

London Erratics v Inkpen

The Erratics arrived with nine players, but were fortunate to recruit Grant Lungley and his 9-year-old son Harry, who were having an informal net at the ground. A 35 overs format. The Erratics won the toss and elected to bat.

As usual at this venue, the wicket was green and interesting, the outfield long. Jim Head pulled a couple of boundaries, then bemoaned his continuing ill luck at this ground as he was caught at point. Albert Alla was promoted up the order to have a go at the early bowling: after a little time to work out the right shots (and the appropriate calling), he had the fielders running around – ably assisted by Richard Carver, until the latter tried to pull a ball that didn't get up.

Albert continued the good work until he was caught at deep mid-on. Alex Padmore would have hoped to pick up where he left off at Great Houghton, but received a yorker first ball. Apart from that, every partnership made a useful contribution: Matthew Eltringham and Grant, which brought up the hundred; then Matthew and Chris Dunabin. The conditions meant that this was again not going to be a high scoring game, and the Erratics weren't quite up to 4 an over: after 29 overs the score was 113, with Matthew on 33. One over later, the score was 133 and Matthew had his half century, thanks to a four, two sixes, and another four.

When Matthew chipped to square leg, Chris and James Rivington ran about a bit. Chris was caught, also at square leg, off the penultimate ball.

George Dabby proved far too much of a handful for the limited skills of the early Inkpen batsmen. In his third over, a plumb lbw was followed next ball by a lovely swinging delivery that bowled the batsman not playing a shot.

Jim was bowling well at the other end, but the No. 5 had a good eye and a good swing, and he was less respectful of Jim's subtleties. The circumstances were just right for a tight spell from Richard Heller but he couldn't find his rhythm. The local support, which had good-naturedly witnessed the opening collapse, now had something substantive to cheer: at 58 off 12, Inkpen were suddenly on course.

Skipper James now whistled up Alex to test the batsmen's technique. The remaining opener didn't seem too overawed, and the fact that he was a left-hander rather upset Alex's line (young Harry played a key role at long leg); but importantly, the right-hander was no longer throwing the bat. Albert's spin proved testing too, and the game now entered a prolonged stage of uneasy balance – marred by various missed chances. Between deliveries one could now only hear birdsong, indicating the tension felt by players and spectators alike.

Drinks were taken after 22 overs, an opportunity for both sides to huddle, with the score 87 for 3. Among the Erratics there was talk of changing things, particularly as Alex was unhappy with the end he was bowling at; the two batsmen were overheard to say that they were surviving but weren't pushing on. Second ball after the drinks, the No. 5 rashly swept at Albert and was gone. Instantly, skipper James brought back Jim and he obliged with a wicket; and Albert took another next over, tilting the game firmly in favour of the Erratics.

There was a little stand of 20 or so, but James and Matthew started tightly enough to keep up the pressure, and Matthew broke the partnership. This brought to the crease the man who scored 69 against the Erratics the year before: today he was struggling with a bad back, but he and the left-hander did what they could to dent the bowlers' figures. With 25 odd needed from the last two overs, James turned to Grant, who made himself unpopular locally by taking a wicket first ball. Nine-year-old Harry bashfully declined the final over, leaving it to Chris not to concede 21. The left-hander (their skipper) was finally run out, despairingly taking on Alex's arm for a second run – but with a very creditable half-century to his name.

JR

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

		4s	6s
Head	caught	11	2
Alla	caught	27	3
† Carver	bowled	8	
Eltringham	caught	55	5 2
Padmore	bowled	0	
Lungley G	caught	12	
Dunabin	caught	13	1
* Rivington	NOT OUT	5	
Dabby	NOT OUT	0	
Lungley H			
Heller			

158 for 7 in 35 overs

Fall of wickets: 1(Head)–16, 2(Carver)–49, 3(Alla)–69, 4(Padmore)–71, 5(LungleyG)–101, 6(Eltringham)–140, 7(Dunabin)–158

INKPEN — batting

1	b Dabby	1
2	run out	57
3	lbw	4
4	b Dabby	0
5	b Alla	38
6	b Head	0
7	b Alla	2
8	b Eltringham	15
9	b Lungley G	6
10	not out	3
11	not out	1

144 for 9 in 35 overs

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Dabby	7	1	18	3
Head	7	0	33	1
Heller	1	0	19	0
Padmore	5	0	14	0
Alla	7	0	18	2
Rivington	3	0	12	0
Eltringham	3	0	22	1
Lungley G	1	0	4	1
Dunabin	1	0	5	0

ERRATICS WON BY 14 RUNS