

Devon Cricket League A Division
Season 2019
Match No.2 Bradninch away

See how the Fates their gifts allot, (The Mikado W S Gilbert & Sir A Sullivan)

or

I've got to admit it's getting better (Better)

It's a little better all the time (It can't get no worse) *(From the Beatles Sgt Pepper Album: Lennon & McCartney)*

I have been struggling overnight to decide which of the above two texts I would base my piece on today. Certainly the Fates have not been kind to Bideford in the question of fixtures. Having secured our place in A division for a further season last year by beating the team that, at this point appears to be odds on certainties for promotion, first up, and then to be drawn away to meet one of the two sides demoted from the premier division, second up, is not really very kind of the fates. The Fates have decided to let us loose on the slightly less favoured teams in the division only after having been through the treadmill. However before one gets too downcast, a quick look at the Abbotskerswell result against Cornwood yesterday might convince that although the first game was something of a nightmare, then we are not the only team who will have that nightmare.

And so to Bradninch – and ‘I’ve got to admit its getting better (it can’t get no worse,. Well, that may sound a little cruel but it is not supposed to be, because from factual point of view 0 points from a match is as worse as it can get.

So what was the story of the match. Basically an aggressive talented opening batsman who scored 145 of the total of 263, and a few bowlers who bowled with consistent accuracy and some movement.

Bideford won the toss – its getting better immediately! Put Bradninch in, and opened with Alex Hannam down hill and Steve Bond uphill. Alex was almost immediately successful and was rewarded with the wicket of Bradninch veteran Ross Acton caught at mid off by James Ford (Bideford’s veteran!). Only one more wicket and our first point of the season. However we had to wait another 127 runs until that arrived. Alex returned figures of 5 for 31 for 1 wicket. His bowling seemed improved and if he could cure his tendency to overstep (4 extras) then I see a significant improvement on last year. Steve Bond at the other end bowled a neat spell of 5 overs for 20. It has to be borne in mind that Bradninch’s opener was taking the opportunity to hit every possible ball out of site so keeping line and length was paramount – and to a great extent obtained. Paul Heard took over from Alex downhill – but he did not seem comfortable usually of course at home up hill and he took himself off after 3 overs and put on Jack Ford who bowled 10 over for 26 – remarkable figures in the circumstances. Jamie Lathwell, back from his holidays (a good piece of timing I would say!) bowled 6 tight overs for 17 runs and 2 maidens. Jamie was replaced by Michael Lemmings and it was he who earned our first point of the season with a smart caught and bowled. At that stage Bradninch were 137- for 2. with 23 overs left. The opener continued on his merry way hitting to all parts of the ground. Paul Heard took over from Michael uphill – looked much more at ease, with Martin Stewart downhill. Between them they accounted for the next (and last) 6 wickets, Paul with 3 clean bowled and Martin with 2 catches and a bowled, Paul finished with 3- 46 and Martin 3 – 66. It has to be

accepted that, because of the start that their opener gave them, the latter batsmen were rather thrashing about, but with 4 clean bowled it was clear that the wickets were also earned. So 8 wickets + 4 points.

After the tea break, I am sure everyone but especially Ollie Hannam and Tom Brend must have had that catastrophic figure of 45 in their minds (indeed when that figure was passed a strangled rather ironic cheer was heard). The bowling – which Bradninch apparently consider their strength this term, was not – from where I sit hostile in undue pace, but remorselessly accurate. Both Tom Brend and Ollie can wield the bat with vengeance but today was a day to consolidate and show that we were capable of building an innings. I take my hat (if I was wearing one) off to Tom and Ollie who went out to try to hit the bad balls and defend the good ones. There were two many good ones for comfort – and when a defensive mindset creeps in the timing for hitting bad balls falters a bit. But all credit they kept on and put up the fifty (our first batting point. Ollie eventually succumbed bowled by one that he played a textbook forward defensive shot to (but missed). Jack Ford in his new No 3 roll – and who had top scored last match tried to swat his second ball to square leg and was adjudged LBW. Ben Perry was next., I doubt when he flew 100s of miles he envisaged in his first match seeing collapse all around, but today he played sensibly, showed he has all-round batting skills but was eventually prised out LBW by Bradninch's veteran and wily opening bowler.

The see what the gifts the fates allott!. James Ford run out backing up (or not backing up!) to a deflection by the bowler onto the stumps and Paul Heard was caught at mid off by the opposition captain in a tremendous goal keeper style catch which, had we been 129 – 1 would surely have been dropped. That alas id fate.

Things really were up for us. The 100 was passed (in our first excursion into Div A about 4/5 years ago if was something like the 20th match before we achieved 100). However the end was duly in sight and the others wielded the bat to some extent but at the end of the day we were 121 all out and a total of 6 points.

This was then an improvement on the first week. We have also got the two most difficult teams out of the way but there lie many traps in front of us.

However 'We are getting better'

The Quill.