

ECB Yorkshire South Premier League

Chairman's blog – 15 May 2018

I am currently fitting my various cricket, rugby league and household duties in between invigilation in the summer exams at Hull University. If, like me, you enjoy people watching and observing human nature, it is interesting work. The vast majority of the students arrive, get their heads down and write feverishly away – it is, as ever, the small minority who ensure that the job is not dull.

Last Friday, one rather idiosyncratically-dressed young man raised his hand and, in broken English, asked me if he could phone his lecturer. I wondered if he had been watching *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. Needless to say, he was disappointed.

On Saturday, after the magnificent kedgeree, Kirsty and I ventured forth for our first match-day visit to Whiston. I had heard that the club were hoping to be well supported as they welcomed Premier League cricket for the first time – and they certainly were on Saturday. I have been to county championship matches with fewer people in attendance. The ground was looking in fine fettle and a bit of sunshine always helps!

When we arrived, visitors Aston Hall were about 150-5 with 13 overs to go. It was Pakistani international batsman Awais Zia who applied the acceleration in the later stages, and his 118 off 99 balls saw the visitors to a challenging total of 232. After the early departure of Andrew Tomlinson, Gareth Davis was joined by Zia's fellow countryman Sajid Khan, and these two put on 133 in good time to lay the platform for Whiston's five-wicket win. Sajid Khan fell just two short of what would have been a deserved century when he was run out by a direct hit from Awais Zia – who else? A quick flurry from skipper Danny Kemp, and Whiston were home by five wickets.

During the game, I enjoyed a couple of chats with visiting chairman Graeme Simmonite (but I didn't make the mistake of getting into a round with him!), and his Whiston counterpart Pete Walker. His club have made a great start to their life in the YSPL, and they are clearly enjoying themselves. Aside from the cold that spoiled the after-tea session, it was a very enjoyable day and we were made to feel very welcome.

Unfortunately, it did not end so well, however. When we got home Kirsty and I had a bottle of wine and watched a couple of episodes of *Bosch* (I recommend!) – after which I promptly fell asleep. What I saw when I awoke could scar a man for life. I have not seen the *Eurovision Song Contest* for probably fifty years – I won't be around for another fifty, but I promise you I shall never see it again. I had a lot of trouble getting off to sleep again after that.



Gareth Davis on strike in his partnership of 133 with Sajid Khan at Whiston



Sajid Khan drives, with Josh Marsh behind the stumps

I prepared the first league table of the season and the results bulletin on Sunday morning, and saw that Whiston were sitting proudly joint top with Sheffield Collegiate and Whitley Hall, and champions Thornes just two points behind. It may be very early days, but it is always good to get points on the board quickly.

Later that day, it was fellow newly-promoted club Doncaster Town who took the headlines with a comprehensive nine-wicket National KO win over Bradford League champions, Hanging Heaton.

“It wasn’t just a very good win,” Ray Knowles told me later, “it was a very good performance indeed.”

It was back to the University on Monday, where we have a very busy week of exams. This weekend, my plans are a little up in the air. Kirsty would like to watch the royal wedding so we will not be making the trip across to South Yorkshire or North Lincolnshire. I will probably take the opportunity of popping to see a couple of local games where I hope to meet one or two old friends from my earlier umpiring days. Yes, I do have just one or two – mainly batsmen!

Till next week,

Roger