

London Erratics v **Beamers**

A flurry of activity in the transfer market, and the first appearance of another talented Erratic Academy recruit. The Erratics looked to have a good side, and it got even better on the way to the ground when John Butcher offered player-manager Richard Heller the services of his nephew Freddy Butcher, described modestly as a medium-pace bowler. The final selection contained four leg-breakers and no wicketkeeper: Ed Cadwallader nobly accepted that responsibility (for the first time in his adult career). A 40 overs match. The Erratics won the toss and sent them in (out of habit).

Brian Berrigan and Michael Cockerell, a welcome signing from the Lords and Commons and the BBC Bushmen, opened the bowling with great accuracy on the slow, uneven pitch. Richard found it hard to count the number of fielders, but when all those signed arrived on the pitch he at last realised there were 12, and took the opportunity to withdraw his hugely swollen knee from the fray. His replacement, Seb Carr (a Beamer's son), was a teenaged Australian with a full complement of knees: the substitution was a no-brainer. Brian took charge. He continued to strangle their openers; Michael even more so. The fielding was keen and the emergency wicketkeeper made several alacritous stops down the leg side. Ed distinguished himself even further by stumping our old adversary, Christian Wolmar, when he charged Michael's well-executed slower ball.

Freddy replaced Brian, and belied his modest trade description by producing a searing series of late outswingers and yorkers. He claimed the other opener and the opposing skipper, Simon Kemp. At the other end, Dominic Webb (another capture from the Lords and Commons) produced an excellent controlled spell of left-arm spin bowling, and was cruelly served when several miscues evaded the keen fielders. The young Seb produced an astonishing throw from wide long-off which hit the stumps at the bowler's end. A startled umpire denied him the run-out it deserved, and he will have to be content with an Oscar nomination for this year. Later he took a well-judged catch to remove the dangerous Dixon.

Beamers 84 for 4 off 20 overs – and then things got even better. Brian introduced our Academy product, James Marriner-Goldschmidt (12), signed at Paddington Recreation Ground nets on the evidence of one leg-break bowled at his mother. It was not a freak. Coolly he flighted more leg-breaks at the threatening Carr senior – and mesmerised him into hitting his wicket. A probing spell followed and then James produced a delivery we taught him at the Erratic Academy – a slow long-hop which their No. 7 swatted into the hands of Freddy. Beamers 94 for 6. The opposition were now hoping for 150 at most.

James was withdrawn from the attack when the player-manager remembered that he was allowed to bowl only four overs in a spell because the ECB knows best. Suddenly the Erratics team lost its wheels and its willpower, as the opposition produced a savage but well-thought counterattack. Lewis and Booth peppered the short boundaries, the fielding, hitherto purposive, suddenly disintegrated, and a succession of bowlers mixed jaffas with pies. Lewis and Booth put on 80 in 8 overs, until Booth hit his wicket off Tony Poulter (cruelly on 49) – two hit wickets in a match, unprecedented? It did not bring much relief because Mayes bludgeoned a rapid 27. Lewis completed 50 before being bowled by the returning Michael, who recorded the astonishing figures of 7-2-10-2 in a final Beamers innings of 225 for 8.

This was a tall order against an attack opened by two old opponents, the hostile and accurate fast-medium Mayes and the slow left arm of Wood, who got unpredictable turn and bounce on the deteriorating pitch (good decision by the ex-player-manager). Opener John demonstrated sound technique and excellent judgement and hit one ball an over for four. Unfortunately no one could stay with him. Tony was bowled, Ed needlessly run out, Simon Griffiths bowled, Brian (furiously) lbw to one which kept very low... He left instructions to the remaining batsmen to see off the openers. This they did. He did not instruct them to succumb to their replacements, which they also did. John's dismissal, caught in the deep for 35 (Oscar nomination for resolution amid the carnage) was the start of a collapse which saw five wickets fall on the same score of 54. The proceedings terminated on 60 and the Erratics had batted for a total of one ball short of 20 overs. Dominic was left high and dry without facing a ball – a poor way to treat a distinguished guest.

The ashen-faced player manager nonetheless took a few positives from the game: 'I thought the young boy did great on his debut and we got performances from all our new signings. And we won the first quarter of the match.'

But the appearance of the scorebook tells its own story. The late mayhem of the Beamers' innings is conveyed in illegible and unmathematical scrawl by the player-manager. The clinical destruction of the Erratic innings is conveyed by Robert Waller with his customary immaculacy.

RH

BEAMERS — batting

1	st Cadwallader	b Cockerell	8
2	lbw	b Butcher F	17
3		b Butcher F	13
4	c Carr	b Webb	21
5		b Cockerell	56
6	hit wicket	b Marriner-Gold'	2
7	c Butcher F	b Marriner-Gold'	1
8	hit wicket	b Poulter	49
9	not out		27
10	not out		2
11			

225 for 8 in 40 overs

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Cockerell	7	2	10	2
Berrigan	7	0	43	0
Butcher F	7	1	34	2
Webb	8	0	34	1
Marriner-Gold'	4	0	20	2
Alvis	3	0	28	0
Poulter	2	0	17	1
Carr	2	0	26	0

Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-39, 3-54, 4-84, 5-91, 6-94, 7-173, 8-206

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

			4s	6s
Butcher J	caught	35	8	
Poulter	bowled	1		
† Cadwallader	run out	0		
Griffiths	bowled	5	1	
* Berrigan	lbw	0		
Cockerell	caught	5	1	
Alvis	bowled	0		
Carr	caught	4	1	
Butcher F	caught	0		
Marriner-Gold'	bowled	0		
Webb	NOT OUT	0		

60 all out in 19.5 overs

Fall of wickets: 1(Poulter)-5, 2(Cadwallader)-11, 3(Griffiths)-21, 4(Berrigan)-25, 5(Butcher J)-54, 6(Cockerell)-54, 7(Alvis)-54, 8(Butcher F)-54, 9(Marriner-Goldschmidt)-54, 10(Carr)-60