

London Erratics v Harpsden

Match manager Richard Heller had recruited a useful team to play at South Wraxall; alas the home side couldn't match him and cancelled at short notice. Fortunately Harpsden had been let down by their visitors, so a happy marriage was quickly agreed. The adjustment caused some shuffling in the squad: veteran local Miles Hodgkiss was gratefully received, but the Erratics would still end up a man short. The young Harpsden captain grudgingly agreed to play a time game; he then won the toss and elected to bat.

Alex Padmore and his friend and debutant Jonny Taylor were a lively opening pair. Alex Towers and Mohsin Mufti kept up the pace attack. But the home batsmen survived some early scares and started to pile on the runs. With the score on 99, the young Harpsden skipper gave a snick behind off Mohsin – his first wicket for the Erratics.

Mohsin was also responsible for the second wicket – desperately sticking out a foot to save a fierce straight drive off his own bowling, he deflected the ball onto the hapless non-striker's stumps. The third 'wicket' came courtesy of the other opener retiring on reaching 100.

Skipper James Rivington mixed up the bowling to encourage a declaration, but this did not seem to be part of the Harpsden skipper's plans – with an awards dinner imminent, the young bats were too keen to boost their tallies for the season. Fifteen minutes before the scheduled tea, the No. 5 got himself out lbw by cheekily trying to reverse paddle a James straight ball – at which point Harpsden finally stopped batting.

Feeling under no moral obligation to chase the target seriously, and with not too many proven 'stickers' in the side, skipper James reordered his line-up to hold back some of his batting strength. His hope that Miles would prove a useful irritant to his Harpsden colleagues was dashed when he was out to the first ball he faced.

Chris Dunabin hung around until the last ball of the 8th over; Alex T, who had looked very composed at No. 3, fell to the first delivery of the next: 16 for 3. When Mohsin charged the young pace bowler first ball, his team mates on the boundaries admired his daring; when he did it to every delivery, it seemed more reckless, and he was gone before the end of the over. Jonny had thumped his first ball for four, but was the next to depart: 26 for 5.

Finally a stand, between Bill Bush and Jim Head. When Bill was out, it was time for James to play one of his obstinate defensive knocks; instead he missed a gentle in-swinging first up (collecting for himself a king pair in the weekend) – where is a corrupt gambling cartel when you need one?

As always Jim looked solid, and he couldn't have taken a bigger stride to meet the ball that got him adjudged lbw. When Richard followed shortly afterwards, the home side invited Miles back out to entertain them at No. 11. His belligerent swishes were enough to keep the margin of defeat below 200 – just.

It was good to get a game of cricket when none seemed likely, but this was another pummelling.

JR

HARPSDEN — batting

1	retired		100
2	c Bush	b Mufti	43
3	run out		14
4	not out		47
5	lbw	b Rivington	22
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			

261 for 4 dec

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Padmore	8	0	38	0
Taylor	6	0	36	0
Towers	4	0	26	0
Mufti	5	0	41	1
Hodgkiss	3	0	21	0
Head	3	0	34	0
Heller	2	0	17	0
Dunabin	2	0	19	0
Rivington	2	0	18	1

Fall of wickets: 1–99, 2–139, 3–???, 4–261

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

			4s	6s
Dunabin	bowled	0		
Hodgkiss	caught	0		
Towers	caught	9	1	
Mufti	bowled	0		
Taylor	caught	4	1	
† Bush	bowled	8		
Head	lbw	12	2	
* Rivington	bowled	0		
Padmore	NOT OUT	6	1	
Heller	lbw	0		
Hodgkiss (bis)	caught	10	2	

64 all out

Fall of wickets: 1(Hodgkiss)–0, 2(Dunabin)–16, 3(Towers)–16, 4(Mufti)–20, 5(Taylor)–26, 6(Bush)–45, 7(Rivington)–45, 8(Head)–46, 9(Heller)–47, 10(Hodgkiss)–64