



ECB Yorkshire South Premier League

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Chairman's blog – 6 June

After a most interesting Heritage night at Hull KR last Wednesday – with some great stories from a club legend and interesting comparisons between the 'old days' and the modern game – I spent most of Thursday pulling together our newsletter and, more to the point, the statistics in it. Even then I made a bit of a cobbler because it never occurred to me that a bowler who had not 'qualified' for the top averages could have taken a five-wicket haul, and thus I missed three of the best performances. I have apologised and promised that I will do better next time! It should get easier!



Ali Jahangir bowls to Paul Fenn at the end of the Treeton innings

Saturday dawned bright and sunny, and we set off for Barnsley fortified by another of Kirsty's excellent kedgerees. I was dropped off at the ground, equipped with camera and sandwiches, and Kirsty went to her sister's. By the time I arrived, visiting skipper Chris Cobb (82) was well into his stride on his way to 82. At the other end, after the departure of Steve Foster, only Greg Norton could give the innings any real impetus, whilst Jahangir finished with the important wickets of Cobb, Foster, Sam Drury and Norton. A target of 208 was challenging for a Barnsley side that has not batted convincingly this season, but after the early departure of the elder Jahangir, Haider, on his Barnsley debut, David Hunt and Harpreet Singh Bhatia put on 97 to put the home side on top. But after Harpreet departed for 54 off 52 balls, wickets started to fall with some regularity until Barnsley needed 40 with just three wickets left. By this point, Barnsley cricket manager Mark Beardshall, unable to watch the proceedings, was walking round the ground at a rate of nearly one lap per over. In the end, some sensible batting by Jahangir, Danny Waldron and Oliver Jackson saw the home side home by two wickets in the penultimate over. It had been great watching for the neutrals at any rate!

For me, one of the most enjoyable facets of going to our games is catching up with people and hearing their thoughts on the league, life in general – and, in some cases, rugby league. I had most interesting chats with Barnsley secretary and stand-in scorer Keith Hampshire, SYSC stalwart David Ward, Treeton chairman Keith Haynes and Barnsley skipper Jason Booth. After the game, I had a pint with umpires Nick Oddy and Dave Robinson before Mark took me down to see the Woolley ground for the first time – and to partake of a couple more beers of course. Our journey took us through a labyrinth of back roads – I would have absolutely no chance of finding my way again. But I was very impressed with what I saw when I arrived. The Woolley ground looked lovely in the evening sunshine – it may need a bit doing, but it definitely has potential. There was quite a lively atmosphere in the clubhouse – a lot of the noise emanating from Oliver Jackson it has to be said. When Kirsty came to pick me up shortly after 8.30, it had been a most enjoyable day – which was not even spoiled by an elongated return journey due to diversions.

Looking at Saturday's league results in general, there were four very close games, which I think underlines the strength and competitiveness of our league. Appleby Frodingham were involved in a tie for the second year running, this time with joint-leaders Whitley Hall – a game that I suspect both sides will feel they should have won. Sheffield Collegiate are now eight points clear, after snatching a one-wicket win over Tickhill in a game that seemed lost.



Jahangir drives off Waheed as Barnsley edge towards victory

On Sunday my son Gavin brought his eight-month old daughter Millie for tea. After our Thai green curry, we played with variety of toys, most of which ended up in her mouth, until she became tired and seemed to miss her mummy, who was away celebrating her own mother's 60th. It certainly was not a cricket-free day though, and after doing the results bulletin first thing, I had an update from Steve Ward, who was making his way to Abbeydale, before Rob Richtering rang for my thoughts on a Rudgate Brewery cup tie cancellation. I also took the opportunity of discussing a couple of Management Board

issues with him. In the afternoon, I kept up-to-date with the scores on TCS, keeping an eye too on Rovers' fluctuating fortunes at Featherstone. After last season's poor showing against Yorkshire League North sides, I was very pleased to see Wickersley make short work of Scarborough, but I felt for Thornes, who undeservedly lost to the Academy.

Yesterday, I went to Rovers ground, KCOM Craven Park, to pick up half a dozen old priceless old volumes – meeting minute books and match record books stretching back to the 1930s. These had been discovered in a drawer whilst some of the staff were spring cleaning. It is such a shame that more care is not taken of such valuable historical items – but I know that Rovers are far from alone in that. I just hope that they will find some companion volumes elsewhere! One of the books is the largest I have ever had in my possession – covering all the matches played by the club from 1932 to 1953. No doubt I'll be thought sad, but they will keep me occupied for a long time!

Tomorrow evening, Chris Froggett, Paul McFarlane and I are hearing a complaint about the cancellation of a game on behalf of the York & District league, and on Thursday I am going to Newcastle. I admit that this is a real ale trip but it is a lot more than that. Along with Gavin and one of my closest friends, I am going to see an old drinking pal who has just been diagnosed with a progressive degenerative illness. It will be a bittersweet occasion, but he is taking the approach that he must get as many of these sessions in as he can whilst he is still able to. I think that is not a bad attitude towards life in general, and his illness is a salutary reminder that none of us knows what is round the corner. But before I can venture to the north-east, there is another newsletter to do !

The past week has been punctuated by emails from Northern General Hospital in Sheffield. Our results secretary, Kevin Motley, may be taking a 'sabbatical' whilst he recovers from his illness – but that has not stopped him keeping a close eye on what we are doing, pointing out my errors, and making helpful (!) suggestions. None of this detracts from my genuinely wishing him a very speedy recovery, and passing on the good wishes of his friends in the Yorkshire South Premier League! The last I heard from him, yesterday, is that the doctors are pleased with his progress, and he is hoping to come home tomorrow.

Next Saturday, I plan to be at Bawtry Road for the game between Sheffield & Phoenix and Tickhill – weather permitting of course!

Till next week,

Roger