

Devon Cricket League A Division
Season 2019
Match No. 13 b Budleigh Salterton at Home

*IF you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,*

Poem by Rudyard Kipling the first lines of which are over the players entrance onto Centre Court Wimbledon.

I have referred to 'If' in these ramblings – and perhaps, in retrospect there never has been a better time to reflect on this. If only : it had been a 46 a side match: Ben Perry hadn't been run out by inches: if only the last 4 overs of each innings hadn't fallen as they did: and away from this match, if only Abbotskerswell hadn't won their match.

However it is no good reflecting on the 'ifs' of this life, but the realities of the day. News overnight was that Jack Ford had had to withdraw because of injury (he is of course our leading wicket taker and very mean with the runs) leaving James Greenleaf to reappear in the side having spent the whole of last week acting as a yo-yo between the first and seconds Jack Perham also made a welcome return.

Having failed last week against Ivybridge to exact a win with only 2 balls left, Paul Heard having won the toss elected to bowl first and try again. Jack Perham, from the road, Steve Bond, up hill and then Alex Hannam uphill bowled some very tight overs in which the ball frequently passed the bat, but only Steve Bond managed a wicket with the score at 64. After James Lathwell put in a short appearance from the road, Cameron Atkinson and Paul Heard took control of the match, each bowling their 10 overs straight off Cameron returning figures of 3-44 and Paul 3-37. Cameron took the wicket of Tarisai Muasakanda who has been harvesting runs like a combine harvester on Salisbury Plain all summer. He hit a 6 first ball a four second ball, but failed to deal with Cameron's cunning! Cameron and Paul reduced Budleigh from 126-1 to 173-7 at which point we were strongly in the game. However in several overs of mad slogging their 7th wicket put on 81 in too few overs and on this pitch, this year that was always going to be a very challenging total to achieve. It would also be fair to say that the fielding got a little ragged under the pressure which itself seemed to cause a little tension – probably due to a certain loss of concentration on a hot day in trying circumstances. However overall the fielding, and particularly the catching was good.

After a splendid tea – how the caterer's manage after providing a splendid lunch for Vice Presidents day (well done all) we started with Tom Brend and Ben Perry – now the regular opening pair. Ton showed us one of his sumptuous drives before trying it again and getting caught. Paul Heard, as last week came in at no 3. Budleigh's overseas Tarisai.. has taken many wickets this season against other teams but in the early part of ours he only managed Paul's , which was a great shame, as Paul, who of course missed several matches with his back and has had little opportunity to have time in the middle. He was replaced by James Ford. Whilst the batting order earlier in the season has featured some of our youngest players at 3 & 4 I have to say I do like this formula of the senior members at those crucial wickets giving others a chance to 'express' themselves (what a dreadful word) as they say nowadays. Once again during this Ben Perry had been lynch pinning the innings. James F, who will I am sure admit that he has not had the greatest season, and Ben put their heads

down, saw of the dangers and when the replacement bowlers appeared started to assert the batting. They put on 103 and took the score to 135 with no sign of any danger when they chose the wrong fielder to take a short run to – yes, you've guessed it Tarisai M... This was a great shame, and I don't think this was a run out that either party could be held liable for, just one of those things, because in truth Budleigh's fielding had become ragged themselves as they saw no hope of any breakthrough and by this stage, Ben (53) and James (50) had been scoring at the required 8 an over for some time. James Lathwell was promoted presumably to use his left handed clouting power – but once this failed and Ollie Hannam replaced him. Not having had the happiest season up to last week, when he batted lower and scored runs, he came in took a couple of balls to get his eye in and then stroked and belted 34 in 19. However what had become crystal clear was that with the departure of James and Ben, keeping up the run rate with new batsmen at the crease was going to be impossible, and in the last 4 overs the batting crumbled leaving us – for the second time this season – 2 runs short of 4 batting points. This is, by someone's reckoning the third match that a run out has possibly affected the result dramatically.

However once again this shows that, Budleigh being second in the Division – that in fact we have no need to fear anyone else, and all it needs is that little bit of luck, or as the captain put it, that 20% more effort. I reckon yesterday we had 10% more, just need to up it one more gear (to mix metaphors).

So where does that lead us. Unfortunately due to Bookseller winning yesterday, we remain second from bottom with just Barton below us. This means therefore that the next two match, against Barton at home next week, and Abbots away the following week are crucial and are must wins. However after my rather gloomy report a fortnight or so ago (ask my friend the scorer how arthritis can warp the mind, he suffers as I do) I did see a team who looked as if they were enjoying playing which I had felt was seeping away. So here's to the defeat of Barton and glory for the rest of the season., which reminds me where did I put those happy pills.....

The Quill