

London Erratics v Great Houghton

Match manager Nasir Khawaja recruited ten players (not including himself): the Erratics were grateful for the loan of Rob Hart by the home side. Great Houghton won the toss, and elected to bat.

Following the proven strategy of letting loan players loose on their chums as soon as possible, skipper James Rivington tossed the ball to Rob, and was rewarded with a wicket in the first over. At the other end, debutant David Rees produced some nice deliveries, but variations in length were punished. The home side romped past the fifty mark in an expensive 10th over. But in the first over from Balliol debutant James Douglas, sharp fielding by David at mid-wicket achieved the breakthrough; and shortly afterwards the new bat picked out Matthew Eltringham.

There now followed a cagey period of 10 overs. James D maintained good pressure, and Albert Alla's spin gave the batsmen much to think about, in particular the more inexperienced No. 5. Finally skipper James R introduced Brian Berrigan, to remove the tenacious ingénue – but in his second over he bowled the other more dangerous man.

Albert was continuing to perform well, with no justice. His team mates were therefore bemused at his surprise replacement by Jim Head: Jim repaid his skipper's gamble by hitting the stumps first ball. In the next over, Brian collected another scalp; and in the over after that, Jim grabbed another two (including the No. 5). This brought in at No. 10 a younger Hart brother, who had scored a century against the Erratics the year before. But he was unable to protect his tail-end partners, and in his next two overs, Jim wrapped things up – in both instances thanks to the quick hands of another Balliol debutant, Simon Thwaite.

At tea, skipper James R surveyed the awesome batting talent with which he had been blessed – and it was Jim and John Butcher who were invited to get the innings under way. The pair held their nerve well against a fiery display from the young Great Houghton pacemen, and steered runs where they could. The penultimate ball of the 9th over brushed Jim's arm and provoked wild excitement; a distracted Jim was bowled by a vicious yorker next ball. And John edged the first ball of the next over to first slip.

The solid start was undone, and the balance of the game swung instantly – with the attack now seeming to be unplayable. Two overs later, Matthew Neal departed; three overs after that, Matthew E (caught behind) and James R both surrendered; and two overs after that, James D fell to one of the change bowlers – 35 for 6, with all of the final 20 overs to be survived.

The task of restoring some order fell to antipodean duo, Simon and Brian. Both displayed gritty determination – and no great hurry. But just as they were reaching the half-way point on the path to salvation, Brian was caught off a shot that lacked conviction. This brought in local man Rob, swinging one of these new-fangled Mongoose bats with which he intended to demolish his colleagues' bowling: the fourth ball he faced went a long way.

The entertaining cameo of Rob's belligerence (offset by Simon's dourness) ended when both succumbed in the same over – leaving 4 overs to be faced by the final pair. But David and Albert are no slouches with the bat and neither looked to be in trouble – until a reckless David seemed to be extremely lucky to survive a run-out appeal in the final over. But the draw was greeted by the Great Houghton opponents with their normal good humour and grace. And the Erratics could thank the influx of new talent for this (overall) quite respectable performance.

GREAT HOUGHTON — batting

1	c Thwaite	b Hart R	4
2	run out		33
3		b Berrigan	43
4	c Eltringham	b Douglas	0
5	c Berrigan	b Head	26
6		b Head	3
7		b Berrigan	3
8		b Head	3
9	st Thwaite	b Head	0
10	not out		7
11	st Thwaite	b Head	2

147 all out

LONDON ERRATICS — bowling

Hart R	7	2	17	1
Rees	5	0	40	0
Douglas	6	2	12	1
Alla	8	3	22	0
Berrigan	7	1	35	2
Head	3.4	0	9	5

Fall of wickets: 1–4, 2–64, 3–64, 4–91, 5–118, 6–123, 7–133, 8–136, 9–142, 10–147

LONDON ERRATICS — batting

Head	bowled	12	2	
Butcher	caught	4		
Neal	bowled	0		
Eltringham	caught	3		
† Thwaite	bowled	25	3	
* Rivington	bowled	0		
Douglas	bowled	0		
Berrigan	caught	7		
Hart R	caught	16	3	
Rees	NOT OUT	7	1	
Alla	NOT OUT	4	1	

88 for 9

Fall of wickets: 1(Head)–22, 2(Butcher)–22, 3(Neal)–23, 4(Eltringham)–31, 5(Rivington)–31, 6(Douglas)–35, 7(Berrigan)–52, 8(Thwaite)–77, 9(HartR)–78

MATCH DRAWN