

London Erratics v Harpsden

As is customary for the Harpsden game, there were long delays crossing the river at Henley, and most of the team arrived late. Match manager James Rivington was latest, which meant that Peter Andrews, who was later than most, was chosen by a congress of the people to captain. Since Peter was still dressing, Brian Berrigan tossed and lost. Harpsden were visibly stronger than usual, and very sensibly, a time game was agreed on with Harpsden batting first and providing fielding subs until the stragglers arrived. Last year the fielding subs had been a bit dodgy in the catching department, but this time the subs were full of vigour.

With Alex Towers one of those stuck in Berks, Parag Prasad and Brian opened the bowling steadily, and for a dozen overs or so the Erratics were well in the game. However, it soon became clear that the No. 3 was a powerful performer, the No. 5 was in similar mould, and by the time Alex arrived the extra pace on the ball was a help rather than a hindrance to them. The fielding wilted in the heat – a couple of fierce hits went down, and Peter was embarrassed, after running from the long on boundary to about 10 yards in from the cow boundary, to find a skier ball sailing over his head for four. Parag promised a coach4success tutorial afterwards. Richard Heller had his moments, and Patrick Cobb's spell, a hospital pass with two fierce batsmen looking for an early declaration, resulted in some pain for a succession of fielders at extra cover.

Tea was as ever excellent, with most of the team indulging in the doughnuts, allowing Peter to snaffle the pork pies.

Nasir Khawaja was nursing a long-term shoulder injury which made him reluctant to bat, but since he had to leave early for a fancy dress party the choice was open or not at all. Unfortunately the injury brought about his demise, unable to get round sufficiently on a pull. James and Matthew Neal were out quickly, bringing together Parag and Matthew Eltringham, perhaps the most likely partnership to chase a huge score quickly. They settled in sensibly, but found it difficult to accelerate against some tight spin bowling. Robert Waller, scoring alongside a senior member of the Harpsden committee who had noted the generosity of the declaration, became concerned about the future of the fixture as the victory target receded and a dull draw seemed to beckon. No cause for worry there. An opening quick bowler returned, Parag departed, then Brian first ball for his maiden primary. Peter hung around with the tail for a while but eventually tried to sweep a leggy. Alex and Patrick played very responsibly as the last few overs ticked away and the tension mounted, but Patrick was unable to protect Richard from the strike in the penultimate over, and the leggy did the business thanks to a sharp low catch at backward short leg with 8 balls to go. Tristan Ward's original contact for the fixture arrived to watch the closing stages and observed sympathetically that with two mismatched teams only a time game could have produced such a tight finish.

PA

HARPSDEN — batting

1	lbw	b Prasad	27
2		b Berrigan	8
3	retired		100
4	lbw	b Eltringham	12
5	not out		64
6	not out		11
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			

228 for 4 dec

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Berrigan	7	0	37	1
Prasad	7	0	38	1
Eltringham	7	0	52	1
Towers	5	0	34	0
Heller	4	0	33	0
Cobb	3	0	32	0

Fall of wickets: 1–11, 2–68, 3–93, 4–196

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

			4s	6s
†	Khawaja	caught	10	2
	Rivington	bowled	2	
	Prasad	bowled	29	2
	Neal	bowled	0	
	Eltringham	caught	27	4
	Berrigan	bowled	0	
*	Andrews	lbw	16	1
	Bush	bowled	3	
	Towers	bowled	3	
	Cobb	NOT OUT	0	
	Heller	caught	1	

111 all out

Fall of wickets: 1(Khawaja)–14, 2(Rivington)–15, 3(Neal)–24, 4(Prasad)–77, 5(Berrigan)–77, 6(Eltringham)–96, 7(Bush)–101, 8(Andrews)–110, 9(Towers)–110, 10(Heller)–111