

Devon Cricket League A Division
Season 2019
Match No 7 v Plympton at Home
(and 20/20 semi final)

My name's Bond, Steve Bond. An allusion to Ian Fleming

First the NDL knockout cup semi final.

The weather having remorselessly chucked down rain all day in Somerset, a pleasant drive to Braunton revealed that it had been dry all day there and the ground was playable. With Tom Brend captaining, opening with Pete Stevens, putting on 31 in 3.5 overs, the rain gods decided that they had carelessly overlooked the Braunton ground, chucked several bucket loads of water on the bowlers run up, with the result that the Umpires decided that the ground was unfit, and a pleasant drive back to Somerset was made in beautiful weather with no rain showing on the ground. This is cricket in 2019.

So after the wins over Barton and Abbotskerswell, hopes were high for a third win on the trot against Plympton, one of the group at the lower end of the table. However, during the week, Paul Heard sustained a serious back injury, making him – so it seems – unlikely to bowl again this season, even if he manages to actually get on the field.

Thus a settled side which had prospered, was now to be reshaped. Tom Brend as club vice captain, took over the reins in a team that included James Hayter, and Steve Bond.

Plympton lost the toss and Tom inserted them. Alex Hannam opened the bowling from the sea end with the same hostile intent as before, and, I am so pleased, without any no balls again. A new tactic was for Jamie Lathwell to open from the road end. Jamie got a wicket with his first legitimate ball, but whilst beating the bat on numerous occasions didn't seem to pose quite the same threat as the last two matches. Whether this was because he had the new ball, or whether because a considerable number of balls went to left handed batsmen I don't know, but whilst he and Alex both bowled impressively, Alex proved the greater threat returning another 3 – 27 return from 10 overs. It certainly seems that Alex now has a fixed spot at that end. Jamie may well be the solution at the road end – time will tell, but do not in these comments – from one who would probably pitch the ball on 3rd slips head – as criticism – it is not. Perhaps surprise that Jamie didn't get more than one.

Ben Perry took over from Jamie bowled perfectly respectable, and in his second spell took a valuable wicket returning 1-43. Steve Bond took over from Ben bowled 3 -overs for 19 with one wicket.

As usual Jack Ford took over from Alex and returned with another 3 wicket haul himself, like Alex 3 – 27 off 10

Whilst the above was happening Plympton were giving wickets to us at regular intervals and at 88-6 things were looking good for us, although it is very difficult to assess what might be a good score this year. Plympton progressed to 105-8 but then things started to unroll. The 9th wicket partnership put on 95 and despite Ben eventually getting the captain for 53 and their number 10

being stumped off James Ford for 34 it certainly seemed to me that the final score of 202 all out was very daunting. However we did get the 5 bowling points – every point might be so important at the end of the season.

So after a splendid tea, Tom and Ben started off. Despite 2 fours from Tom, it would be difficult to say that any of the batsman looked in form. It was impossible to say, without being behind the bowlers arm whether the pitch was consistent or not. There did not seem to be variable bounce, apart from one from Jack Ford that did jump, but whether there was spin or variable bounce I don't know. Wickets fell regularly for no apparent reason. Ollie and Alex scored 14 and 11 each, being the only others to reach double figures and at 65-9 everyone was packing up. Enter at this point Bond – Steve not James. Over an innings of 30 balls he looked sound and stylish stroking one four and clubbing one 6 and with sensible batting from Cameron Atkinson, they put on the highest partnership of the innings 33 and took us within 2 points of a second batting point. So disappointing for Steve and Cameron.

So one batting point – a total of 6 from a team we would hope to have beaten. However, losing such an important figure with such a vast fund of knowledge at Paul H will take some reassessment from all.

So next week we are off to Hatherleigh, relegated from Premier last year and not at the top of 'must beat teams', so I think if fair to say we will go there with lower expectations which may well be the right attitude.

A disappointing day. But we live to fight another and still are a good number of points from the relegation zone.

Next Tuesday is the return fixture of the semi final v Braunton. Alas the Quill is away on an artistic trip – hopefully someone can review the match in the right spirit. Talking of spirits, its father's day and I believe a large gin is waiting -

The Quill.