

ECB Yorkshire South Premier League

Chairman's blog – 29 May 2018

My final week on exam duty ended on Thursday night, and on Friday I caught up with a few jobs at home before driving to York to pick up Kirsty, who had been away working for three days in Manchester and Newcastle. The trip back to Hull from Newcastle is always a pain – the rail link between York and Hull is poor to say the least – and I was able to save her at least an hour's travelling.

After a quick tea, I then went down to Craven Park to watch Rovers v Wigan. I had absolutely no expectation other than a convincing defeat – so I was delighted with what I saw. In my opinion the best performance in over two years, and a very convincing and deserved win. There were only two negatives – there have to be some, this is rugby league! First, why can't they do it more often? Second, why does this particular referee insist on stopping the clock so much!? This was exacerbated by an over-zealous landlady calling time at bang on 11pm, and in consequence I drank too quickly and had a headache nearly all of Saturday. We can go to another pub next time – the referee is harder to mitigate against.

On Saturday, I went to Gavin's to do the decorating I had promised. I can't wallpaper but I can paint – and I like the fact that you can immediately see the fruits of your labours. After that I helped Kirsty with our curry and had a couple more beers whilst watching the *Bridge* – at a more leisurely pace this time!

I got a message in the evening from Dave Sharp to tell me that his colleague, Jonathan Crabtree, had been taken ill just after tea at Whitley Hall, and was taken to hospital by ambulance. Dave was very complimentary about the way that Whitley Hall members, in particular Mark Myers, had looked after Jonathan. We know now that Jonathan has had a successful operation to remove his appendix, and is doing well. I am sure that everyone will join me in wishing him all the best for a full and speedy recovery.

We travelled across to Barnsley on Sunday lunchtime for Kirsty's nephew's first birthday party, and stopped over for the game at Hallam on Monday. After lunch at Cannon Hall, Kirsty, her father, and I travelled down to Sandygate on another lovely warm day.

Having looked at live scores and seen that Whitley Hall had been 0-3 after the first over, I thought we might have missed all the excitement for the day. But Chris Siddall held the innings together with a well-crafted unbeaten century, and received excellent support from Danial Rafiq and skipper Greig Batty, so that the visitors posted a very competitive 234-8. Although both openers were out by the time Hallam had reached 52, Harry Bliss continued the fine form that he had shown at Cleethorpes on Saturday, and Aditya Edekar gradually found his own form and



Chris Siddall hits out during his unbeaten 108 at Sandygate



Hallam's Aditya Edekar during his match-winning innings of 93

comfortably passed his previous League highest score of 33. By the time he was out for 93, the home side were just 15 runs short of victory with five overs left.

It was Hallam's second league win of the season, and lifted them into joint sixth place – albeit that there are only eight points between sixth and tenth – and will give them increased confidence. Whitley Hall have a very talented squad – their difficulty is around getting them all on the field at the same time.

It is significant that the two leading teams, Sheffield Collegiate and Wakefield

Thornes, have both been able to field settled sides thus far. Eight points behind Thornes now are Wickersley, who have now put three successive wins together.

During the game, I was able to have a good chat with Richard Storer, who updated me on the happenings at Sandygate. Richard is a tireless worker for the game, not only for his club, but for junior cricket. Successful cricket clubs depend on people like him, and it is no surprise that Hallam more than meet the ECB priority areas like All Starts and Womens' Cricket. Mrs Storer was also at the game, and I wondered whether that was so that she could actually get to see Richard.

After the game, Kirsty, Stuart and I stopped for a drink in the lovely evening sunshine. As I said at the time, it is looking forward to such evenings that keeps me going through the dark and cold winters. We were joined by the umpires, Mick Mann and Simon Widdup, so our conversation inevitably turned to umpiring matters, and there was a little good-natured humour at the expense of one of my former colleagues. I could imagine him grinning if he had been able to overhear our conversation. This was the third time I have seen Mick in action this season, so I must choose my matches a bit more carefully from now on!

We stopped over in Barnsley again, so I was back in time to do the results bulletin, whilst partaking of a light evening meal of beer and sandwiches – it is a splendid combination that has kept the country going in years gone by. I returned to Hull this morning and have been working on my editing job today – I shall finish off in the morning before going down to Craven Park to give a talk to the Heritage Group in the evening. On Thursday, I will be back in York to visit my old drinking pal who is poorly, and on Friday there is another game at Craven Park – this time against Castleford. Another enemy will loom on the horizon this time too – optimism.

On Saturday, I shall be at a game as usual – although at this stage my destination will depend on where I need to be in the morning, not to mention where Mick Mann is umpiring.

Till next week,

Roger