



BIDEFORD IIS v NORTH DEVON IIS

July 11th 2020

It finally arrived, the first match of the season. Nearly 90 days late due to CoronaVirus, but the ground & clubhouse looked spectacular and Covid-Ready thanks to Messrs Hocking, Luxton(s), Davies, Hannam, Stone and more...



Hard for all to adapt to the new regulations regarding hand hygiene etc, but everyone stuck to it and we got a game in on a beautiful day in Westward Ho!

The last time I captained a Devon League side, six of the team hadn't been born, and I suspect three others weren't even old enough to play with a hard ball and were quite possibly still in nappies. In that year, Concorde made its final flight, Tony Blair was half way through his Prime Minister-ship, and the Aussies beat India in the World Cup Final.

I won't go through all the problems/calls/messages etc of getting 11 players to play, you can take that as a given each week. John Weeks – enjoy your season off!!!

But after a double team-talk Covid-chat, I won the toss, which is pretty rare to be honest. So we had a bat first. Lee Merrick and Tom Stone opened up, and looked relatively untroubled until Lee nicked off to a good catch by 'keeper Windley. Both Fionn and Julian looked solid, but both were undone by the turning ball, and Olly too was fooled by a spinner.



Meanwhile Tom was compiling runs at the other end, and was joined by Ian, who smacked his second ball of the season for 6, at 35-4. But once Tom thumped a half-tracker to cover, and a score-board malfunction (user error more like!?!?) left the skipper fuming, wickets fell until we were 67-8. Gareth, helped by Dan in a partnership of 33, and Jim, hit out for a few at the end. We finished on 105 all out.

After a break (no teas of course, but the umpires needed a rest, it was pretty hot) North Devon knocked off the runs in 10 overs for no wicket. And in those 10 overs we managed to bowl 30 wides... something we need to work on... even though it was the first game for many moons, that's quite a lot of wides... .. We then bowled another 20 overs at them so that some of their other batters could have a knock.

Even though we were hammered, don't think that there weren't positives from the game though. We had six players aged 16 & younger in the team. Tom opened the batting and stayed in for 22 overs – no easy task against their bowling. He showed great patience in scoring 17 with no boundaries – most unlike him! But an excellent attitude and concentration. I'm looking forward to watching him bat more as the season progresses. He also bowled well in the final 20 overs. Ben Gifford too, bowled well, with lots of turn and

bounce. He's going to be a real handful. Fionn came on and took three wickets, and was on a hat trick at one point. In fact, everyone had a bowl and there were wickets for Ben, Fionn, and Ian. Julian was kept busy behind the wicket and took a very tidy catch standing up off Fionn, and a had very close leg-side stumping turned down. Dan was superb in the field, as was Tom.

The game played its purpose – everyone had time out in the middle with a bat, and everyone had a bowl. We have another friendly next week where I hope to do the same.

Player of the Match: for his batting, bowling & fielding ~ **Tom Stone.** 😊

Bideford 105 (Extras 35, Ian Hayter 19, Gareth Davies 18, Tom Stone 17)
North Devon 106-0