



ECB Yorkshire South Premier League

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Chairman's blog – 16 May

Last Wednesday, we had our tenth league committee meeting. The agenda included a wide range of matters, including finances, scoring arrangements, disciplinary issues, the cup competitions and ground reports.

We have a good mix on our committee; we do not always agree, but we have a good discussion, reach a decision and take it from there. I always think that informed debate is healthy – one thing I learned from managing teams in the civil service is that strong teams utilise the knowledge and experience of all their



Neil Longhurst bowls to Tom Knight

members. Unfortunately, I came across several managers who always had to have things their own way – then the whole team is only as strong – or weak – as they are.

It was a sad week. A former director and chairman of Hull KR, Max Gold, who was a fellow member of the club's Heritage Committee and had been most helpful to me when I wrote the club's history, passed away during heart surgery on Wednesday night. Whilst attending his funeral on Friday, I reflected that it is such a pity that we often learn more about a person's life when they are no longer with us than we knew when they were alive. What I knew was that he was a lovely, kind, generous and knowledgeable man, whose anecdotes I could listen to all night.

I only had one real ale 'session' last week – and that consisted of four pints of Abbeydale *Deception* with my son and a friend on Friday night. I am sure this relative abstemiousness will please some readers who I think have become a little concerned about my lifestyle. Rest assured that I take a three-mile walk most mornings, eat very healthily, and have at least two alcohol free days a week. I have made a commitment to buy my seven-month old grand-daughter a drink on her 18th birthday and will do my best to keep it – (it may also happen before that, but that is between us).

On arrival at Wickersley on Saturday, the first person I saw was my old friend Brian Whitehead. Brian and I umpired together in the old Yorkshire League for several years – we shared many interesting on field experiences and over the following couple of hours I think we covered them all. Brian is a diehard Wednesday man, and was looking forward to the play-off tie at Huddersfield in that fatalistic sort of way that is common to real football supporters. I imagine he would be happier with the 0-0 draw than the home fans were.

We were a little later arriving at the game than usual, but we got there in time to see Greg Batty and Rich Wilkinson inject some impetus into the latter stages of the Whitley Hall innings. Rich told me that the pitch hadn't been easy earlier on, and he thought that 239 was a good score. In the home side's reply, Mark Cummins and Tom Knight added 85 for Wickersley's second wicket, but after they departed in quick succession, the innings fell away against the bowling of Wilkinson and Callum Bethel, and Whitley Hall retained their 100% league start.

During the second innings I had a long chat with Andy Harrison, who had been unable to get to our committee meeting on Wednesday night. I filled him in on our discussions, and we talked about the general way the league is



Rich Wilkinson bowls, Mark Cummins is the non-striker, and Carl Williams the umpire

going. We agreed on most things, but I know Andy well enough by now to know that he would not hesitate to tell me if he did not agree with me. Exactly as it should be.

By the end it was getting rather chilly and Kirsty and I went into the pavilion to warm up. I was pleased to see the array of real ales (I settled on Chantry *Full Moon* – as at Treeton last week) and Andy told me that the club had won CAMRA awards.

We stopped for a chat with umpires Ian Dixon and Carl Williams. Ian, of course, is an old friend that I stood with many times in the Yorkshire League – and was one of the best colleagues I had. He is almost a

full time umpire nowadays – having spent the winter in Abu Dhabi, where, of course, he stood in our Premier Leagues Championship final last October. He is now an ICC official, and stood in a recent England v Ireland womens' international.

I had a brief word with some of the Whitley Hall lads, including Andy Tipple, a top man and top scorer, and skipper Alex Fletcher, who I asked to be on our disciplinary working group. After that, we made our way home. We were delayed by over an hour and a half on the M18 by an accident, but at least we got home and had our glass of wine – I fear others did not.

I shall be unable to get to a game on the next two Saturdays. Next week's blog will be in the hands of Steve Ward, who cannot wait for the opportunity to get his revenge for perceived slights he has suffered in previous blogs. I hope to be at what promises to be a cracking game at Abbeydale on Monday 29th May where our current top two clubs come face-to-face, and I will be back with the blog after that.

Finally, our esteemed results secretary, Kevin Motley, has just been released from hospital following an infection – I am sure I speak for all of us when I wish him a speedy recovery. Get well soon Kev – you are missed!

See you in a fortnight,

Roger