

## London Erratics v Balliol Erratics

On the hottest day of the year so far, and with the Balliol ground looking as usual immaculate, roadworks on the M40 meant that only 6 Erratics were present for the planned 2.15 start, and scarcely one among them with pretensions to bowl, thus predetermining captain Chris Dunabin's choice on winning the toss to bat first.

Balliol, having clung on desperately for a draw in 2008, had reinforced their side with several first-teamers, and openers Peter Andrews and Jim Rowland laboured for runs against a tight medium-pace attack. When they fell in quick succession, Nasir Khawaja and James Rivington tried to accelerate, but found run-making a struggle against the off-spin leg-spin combination of Albert Alla (10-2-26-0) and Jim Head, as did Chris when he replaced James (b Head). Boundaries especially were rare on a big ground with a deep-set field.

Nasir and Chris were getting them in singles, twos and threes, until a quick single overstretched Chris's calf muscle. He briefly called for Matthew Neal as runner, but realised that even hobbling from square leg to square leg was too much, and Matthew, nominally No. 9, stayed on to take over.

Balliol pursued their traditional, and praiseworthy, policy of giving all ten outfield players a bowl, and Nasir and Matthew were able to play some more expansive shots, until Nasir retired having reached a chanceless century. By this point George Dabby had arrived after a 4-hour journey from Brighton, to announce that he'd need to set off back at 5.30, so the batting order was further revised. (Apologies to Bill Bush and Michael Evans.) Some on the boundary argued for an early declaration as the attacking option, but, after George fell cheaply, Chris let the two Matthews press on to reach 225 by 5pm, from 46 overs.

Both sides lingered lethargically over Jim's tuna and cucumber sandwiches, and at 5.35 Chris and Balliol skipper James Villalard agreed that a limit of 20 overs from 6.45 rather than 6.30 would make for a better chance of a result. What did James V know that Chris didn't?

London Erratics took the field with Jaspar Khawaja replacing the injured Chris (to be joined by younger brother Sami when George really had to leave), and James R taking over the captaincy. They knew their bowling resources were thinly stretched, and George and Matthew Eltringham bowled tidily without much troubling either the adhesive Jim or his aggressive partner. After one dropped catch that luckily wasn't costly, Matthew E won an lbw decision against the hitter, but this only brought Albert to the crease to continue the good work for Balliol.

Jaspar, coming on as first change, maintained a good line and length, but lacked sufficient penetration, and Richard Heller and Matthew N suffered some punishment, enabling Balliol to keep up the 6-an-over required. The visitors felt that if only they could get at the lower order the match was still winnable; but when Albert fell lbw to James it was only to bring in another hitter, and Balliol cruised to victory by 8 wickets with ten balls to spare, Jim (now with a runner) not out on 63.

Would the 14 balls fewer than 20 overs from 6.30 would have given them have caused Balliol to crumple under pressure to score quickly? Probably not. Would fielding first have made the difference? Only if the Erratics had then played for the draw from the start of their innings. More and better bowlers required!

CD

[Ed – Nice to see the art of spin is not lost these days... A personal highlight: young Sami fearlessly scooping up a fierce drive and in one move fizzing the ball in for an attempted run out.]

### LONDON ERRATICS — batting

		4s	6s
Andrews	caught	11	1
Rowland	bowled	15	
† Khawaja N	retired	101	10
Rivington	bowled	12	
* Dunabin	retired hurt	20	1
Neal	NOT OUT	32	4
Dabby	caught	6	1
Eltringham	NOT OUT	1	
Evans			
Bush			
Heller			

**225 for 5 dec**

Fall of wickets: 1(Andrews)–29, 2(Rowland)–35, 3(Rivington)–82, (Dunabin rtd hurt)–155, 4(Khawaja)–202, 5(Dabby)–213

### BALLIOL ERRATICS — batting

1	not out	63
2	lbw	b Eltringham 55
3	lbw	b Rivington 65
4	not out	26
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		

**229 for 2**

### LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Dabby	7	0	45	0
Eltringham	10	1	50	1
Khawaja J	7	0	31	0
Heller	4	0	26	0
Neal	5	0	46	0
Rivington	4.2	0	27	1

Fall of wickets: 1–89, 2–190

ERRATICS LOST BY 8 WICKETS