

## Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May v Torquay at The Ho!

### 3<sup>rd</sup> DL Match

Upon this rock I will build my [team} slight misquotation from the Bible.

Probably the most significant think that happened on Saturday occurred after the toss and before the game started. In the warm up James Ford pulled something in his back and clearly was in great pain. That he struggled out to bat at all at number 11 reminded one of Colin Cowdrey going out to face the last over of a test match with his arm in plaster. On that occasion (about 1962) Cowdrey's efforts saved the day, alas on Saturday James' efforts did not.

James Ford has opened the batting for Bideford for as long as I can remember. The question over the years I have asked is 'who is opening with him?'). So when he couldn't a volunteer was required as so step forward J. Ford junior in his stead accompanied by Tom Brend. Jack hit one 4 but was unfortunate (perhaps) to be out caught behind when he toe ended a ball that would, I am sure otherwise have been called a wide. Experience I think would ensure that later in his career he would leave it to get the wide.

Tom Brend had, I think he will admit a poorish season last year, judged by hos own standards. However after sharing an opening partnership of 76 against Paignton last week, I told him he was due to make it a half century this time, which he did. With a mixture of patient stout defence and some glorious shots he finished on 53 with 8 fours and one six. Oliver Hannam joined him after JF was out, scored 12 neat runs and then given LBW. He looked disappointed, whether at the decision or his failure to connect with the ball I am not sure. Hopefully the latter.

Paul Heard came in to support Tom. Paul always shows a 'they shall not get past me' defence at the start of the innings but he and Tom put on 78 before Tom was out. Adler Alex H had come and gone, Jamie Lathwell joined Paul and they put on 47 in rapid time before Jamie was out for 29 off 24. Shortly after, Paul went for 43 and that was pretty well it Bideford all out for 176 – in my estimation 50 runs short.

After another splendid tea by Jenny Ford (one hopes James helped her as he had nothing else to do batting at 11), play resumed. Fred King and Paul Heard opened as usual., Fred – it struck me – bowled more aggressively (perhaps walking the dog the week before had inspired him) and Paul Heard was, in the words of my on field source) simply superb. How he didn't get a wicket no-one knows. Perhaps on that form it would take James Hildreth even to get bat on ball (Hildreth made a wonderful 150+ yesterday at Taunton one of the best innings I have ever seen). He bowled in my view one bad ball that was hit for 4 and after 10 over one maiden he had conceded 27 runs, 23 off edges and snicks.

Fred was relieved by Jamie Lathwell who bowled as well as I can ever remember. His 7 maximum overs yielded one for 10 with 4 maidens.

Josh Atkinson replaced Paul and picked up two wickets, the part time opener bowled and Torquay's captain superbly caught high above his head, and that was that. The fat lady had truly smug and Bideford had lost with 7 and a half overs to spare and 7 wickets in hand.

Mona of the match has to be Paul Heard but I know that will mean nothing to him in a lost game.

So now, three games in what do we learn. Plympton was a good result. I think it fair to say that they never really turned up but winning the first game against a team just down from the premier was a good achievement. You can after all only play the team that turns up.

Paignton was disappointing. In the bowling department we seemed to have them for the taking but somehow they managed to escape and when we were batting no-one was able to take over from that great opening partnership Of JF and TB. The pitch at Paignton is, I gather, notoriously difficult at the start of the season and more application was required against (admittedly) good bowling.

As to Torquay. Again when batting there were two occasions when we could have prospered more. The partnership between Tom B and Paul H was very good. But in truth neither of them needed to play the shots they did to get out. Jamie innings was sensation in its explosiveness but again he may well rue the shot that got him out. When Torquay batted there were no half chances, no reckless shots (except perhaps the catch Paul H took). If there were no boundaries to be had they simply took singles. Keep changing the strike. It has to be said that one Paul Heard had finished bowling, and James L had she match was pretty well done and dusted.

So without trying to be critical the message after one sixth of the season is if we get them into a difficult situation when bowling, we have to be ruthless, and when batting don't give wickets away to foolish shots. Points are hard to get in this division. This is not criticism for criticisms sake but hopefully a reality check.

Next week we are away to Ivybridge. I am unable to attend so Jeff King, who is a far better scorer than me is doing the honours. Ivybridge are still using the TCS so the game will be on the TCS page -the one you used last year.

I will be back for the se3cond away match in a row the following week at Budleigh Salterton. Two very important matches. Ivybridge have always been very level in terms of ability and Budleigh have had a poor start to the season so lets go for two on the trot.

The Quill.