

Bideford vs Bude(a) – 9th April 2022

Today marked the start of the 2022 season for us. We travelled to Bude and couldn't have asked for better weather to play in. For many, this was a new venture (me included) and we knew very little of what to expect from our first opponents. Playing this early in the year was also something new – having not formally began outdoor training yet – I was expecting a lot of rust to be on display. Before I go on to the game itself – special mention to Jack Ancill – who made his 1st XI debut today.

Having won a fairly informal 'toss' – I decided to have a bat. 40 overs a side, retire at 50, players umpiring – I thought we were in for a very long day. James Hayter and I opened the batting as we did for much of the campaign last year.

After seeing off the first few overs, the spinner at the far end unfortunately developed the 'yips' and bowled a Martin Stewart -esque 16 baller including a variety of 3 bouncers, full tosses, and failed releases. I happily helped myself to the playable deliveries and took the over for 30+. A nice way to settle in. I carried on with a couple more 4s and made myself to 50 retired. Ollie Hannam – fresh back for easter from a successful campaign with Bournemouth Uni 1st X – came next at 3. Having played that standard quite consistently over the winter, I think todays offering of slow bowling on a soft, low pitch did for him, getting a good nut that took the top of off. James Ford came at 4 – one of the few players today to have played at Bude before, we'd barely got out of the car and got our kit out before he revealed he hit a ton here in years gone by – of course he had. Fordy hit a couple 4s and then nicked one to slip. James H was quietly racking up a score at the other end as he so often does, and he was joined by Tom Stone at 5. Hayter passed 50 and retired – well played with some lovely 4s and 6s and valuable time out in the middle. Stone and James Greenleaf came together then and steadily built a partnership taking us towards the final 10 overs with roughly 150 on the board. Greeners was bowled trying to sweep, whilst Stoney carried on playing some very attractive drives and sweeps taking the score close to 200. Ian Hayter came next and carried on building towards a strong total. Ian was particularly pleased with the amount of 2s that him and Stoney were running at one point requesting that Stoney 'hit the ball harder' mid over. Having completed the couch to 5k – I see Ian's next venture being more sprint based, and I certainly would not rule out Paris 2024! Stoney retired for a well-played 50 with a clever variety of shots and impressed again following some solid indoor netting in March – plenty more where that came from this season, I think. Jack Ancill came and went without troubling Jess's scorebook – an unlucky innings involving a very smart catch at short third man. Ian was joined by Alex Hannam at for the last over, and in true A. Hannam style, decided to leave his first ball. He then stuck one over long offs head for 4 and we finished with 244 from our 40.

After a lovely tea provided by Bude and a long VAR check from Bondy we headed out to defend our total. Fordy enquired as to whether it would be acceptable to have his phone on the field to follow the Grand National – and for that was sent out to the boundary to sweep for 40 overs – something he relished and enjoyed – taking in the very picturesque Cornish coastline. Just a shame he didn't pack his armbands.

Alex and Steve opened the attack, both bowling tightly and offering little. Alex took the first 2 with an LBW and a smart cradle catch from James Ford. Bondy didn't get the same reward but deserved it – hooping the ball down the Crooklets slope. Jack Ancill took over the reins and bowled magnificently. A very impressive spell of 6 overs, taking the off stump of a batsmen I later found out played Cornish premier cricket in previous years – well played young man. Very rarely strayed from a 4th stump line and bowled with pace and confidence, a young Steve Kirby. At the other end Ben Gifford took over and bowled very well taking 2 wickets including a bowled and a smart catch from Stoney, another impressive young display. After drinks, Tom Stone took over J.Ancill – I was reluctant to take Ancill off after such a great start, but club doctor J. Greenleaf quickly informed me I shouldn't be over bowling such a fine young talent, with the risk of a stress fracture through the roof. Anyways, Stoney obliged and took 2 in 2 but was unsuccessful with his hattrick ball. After a smart runout from Bondy we wrapped things up nicely bowling Bude out for just over 100.

All in all, a great first run out with everyone contributing. Our batsmen looked solid and untroubled for the most part – a good start with stiffer challenges to come. Bowling I was pleased with the consistency and lack of extras, as we all know this brings rewards eventually. Hats off to keeper O. Hannam with some very smart takes up to the stumps. Fielding was also something to be proud of, with no drops and some very good takes. As a newly appointed skipper – it was nice to see a strong team cohesion and mainly everyone enjoying themselves. Well played lads, on to the next one. See you at training on Wednesday night. Great Start.

Cheers,

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Man of the Match – T. Stone
Honourable Mention – J. Ancill

Scorecard: <https://blwh.play-cricket.com/website/results/5398126>