

London Erratics v Great Houghton

A scorcher. The eight Erratics were supplemented by two locals, to make it a ten-a-side match. Great Houghton won the toss and elected to bat.

Heath Gibson, a holidaying Australian recruited at the Paddington Rec nets earlier in the week, proved an excellent opening bowler. A rare blemish by Jim Head in the slips denied him a scalp in his first over, but keeper Bill Bush showed how it should be done shortly afterwards. An excellent tumbling catch by Andy Hosken at backward square leg brought a second wicket. At the other end, the Erratics were benefiting from the generous donation of Greg Pearce, one of GH's first XI opening bowlers: he much enjoyed knocking over the youthful Sunday skipper. Heath hit the stumps too, and then swooped at point to give Parag Prasad a wicket in his first over – leaving the Erratics in good shape at 48 for 5.

Time for a Hart to Hart. Charlie Hart, with a scary record in demolishing Erratics bowling, now came to the crease. Skipper James Rivington therefore turned to older brother Rob Hart, who for the second year running had been gratefully adopted as an Erratic. Rob's bowling was fast but a bit excitable, and Charlie seemed to have the advantage in the fraternal contest. But with Parag still bowling tidily, and with the Erratics fielding considerably stronger than normal, Hart junior had to work for his runs. Brian Berrigan tightened up one end, and Parag finally removed the stubborn No. 1 thanks to an excellent one-handed catch at square leg by John Lee – who had by that point managed to shake off a shocking hangover from the previous day's Balliol garden party.

An experimental couple of overs from Jim boosted the total, but perplexed the GH keeper as the slowest of slow deliveries trickled onto his stumps. A few biffs later, GH declared on 161 for 7.

At the southern end of another continent, England had been making a right horlicks of their second round World Cup tie against Germany. Fortunately for all, GH had declined any time out for the football, so those in the field were spared the true horror. The commentators' tone drifting across the ground from the radio on the boundary had indicated the worst; and on at least two occasions, the goal tally shouted out to the middle had the benefit of immediately gifting the Erratics a wicket.

The young GH bowlers quickly proved themselves to be a handful. Successive swinging deliveries trapped both John and Andy. By the time the final 20 overs arrived, the Erratics were hopelessly behind the asking rate.

James and Jim fell trying to hit out against a loopy spinner: 48 for 4. This brought together Rob and Parag, and a sparkling fifty partnership put the visiting team back on track. There was considerable local generosity in giving the spinner such a long spell. But the GH Sunday skipper turned out to be the other half of the first XI opening attack, and he now entered the fray. He accounted for Rob and (after a promising boundary) Heath: 107 for 6.

But Brian and Parag worked the ball around nicely, and pushed the score to within sniffing distance of the target. Then, tragedies! Brian was given out lbw when he was sure he had got an inside edge. And two runs later Parag holed out at long-on, and cursed himself for unnecessarily trying to force it: 145 for 8.

This left Greg and Bill to accumulate the required runs. The rate was now comfortable, but the GH quick was still steaming in. With the score on 159, the final ball of the 19th over ripped through Bill's defences – and the Erratics had agonisingly lost by 2 runs.

A very enjoyable game, played in a splendid spirit. A most uplifting alternative to being stuck in front of the telly watching a sporting debacle.

JR

GREAT HOUGHTON — batting

1	c Lee	b Prasad	39
2	c Bush	b Gibson	0
3	c Hosken	b Gibson	9
4		b Pearce	1
5		b Gibson	14
6	c Gibson	b Prasad	0
7	not out		66
8		b Head	9
9	not out		5
10			
11			

161 for 7 dec

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Gibson	8	1	22	3
Pearce	8	1	28	1
Prasad	7	1	29	2
Hart R	4	0	23	0
Berrigan	6	1	26	0
Head	2	0	18	1

Fall of wickets: 1–7, 2–28, 3–29, 4–45, 5–48, 6–110, 7–142

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

			4s	5s
*	Rivington	caught	16	1
	Lee	lbw	3	
	Hosken	lbw	0	
	Head	caught	15	
	Hart R	caught	42	8
	Prasad	caught	39	5 1
	Gibson	c & b	4	1
	Berrigan	lbw	13	2
	Pearce	NOT OUT	5	
†	Bush	bowled	6	1

159 all out

Fall of wickets: 1(Lee)–13, 2(Hosken)–13, 3(Rivington)–34, 4(Head)–48, 5(HartR)–102, 6(Gibson)–107, 7(Berrigan)–143, 8(Prasad)–145, 9(Bush)–159

ERRATICS LOST BY 2 RUNS