

London Erratics v Harpsden

A vintage Erratics side arrived to play a much more youthful home team. Perfect sunny day. The Erratics won the toss and elected to field.

With the Greens and Simon Davie not able to make the early start (theoretically 1 o'clock), James Rowland took up duties behind the stumps, and Harpsden kindly loaned a couple of young subs. Both Parag Prasad and Matthew Eltringham found good movement through the air, but some pulls through mid-wicket looked ominous — mercifully the next one was whacked straight to the smallest sub who held it with some nonchalance. The rather relieved Erratics got more hope when the other opener misread Matthew's flight. Parag was bowling too well not to be taking wickets, and got one to keep low; and Matthew earned another lbw. Four down already — and the Erratics now had a full complement, with Simon Green taking over the gloves (from the admirably competent Mr Rowland).

A rather lame, sprawling attempt at a run out by skipper James Rivington was mocked by his comrades; a couple of balls later, a running, full-length diving catch got a different response. The No. 3 sliced Matthew to Chris Dunabin at gully. And when Parag hit the stumps again, the pride of Harpsden's youth had slumped to 47 for 7, and there was a spring in the veterans' step.

Time for the skipper to rest the opening attack, but the next pair of bats (one big, one small) looked much more solid than anything seen so far, so he turned to Richard Heller — though he did bring himself on at the other end, which helped the score along. Richard was incredibly unlucky as the batsmen consolidated their partnership. Brian Berrigan's first ball went for four, the drinks break disrupted Richard's rhythm, the fifty partnership and the hundred were passed. Matthew made an unsuccessful return, and the Erratics had gone a bit quiet. Eventually Brian uprooted the opposition captain, and speedily despatched his replacement. Finally Chris had received the call, and he quickly got the 15-year-old semi-centurion chipping to mid-off, where James Rowland held on at the second attempt. A walk-over had turned into a very challenging game.

With lots of time available, the two Jameses began the Erratics innings with some circumspection. As small milestones were passed, their confidence grew, but Harpsden's adolescent leg- and off-spinners were proving a handful. The fifty was reached, and the team on the bench was starting to gesticulate. The pair managed a couple more half decent boundaries, and got out in quick succession. But surely they had built the platform? When the final twenty overs were signalled, the target was 87.

Alas, an out-of-form Brian, who had already survived a couple of chances, was out in the first over of the final session. However, Parag was looking in good touch, and a nice little partnership with Simon G brought up the hundred. Then Parag swung across a straight full toss.

This cheered the home team and might have been a major blow, but Simon G and Matthew attacked the bowling and kept up with the required rate. But a couple of tight overs added some pressure, and both batsmen were gone, flailing against the young ginger leggie.

Now all results were possible, as the later Erratics recklessly threw themselves into the fray. Simon D received a shocking call from Chris; Jonathan Green briefly played some lovely crisp shots. With 14 required off the last over, it needed some lusty blows from Bill Bush — but it wasn't to be this time. Nevertheless, a creaking team that had arrived with finely honed excuses, rather than finely honed bodies, had done itself proud in a most enjoyable match.

HARPSDEN — batting

1	lbw	b Eltringham	13
2	c sub	b Eltringham	10
3	c Dunabin	b Eltringham	10
4		b Prasad	6
5	lbw	b Eltringham	0
6	c Rivington	b Prasad	0
7		b Prasad	2
8		b Berrigan	36
9	c Rowland	b Dunabin	58
10		b Berrigan	4
11	not out		2

165 all out

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Prasad	8	1	18	3
Eltringham	9	1	38	4
Heller	7	1	26	0
Rivington	4	0	27	0
Berrigan	6	1	33	2
Dunabin	1.1	0	3	1

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

4s

* Rivington	caught	27	3
† Rowland	c & b	25	1
Prasad	lbw	25	3
Berrigan	caught	0	
† Green S	caught	26	3
Eltringham	caught	17	1
Davie	run out	6	1
Dunabin	NOT OUT	2	
Green J	caught	7	1
Bush	NOT OUT	2	
Heller			

155 for 8

Fall of wickets: 1(Rowland)—65, 2(Rivington)—68, 3(Berrigan)—82, 4(Prasad)—108, 5(GreenS)—138, 6(Eltringham)—143, 7(Davie)—144, 8(GreenJ)—150