

# Bideford v Filleigh NDL 2, 24<sup>th</sup> April 20022

The first challenge of a Sunday skipper is getting a team together, fortunately for me, I was flooded with plenty of options available. There were even some disappointed players to miss out on selection (Sorry Bondy). If only it would be that easy every weekend. The team saw two new faces and the return of a former Bideford stalwart. A welcome to the club to Mark Paul, a Sunday debut for Jack Ancill and welcome back to Matt Clarke. Sunday's for me are about being an opportunity to blood new players into adult cricket and provide the chance for players to gain time in the middle.

Arriving at the HO! in April can sometimes have you questioning your choice of sport. However, the early summer sun had appeared, to provide a most pleasant day for a game of cricket. Having re-marked the pitch following the Saturday game, the team arrived showing enthusiasm ready to start a new season. A quick chat with the opposition and umpire saw a discussion about the new rules for Sunday's games this year with no fielding restrictions and less restrictions on the wides. All good additions to the Sunday rule book making the cricket more about playing the game and less about worrying about the rules. With the sun beating down and a very good-looking wicket, winning the toss was an important one. Luckily for me the coin fell the right way and I selected to bat vs a 10 men Filleigh.

The choice to bat was an easy one given the strength of the batting line up which I could call upon. Having debated who should partner the newly appointed vice captain Julian Hayter I selected Mr Thomas Brend and as you undoubtedly know that was some choice to make. I decided on Mr Brend as I felt it would be good for him to get some time in the middle before the start of the Devon League season.

Both openers would look very comfortable, quickly settling into the job of building runs. It soon began a race to 50 for the two openers, one which was won by Julian, which shows his ability to punish bowling from the very beginning of the innings. I am hopeful he will be able to build many more of these innings on Sunday's over the course of this year. Julian was quickly followed to fifty by Mr Brend, who was looking at his menacing best by piercing gaps around the ground off the tricky slow bowling of Kevin Toze. The 100 was quickly brought up by the opening pair at around the 12<sup>th</sup> over of the game. Unfortunately, Julian would fall for a 52 LBW, he was certainly frustrated by this, seeing an opportunity to achieve his maiden century.

Brend was joined at crease by Jim Keates who has developed into a very secure batsman over the last couple of years, As Jim settled in slowly building an innings, it was time for the Brend show, who was continuing to accelerate the scoring rate at the neglect of the Filleigh bowling attack. Brend soon reached his 100 and did question whether it was time to retire, however as this was first league game I encouraged him to continue going.

We reached drinks with the score at around 200 which already looked like a menacing total. In a previous match report, there were questions about the ability of the club members to make a mixture of squash which is suitable for the palate of Mr Aviston. Having left the squash making in the hands of Senior Keates this week I was confident that this would be taken care of and an agreeable mix to suit all would be made. However according to those who tasted Keates's brew, he had forgotten to add water to the Tesco's four times concentrate. The lack of Tea's has seen the disappearance of club members who know how to make a good mixture of squash, so we would appreciate anyone who runs a training course in "the basics of making squash" to please get in touch.

Over the course of the next twenty overs Mr Tom Brend would complete one of the most destructive and devastating demolitions witnessed in history of the North Devon League. As if by magic, Club and North Devon League Historian Paul Argyle arrived to witness the occasion. I sure that Brend's name will continue to haunt the discussions of the Jack Russel for years to come. For someone who had a previous high score of a little over a 100, Tom showed few nerves to fly pass 150, then to bring a rapid 200. With the discussion turning to the club record score of 214 by Andy Webbe, this was broken by Brend as our overall score rocketed towards 400. At the other end Jim continued to build towards his 50 by rotating strike easily with some accomplished drives down the ground. For me as a Captain the concern was whether Jim was going to make his 50. Luckily, he made his 50 in the 38th over of the innings. He was clearly proud of himself taking off his helmet to celebrate his landmark. Meanwhile at the other end Brend who had slightly slowed his scoring to guide Jim to his 50 ended up with an astonishing 273, which demonstrates the skill and craft which he has developed. We would end up with a mammoth total of 427, the second such score in the last two years, opposition bowling attacks will certainly fear coming to HO! and receiving bowling figures of over 10 an over.

We moved quickly in the second innings without a Tea which will be sorely missed by all Sunday players as one of the key motivating factors to play cricket. With many of the team not batting my task as captain was to make sure everyone got themselves a bowl and get practice for the season ahead. James Hayter and Jack Ancill would open up and challenge their two openers who clearly saw themselves with an opportunity to spend time in the middle on a quality pitch. Both opening bowlers were unlucky not to gain themselves a wicket on a day where wickets were certainly difficult to come by. Slower bowlers Martin Stewart and Ollie Keates would come on to test the

batsmen's patience. Neither would achieve a breakthrough before drinks. Despite reaching a very good 100 for 0 at Drinks, Filleigh still faced a monster total of 300 runs more runs to chase for the win and over 100 runs more to gain any points for their efforts. Young Seamer Adam Rashid would takeover from Martin at the top and would quickly achieve himself a wicket. Filleigh's opening batsman who was looking to accelerate post drinks, was taken by a stunning forward diving catch from James Hayter. a young man who never seems to have a quiet game. With the fall of Filleigh's danger man any possibility of them chasing the total had disappeared. Ollie began his list on the fridge this year with a wicket caught by myself. Filleigh to their credit continued to bat sensibly and punished the bad balls. Mark Paul would replace Ollie at the end of his 8 and show some promising signs of spin and turn which will be useful during the season. Patiently awaiting his return to action was Matt Clarke who show himself to provide a quality bowling addition to the side, demonstrating an accurate line and length to his bowling which tested the batsmen's patience, with his varied range Clarky managed to grab himself two wickets to end the day.

The game would end with us winning by 200 runs which makes for a fantastic start to season and a result which will be difficult to follow. To their credit 10 men Filleigh showed a great effort in the field until the end and made a number of great stops to prevent further punishment. Undoubtedly as Captain I was delighted with the start to the season, all of the batsmen reaching 50 and the bowlers showing patience on a quality batting wicket. The innings of Tom will one which will be remembered for many years by all who witnessed it. The biggest compliment I can give Tom was from the discussion of their players after game, who when questioning what had gone wrong could not even remember a half chance to get Brend out. A truly remarkable innings which will strike fear for many seasons to come.

Now back to the reality of what Sunday's are really like. Sat on Friday night at the end of a busy week at work trying to pull together a side for an away game.

Regards

Greenknees.