

BAS Cricket Reports 2014

June 3 v Allsorts

Last night ten brave men strode out under the blazing Girton sun to avenge last year's defeat by Allsorts. Many thanks to Tom Dunn for producing four extra fresh legs (Freddy and Nick), in addition to his own.

The sun lasted about as long as our chance of winning.

After 7 overs they were 77 for 1, with their best batsman racing towards a well-earned 50. Light rain began. Despite a round of Pointless Clapping, BAS spirits sank a tad.

Then Ricky decided to bounce a few at their lidded batsmen, taking 3 for 27. Despite dislocating a finger in the third over, Nick held a neat catch for one of these (big prize for guts). Wicketkeeper Mike lost a lens from his glasses, making him an ideal umpire later. Tom got a well-deserved wicket, and they collapsed to 137 at the close. Eminently beatable, for a team of our quality, even in the gathering gloom.

We began in style. Freddy clipped three to the boundary in the first over. Playing a low-key defensive game reminiscent of Boycott, Ricky added 25, including his characteristic "Lost Ball" shot for 6. After 6 overs we were ahead of the run rate, and motoring to victory.

Then Murray started bowling, and I draw a veil over the fate of our Middle Order. Shane played well for 15, Sudipta whacked a couple, but we ended on 92 for 8 (a higher score than last year).

June 10 v John Lewis

Girton on a sunny Tuesday night is the place to be.

John Lewis employ 350 men, of whom the eleven best cricketers came to challenge our nine on 10 June.

We won the toss, and wisely decided to bowl at them.

Six tight overs from Shane and Freddy kept them below 6 an over, and when fielding Shane made his bid for the Champagne Trophy with a sensational run out from distance, sending the middle stump cartwheeling with the batsman astonished. Andrew and Tom were effective as first change bowlers, and John Lewis began to look desperate as wickets tumbled. A friendly black dog wandered onto the pitch (JL had promised us an extra fielder, and I thought this was it: but the dog was more interested in sniffing leg than in being at fine leg.).

Mike kept wicket in such agile fashion that he may never walk again. Our fielding concentration stayed high, with good catching, and their innings ended with a smart last ball wicket by Shane: 94 for 8, on a near-perfect track, so eminently beatable. Their highest scorer was Mr Edward Xtras (35).

In came BAS, our two umpires resplendent in their new white coats. Shane missed a nasty low swinger, early on, but after that Tom and Freddy (56 not out at the close) made it look easy, even though John Lewis lived up to their motto "Never knowingly

underbowled". Before you could say "sold" we had knocked off the runs for just two wickets, with three overs in hand. Definitely a Triumph (not a Mazda). Top honours to Shane and Freddy (BAS average now 78), but everyone did their bit.

June 17 v Bar Hill

Bar Hill played the ungentlemanly trick of bringing a Real Batsman to open for them. He played even decent bowling, and lofted one 6 over (yes over) the pavilion. The second best shot of the match (see below).

When we finally nailed him, in his seventies (score not age), it looked hopeless. But tight bowling and fielding then restricted their run rate, and Samir in particular excelled, with three good wickets. 160 odd, on a perfect track and in sunshine, did not look unbeatable.

We tried hard with the bat, and had some bad luck. Ian in particular, who got a ball in the face off the shoulder of his bat, just when he was settling in for a century. Ricky smashed a couple and then went for silky finesse, with a beautiful reverse sweep for 4. A candidate for the Champagne Moment. But we were always behind the run rate, and though we had wickets in hand we only just topped 100 at the close.

Better luck next time! This was an enjoyable game played in a friendly spirit, with plenty of humour. Bar Hill are a classy team, and losing to them was no disgrace.

June 25 v Dobblers

A win!

In more detail:

Parker's Piece was laid out before us in all its glory - an even track, firm wicket, clear out field and crowds milling in anticipation. And then reality struck as a couple of overseas students jogged in oblivion, lads with tinnies wobbled around the stumps and the ground cut up even before the first ball was bowled.

In such adversity are victories crafted. The young ringers of Luke and Freddie opened, took wickets between them and kept the score down to 20 or so off 6 overs. What they made the ball do was remarkable, kicking up, staying low - you name it. Tom and Shane followed, Tom making the ball move in ways not known and Shane allowing the oppo a few runs to keep their spirits up. Ian took over the pads from Ricky who then made a critical breakthrough with his first ball. Noticeably slowing from the second ball onwards momentum still prevailed and two more wickets followed. Tom added 2 in succession but missed a ha-trick and Dobblers were all out for 76 - as fine a display in the field as seen for a couple of seasons.

Youngsters then opened - with Tom and Luke commencing at Test pace to make the most of the evening out of school. Luke carried his bat for 30 (ish), Tom added 12 in a partnership nearing 40. In came Ricky - 4, 6 out. Shane followed and caught a wicked low one, as did Ian - helmeted and therefore impeded after the events of last week (or no doubt he would have stopped the loss of middle stump) - so Freddie came in to add a straight bat to proceedings enabling the runs to be knocked off with overs to spare.

All round excellent performance with notable contributions from Andrew, Samir and Sudipta in the field, some spectacular diving by Philip - generally once the ball had gone, and some adept fielding by Jon once he had spotted the ball against the darkened sky.

July 15 – v Histon

"As I drove up that so familiar drive, in beautiful evening sun, I gazed at the old Chapel and wondered what God might have in store.

On the ground, I was greeted by a remembered voice. My Father? My Confessor? No, the Captain himself, a Vision in white, arisen for the contest.

We began. The opponents, despite being mere yokels from Cherry Hinton (a remote village), accumulated runs steadily, at 8 an over. Cunningly, they deployed a succession of Lefthanders to tire our fielders. But the bowling stayed mainly tight, with a wicket each to Freddie and Nick. The Captain, as expected, delivered another wicket. Then the Mystery Man from Australia (a far off country) bamboozled two yokels with fiendish spin, and their scoring rate dropped. 130 for 5 at the end of their innings, with Mr E X Tras joint top scorer.

Our first over was a triumph: 10 without loss. But then we slowed, though Freddie and Tom looked solid enough until Tom was run out despite a spectacular dive. Mike and Nick both failed to trouble the scorer, but the Captain steadied the ship by starting with 9 dot balls (less than his usual ration). Suitably encouraged, Andrew began batting like James Anderson at Trent Bridge, whacking five to the boundary for a quick 30. His father and Philip saw us home for 94-5, a fair way short but not disgraceful. Personally I blame Mr E X Tras for failing to provide sufficiently.

Then the great orb of the setting sun threw our creased faces into shadow, and we were left to contemplate eternity. We shall meet again: of that, I am sure.

E Waugh Esq"

July 22 – v MCC

"The joint was hot. Molls and babes round the edge: that kind of joint. I needed a drink. Badly.

The other guys were big, and mean. They wanted to win. But so did I.

It started swell. Third ball: great return catch by Freddie. They were sweating. So was I.

They were in a jam, and couldn't hit their way out of it. Our team were stopping everything which moved. Mike Safehands was like a panther behind the woodwork. The only thing we dropped was our sweat.

Four an over ain't good enough. They cringed. I smiled.

Two screamers from Big Ricky, two beauties from Tom "Fingers" Dunn. Another wicket for Freddie, and one for Deadeye Dick. Seven men dead. No way back for them. No way, Jose.

They just ran out of road.

85 is a losing hand, pal. They knew it. So did I.

The rest is easy to tell. Freddie and Fingers started strong, real strong. "Big Willy" tried rattling their cage. No dice for him! 12 from Freddie, and 33 from Tom with four belters in one over. Big Ricky looked set to wreck the joint, with 10 off two balls, till the Sheriff called time on him. 11 each for Deadeye and Shane. But it was left to Philip to seal the deal. A mean single for him. Myself, I prefer doubles.

We had 87 for 5.

87 is a winning hand, pal. I knew that all along. Now they did too.

You know what I say about winning. It's better than losing.
Time for that drink." *Humphrey Bogart*



The winning team

July 28 – v Champ (ion of the Thames)

“How ironic that my beloved colleague Ricky should have missed this match, the only one with food attached. And what food! But I must first mention the cricket.

A culinary theme seemed to run through the whole evening, with menu choices as important as shot choices. Even the name of our opponents, CHAMP, suggested busy jaws!

A sun-kissed evening on the Fitzwilliam ground. A contrived toss (of coin, not frying pan or hair) let them bat first.

Despite lively bowling on a good track from Freddie and Nick, their opening pair ticked along comfortably at a run a ball, although they did fish at one or two outside off stump. After Shane got the first breakthrough with a fiendish long hop, our spirits were dampened by the quality of their Number Three, whose cuts were as fine as those of my Kensington butcher.

Tom's off spin was tidy, the fielding was sharp, Dick reminded us how to catch, and we were denied a plausible run out (direct hits have been a surprise feature of this season). By now the saucissons were starting to flambé, as the Spinner from Down

Under turned his arm over to good effect. CHAMP finished on 127. Could BAS match it?

The kebabs were ready for grilling, and so were our opening pair.

An expectant hush. Freddie clouted the first ball off the meat of his bat towards square leg, and grinned at the certain boundary. But No! The CHAMP fielder leapt up like a salmon in my Scottish river, and pouched the ball with one hand: a bit like my beloved husband's technique with cheques. You could have heard a hairpin drop, and the fielder was as astonished as Freddie. After that all our batsmen made some runs, against accurate bowling. But we were too slow, and after ten overs the required run rate looked as unattainable as a perfect Baked Alaska.

The ribs were now sizzling in lemon juice: the subtle aroma, with a suggestion of paprika and just a hint of jockstrap, seemed to incentivise the CHAMP bowlers (and our umpires).

And so to the last over. A comedy runout on the penultimate ball, with the score at 97. In strode Robert, hungry for that last ball boundary which would get us to three figures and (more important) triple his League aggregate for the season. But No! He was sent into exile as the non-striker, and could only watch as Shane committed middle stump suicide rightly trying to hit the ball halfway to Huntingdon.

We had all earned our barbecue, details of which will be in my forthcoming book, *Nigella's Cricketing Recipes.*" *Nigella Lawson*