

London Erratics v Bank of England

Andrew Hosken having been heard on the *Today* programme covering the Karadzic story on Thursday morning, there was little chance of his escaping Sarajevo to reach Roehampton by Saturday. So nine Erratics gathered at the Bank of England ground, expecting to be loaned two Bankers freed by their supply of colts. Richards Down and Langley, both already in the Erratics statistics, were welcomed aboard. Unfortunately two of the Bank colts failed to arrive (there were elaborate stories about a mother who failed to convey a message to her son in the bath), and Richard L was transferred back after about half an hour of play. In the meantime, the Bank had won the toss and elected to field.

Nasir Khawaja and James Rivington cut loose straight away against two 15-year-old left-armers of fair pace but variable length. Nasir played wonderfully off his legs, while James scored steadily all round the wicket and added some sharp singles. They were interrupted by blasts of pop music from a sound system being tested for the Governor's Day celebration next day. The Bank wicketkeeper, a white-bearded veteran, shot off the pitch at the speed of an Indian dysentery victim; moments later the music stopped abruptly and the keeper returned, seething but triumphant.

Nasir's 50 and then the 100 partnership came at speed, now against the first change pair, and the record books were trembling before Richard L was introduced. After so long scoring at 7 an over, it was frustrating to be tied down to 1, and Nasir soon succumbed. John Butcher was stumped off a quirky leggie, and then Bill Bush, sent in while the bowling was suitable, declined a very ambitious call by James and nobly headed for the pavilion instead.

Around this time, the chance of a maiden century by James might have entered the declaration calculations, but Matthew Eltringham wrought such carnage that there would not have been enough runs to go round. As the Bank wilted in the humidity, skipper Peter Andrews instructed the batsmen that there would be two more overs. This evoked a pair of implausibly accented expletives from the Bank's 70-year-old. Matthew smashed 20 off the next over, passing 50 in the process, and the closure was applied an over early.

While most of us piled into the cream scones, George Dabby practised his run-up outside, and was rewarded by breaking a steady opening partnership. But this brought in a muscular 16-year-old, unaccountably omitted by the Bank 2nd XI. The ball (or rather balls – two were lost and we were left with a dog's breakfast) was soon flying to all parts – into Bank Lane, over the cottages at the entrance to the ground. Matthew's spell came and disappeared. Dan Beary, making a welcome return after several years in the US, had two difficult catches dropped off his slow left-armers but also proved expensive.

Fortunately Richard D bowled the youngster within sight of a century, while the youth at No. 4 attempted a suicidal run soon after. Tactics changed: a rate of 5+ an over was trivial for the early batsmen but difficult for the later ones. Richard and Brian exerted tight control, and induced a fatal error from the quirky leggie batting at 6. As the gnarled keeper joined what Wodehouse would have described as a brave but unrazored youth, the odds shifted in the Erratics' favour.

However, betting on the Erratics is usually a bad idea. The youth had just made his first 50 for Surrey U13s, and soon showed fine footwork, dancing down the track even to Brian, and driving and chipping the ball infuriatingly into places fielders had just left. The elderly keeper was not so convincing, but hobbled some singles as the Erratics tired. Despite various shuffles of bowlers and fielders, the youngster won the match with a couple of overs to go, just failing to reach 50. After the match, the Bank provided free beer, the recompense by their caterers for making a mess of tea the previous week, which soothed the pain of another defeat.

Endnotes. The partnership between Nasir and James (136) is the second highest opening stand in Erratics history. The Erratics total of 243 is their ninth largest.

Three years ago we played against two Bank colts in this match (a U15 and U14), both now playing in the Bank's 1st XI. One, then a pace bowler, made 70 on debut for Bucks a couple of weeks ago, the other, a diminutive leggie, is on a Laker spin bowling scholarship from Surrey. Two more for our collection of famous opponents.

PA

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

		4s	6s
† Khawaja	bowled	79	11
Rivington	NOT OUT	83	10
Butcher	stumped	4	1
Bush	run out	5	1
Eltringham	NOT OUT	54	10
Berrigan			
Dabby			
* Andrews			
Beary			
Down			

243 for 3 dec

Fall of wickets: 1(Khawaja)–136, 2(Butcher)–158, 3(Bush)–168

BANK OF ENGLAND — batting

1	b Down	30
2 c Bush	b Dabby	6
3	b Down	91
4 run out		32
5 not out		49
6 c & b	b Down	6
7 not out		12
8		
9		
10		

244 for 5

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Dabby	6	0	37	1
Berrigan	13	1	78	0
Down	13	1	63	3
Eltringham	3	0	33	0
Beary	2	0	33	0

Fall of wickets: 1–29, 2–72, 3–172, 4–179, 5–194

ERRATICS LOST BY 4 WICKETS