

London Erratics v Harpsden

After several days of rain, the Erratics were glad to be standing in the sun at Harpsden's ground. It had been hoped that the locals might supplement the nine Erratics, but it turned out they only had ten; the visitors were loaned a sub, to give ten in the field. The Erratics won the toss and elected to field.

While Parag Prasad started tidily, Matthew Eltringham mixed things up with some full tosses and long hops — then snaffled the first wicket, a flick to skipper James Rivington at square leg. The new man snicked behind to get Parag's tally going. The No. 2 had hit two sixes off Matthew, but another attempted swish looped to Brian Berrigan at slip.

Brian replaced Matthew E, but it was Parag who had the home team reeling: having given James another catch at mid-off, he ran through the opposition captain and one of the two who had dug Harpsden out of a hole last year. With the score 69 for 6 at drinks, James finally thanked Parag for his potent spell.

Richard Heller took a few balls to sort out his demons, then removed the younger of last year's troublesome bats, as Bill Bush took a well-judged catch at mid-on. With five catches already held, the Erratics were pretty pleased with their fielding. Then Bill tweaked a knee and had to limp off (no extra sub offered), and with two youthful batsmen haring between the wickets, the Harpsden innings gained some momentum. It was also announced that the home side had found a 12-year-old to bring them up to eleven.

The hundred was passed: would the Erratics let a strong position slip yet again? Frustration as an able young sub dropped a catch at mid-off (was that a little wink we saw?). The young left-handed No. 4 had been playing some nice cut shots, and seemed to have acquired a taste for Brian's orthodox bowling. Finally he top-edged Richard high, and keeper Nasir Khawaja called loudly for his second catch. James had already given the nod to Matthew Neal for some 'maverick' bowling — and that's what he got: four; (harsh) leg-side wide; off-side wide; catch to Parag at cover; snick behind (a moment of tension as the bat initially failed to walk).

With the Harpsden innings wrapped up in 27.3 overs, the Erratics were given a few overs to bat before tea. The soft pitch was still slow: James was carelessly bowled through the gate, but three balls later Nasir weakly paddled one that stopped on him to midwicket. At tea, 7 for 2; and a little rain didn't help.

Peter Andrews was dropped for the fourth time in the 11th over, but couldn't survive the next. Parag looked in control and steadied things with Brian — then inexplicably skied a young medium pacer to the cover boundary: 45 for 4.

When the final 20 was called (after 24 overs), 75 were needed. After a slow start, Brian was scoring well against the younger attack. Matthew N helped push towards the target, and played one outrageously premeditated reverse sweep.

The return of the senior bowlers arrested the visitors' progress. In the 32nd over, Brian chased a wide and tapped it to point. Matthew E watchfully let his namesake take the lead, then gave a simple catch. Now 94 for 6, and the shortage in Erratics numbers had become telling — particularly as two of the reliable bats had scored nothing.

Bill went in, with Peter as runner. He swung, he played on. Richard tonked a single back over the bowler's head, and two balls later Matthew N holed out to mid-off.

JR

HARPSDEN — batting

1	c Rivington	b Eltringham	10
2	c Berrigan	b Eltringham	32
3	c Khawaja N	b Prasad	4
4	c Khawaja N	b Heller	45
5	c Rivington	b Prasad	7
6		b Prasad	0
7		b Prasad	0
8	c Bush	b Heller	2
9	c Prasad	b Neal	19
10	not out		0
11	c Khawaja N	b Neal	2

126 all out

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Prasad	10	2	25	4
Eltringham	7	1	36	2
Berrigan	6	0	30	0
Heller	4	0	25	2
Neal	0.3	0	6	2

Fall of wickets: 1–25, 2–34, 3–48, 4–65, 5–69, 6–69, 7–84, 8–120, 9–126, 10–126

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

* Rivington	bowled	2	
Andrews	caught	13	1
† Khawaja N	caught	0	
Berrigan	caught	36	3
Prasad	caught	9	1
Neal	caught	28	3
Eltringham	caught	0	
Bush	bowled	0	
Heller	NOT OUT	1	

98 all out

Fall of wickets: 1(Rivington)–7, 2(KhawajaN)–7, 3(Andrews)–19, 4(Prasad)–45, 5(Berrigan)–86, 6(Eltringham)–94, 7(Bush)–97, 8(Neal)–98

LOST BY 28 RUNS