

ECB Yorkshire South Premier League

Chairman's blog – 3 July 2018

It has been a very busy few days of cricket for our league, and thankfully the excellent weather continues.

On Saturday, I dropped Kirsty off in Wakefield to join her sister's hen party, and made my way down to *Shaw's* excellent fish shop in Dodworth to purchase a large haddock, chips and peas, which I took down to Shaw Lane to eat in the sunshine whilst watching the early overs of the game with Wakefield Thornes.

Fish and chips, beautiful sunshine and cricket – what more could a man want? A pint of Barnsley Bitter perhaps? As it turned out I got the company of Jason Booth – only marginally inferior it must be said. As I watched, Jon Trower and Boeta Beukes made a good steady start against the seamers, before Qaiser Ashraf and Steve Morgan made inroads into the Barnsley batting – some of the damage being very much self-inflicted.

After a few words with Mark Beardshall and Chris Froggett, I made my way to my intended destination of Northfield Lane, where the home side's innings had subsided somewhat from a very promising 91-1 in 15 overs, and I watched it conclude at 174 all out.

I chatted with the home side's chairman, groundsman, refreshments manager and glass-collector, Andy Harrison, whilst he attended to the pitch at the break. The long wet spell before the season, followed by the long dry spell, has caused problems for all our groundsmen. Andy is very proud of his playing surface, and is scratching his head a bit about how to deal with the hard, dry square – it is a problem shared by most of his colleagues, manifested by the comparatively low scores we are seeing in most games.

I referred to Andy's many roles in a semi-frivolous way, but so many cricket clubs depend on a few volunteers to do all the work – and the concern is what happens when those people are no longer able to fulfil all these roles – or simply get fed up of doing so. A couple of days later, a member of another club agreed with this point, and then said, "that is one thing our chairman is good at – delegating!" But you can only delegate if there are people you can delegate to, and we need to encourage more younger blood, like James Ward at Doncaster.

I watched the Whiston innings until the result was beyond doubt, before returning to meet Kirsty's dad, Stuart, at Barnsley. Gareth Davis by that time had all but seen his side home with an innings of 66 that mixed careful defence with a willingness to punish the bad ball. It is the second time I have watched Gareth this season, and he has scored 105 runs in the two games, so I am sure that he will welcome my presence in the future – unlike Andy, who has told me not to go to see Wickersley again.

By the time I reached Shaw Lane, Barnsley were on the brink of a second consecutive home win over Wakefield Thornes, and Chris Froggett freely admitted that his side 'were second best on the day.' I spoke to Mark Beardshall and Chris Marples about covering drop-outs from the League side for Monday's game. It is unavoidable that work and



Gareth Davis applies himself to the task in hand



Cleethorpes again did a magnificent job of hosting our t20 finals day

injuries sometimes prevent players from playing, but for me the positive is that invariably the players affected want to play and are genuinely disappointed about not being able to play.

On Sunday, Kirsty and I were at Cleethorpes for the League t20 finals. Once again, I thank Bob Leafe and his committee for putting on a great day. It was Armed Forces weekend in Cleethorpes and hundreds of cars were parked on the ground and adjoining school field, but that did not spoil the proceedings at all. The weather certainly helped, and the brilliant display by the Red Arrows entertained us during an extended tea interval – they

certainly have some pull at Chichester Road! Thanks also go to our match manager and MC, Dave Sharp, who presided over proceedings in his own unique way.

My congratulations go to Hallam who were very worthy winners on the day. Their success is based on teamwork and top class fielding, and the unbeaten 103 in 43 balls by Harry Bliss in the final was worth the journey to Lincolnshire on its own. As Tickhill's Mick Ford said to me, "you can accept defeat by an innings like that."

Monday saw the League t20 game against a Yorkshire Vikings XI. We had been told that the YCCC team would comprise a mixture of 1st and 2nd XI players, and had picked a side accordingly. In the event, the Vikings team was mainly a second XI, and our team recorded a convincing win. Our side looked good in the field, and tidy bowling spells from Qaiser Ashraf, Vusi Sibanda and Ali Jahangir helped restrict the Vikings to 165-8. After an explosive opening start, in which Tom Rowley led the way, the result was never in doubt, and Vusi's 80 not out, coupled with his bowling spell, made him my unofficial 'man-of-the-match.'

I am very pleased that we have got Chris Marples on board to help with our representative teams, and I am sure that his experience will prove invaluable, particularly with our under 23s side. My thanks to Richard Ibbotson and the Collegiate club, who made an excellent job of staging the event, Mark Pearson produced the best playing area that I have seen at Abbeydale in years, and the lovely weather ensured that we had an excellent crowd. I spent a while near the gazebo that housed the scorers and was able to listen to some of the repartee between Steve Ward and Carl Morton – as most of us know, Steve specialises in insults, but I think he met his match there.

I must also complement the gentleman on the barbeque, from whom I bought a burger, even though he initially forgot my bun. I'm not really into burgers – but I thought that it was excellent. I later washed it down with a very tasty pint and a half of Wickwar *Bob* – marketed as 'the connoisseur's session ale.' I'll drink to that!

On Tuesday, I caught up with my Rovers' work (the club's weekly stats and my programme article); started sorting and editing the 1,500 plus photos we had taken over the three days; and did some preparation for Wednesday's captains' meeting. I apologise for being a little bit behind in this work, hence the lateness of this blog – due mainly to Monday's game.

Till next week,

Roger



Vusi Sibanda in bowling action against the Yorkshire Vikings XI

