



ECB Yorkshire South Premier League

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Chairman's blog – 13 June

I made my trip to Newcastle on Thursday with a clear conscience after completing the newsletter the day before. We had a great day after a dodgy start, when it looked as if we'd miss our train due to the ridiculous rush hour traffic.

Our first port of call was *Red's True Barbeque* for a spot of lunch. Our taxi driver knew a lot about Newcastle United but had no idea where the restaurant was – but at least we ended up nearer to our destination than where we started! *Red's* is always well worth the visit and it was on form. We then visited two of the city's top real ale houses

but the beer was no more than ok. That is sometimes a problem with real ale – the market is flooded with many brews of varied quality that are not always kept as well as they might be. But when you find some good stuff !!

The best thing that could be said about the weather on Saturday was that it was better than the day before – and the improvement was too late to save two of our games, with two of the top three sitting it out. After a substantial breakfast we drove across to Barnsley, visited Kirsty's sister's family, and then made our way down to Bawtry Road. The first innings of a shortened, 40-over, game was drawing to a conclusion and Tickhill posted a challenging 212-7, with David White's 88 leading the way. I had a long chat with Sheffield & Phoenix chairman Michael Heseltine, mainly about his plans for the forthcoming League t20 game at Bawtry Road against a Yorkshire XI on 4th July. I met the new Sheffield & Phoenix captain, Matthew Gouldstone, at tea and we were in the middle of a most interesting conversation about premier leagues when he had to make a swift departure to get padded up. It was most disappointing that the need for action curtailed our discussion.

Michael then showed me inside the old pavilion. It could do with a coat of paint in places, but it is largely as I remember it when I last umpired on the ground five years ago. It is a great shame that it cannot be fully opened up for the use of the cricket club for use for teas and a drink after the match – particularly as the university seem not prepared to keep the bar in the main building open after 6pm.

We then walked round the ground and met Tickhill team manager Mick Ford, with whom we had a long chat about both the current season and seasons past. The conversation was brighter than the weather, which remained stubbornly damp and overcast. Mick was telling me of the club's plans for the League t20 tournament the following day – they were clearly determined to put on a good event.

On the field, Sheffield & Phoenix showed some spirit in their reply, but lost wickets too regularly to pose a real threat to Tickhill, who duly recorded their third league win of the season. Only Jacob Heseltine batted for any length of time for his 32. Mick was very pleased that young Tickhill slow left armer Josh Court took 4-20 on his return to first team action after injury.

After a very quick word with umpires Bob Cummins and Michael Linwood, I congratulated visiting skipper Ashley Fiddler on the win and said my goodbyes. Kirsty had retired to the car after her short photography stint and was



Usman Muzaffar bowls to Matthew Gouldstone during the Sheffield & Phoenix innings



'Three men at the match' – Michael Heseltine (left), Mick Ford (largely obscured) and myself

reading the papers out of the damp weather. It was my 'old farts' night in Beverley, so we got on our way, stopping on route to pick up one of the brethren. We had a good night, with the unexpected treat of Roosters *Scrambler* to wash down our pork pies – not to mention the entertainment of a small group of inebriated racegoers whose evening was abruptly terminated when one of their company collapsed across the table.

On Sunday morning I had just completed the results bulletin, shortly after 8.00am, when the news came through that Sheffield & Phoenix were unable to field a side in the t20 at Tickhill. I won't go into the ramifications of that now because the committee will deliberate in full at our next committee meeting – but for the next hour and a quarter I was on the phone to the other clubs in the group, as well as to Steve Ward and Duncan Jones, one of the umpires for the day, in an attempt to reorganise the schedule and ensure that the three remaining teams had the best opportunity to play cricket. In the end we settled on a 15 overs per side 'round robin' tournament, and I can only thank Duncan and all those involved at Aston Hall, Hallam and Tickhill for their co-operation and flexibility. The saying that strength comes from adversity comes to mind – in running a cricket league not everything will ever go smoothly, but it is hugely encouraging that we have so many good people who are prepared to go out of their way for the good of the game.

Yesterday there were email discussions with committee members about the fall-out from the t20 issue and correspondence about a disciplinary issue to deal with. We may not always agree, but I reflected again that we have a very good committee with the range of views and experience that is vital in running the league.

The disciplinary issue I mentioned is now largely resolved, thanks to the co-operation of the club concerned, but I understand that there is another in the pipeline. Almost without exception, the clubs have been very co-operative in taking the action that we have recommended – with occasional comments about similar incidents taking place and not being reported. This is a real concern to me – some of our umpires do their jobs very conscientiously, but a few simply accept an apology or 'turn a blind eye,' which invariably results in feelings of unfairness and resentment.

I shall hopefully get the newsletter done tomorrow so that I can get on with a very long editing task that I keep putting off! The league is hotting up now with Whitley Hall going four points clear at the top after Sheffield Collegiate's wash-out, and Wakefield Thornes now only eight points behind the leaders. At the other end of the table, it is looking increasingly difficult for Sheffield & Phoenix at the bottom, but above them only eight points separate the next five clubs.

I have only one small real ale excursion planned this week – a short trip into town to the *Lion & Key* – who brew some interesting beers of their own, so fingers crossed! They also serve a rather fine haddock

Matt Summerhill has been in contact to ask me if I'd like to do the t20 semi-final draw when I'm next out and about. This is well-timed, because on Saturday I plan to visit Aston Hall, where the visitors are Appleby Frodingham – by coincidence two of the semi-finalists. So we shall do the draw in the clubhouse after the game. I understand that the weather may favour us, so I shall very much look forward to my visit to Green Lane.

Till next week!

Roger