

CHILMARK CRICKET CLUB
Affiliated to the Wiltshire Cricket Board



CCC v The Lobsters – Sunday 14th May, 2017

Chilmark's winning start to the season has hit some rocky water, as the team stumbled to a second consecutive loss at Cleeves Farm on Sunday, this time to The Lobsters. On the bright side, however, Chilmark teas are back on the menu!

After losing the toss captain Ben Fowles handed the ball to Darren Lee who, pushing into the wind and up the hill, struggled to make it to the bowling crease. When the ball did eventually emerge from his hand it sailed gently towards the batsman in an unthreatening manner, finally making contact with the bat and falling mutely away to the offside. This happened twice before the batsman hit him for four; but then Lee found a little extra something and with it the edge of the bat, however Brand King at slip was being too generous with his expectations of pace, and the ball failed to carry. Not to worry though, because the batsman attacked his next delivery and lobbed a catch to mid-on, where Angus Steele completed the play.

New ball duty from the Pettigrew end was given to Archie Small, who responded to news of his role with the look of a passenger who has just been asked to land an Airbus. Small has been at Exeter University and the nightclubs thereabouts for the last year; bowling has not featured high on his list of priorities. None-the-less Small accepted his fate and tried to remember how to do the thing. It didn't go well. The first ball missed the pitch, the second nearly took off the batsman's head, while others in the over landed on what would have been a good length if he was coming in from the other end. That the over only cost nine runs was mostly down to bemusement on the part of the batsmen.

Lee returned for another over of slow motion cricket, before Small again livened things up with a series of unpredictable deliveries, one of which was dispatched over the long on fence. His last ball, however, was a peach, doing everything but take out the stumps. It was enough to earn him another over, which reverted to type. With 26 runs coming from his three overs, Small was given the rest of the innings off.

Angus Steele took up the attack from the Pettigrew end and immediately stemmed the flow of runs. With genuine pace, relentless accuracy and dangerous late swing, he proved to be a class above the Lobsters batsmen who did well to survive his opening over. They didn't get through his second though, as the youngster swung a piercing deliver through the opener's defence and took out his middle stump. When he repeated the dose in his third over, the Lobsters had stumbled to 46-3 and there were thoughts in the Chilmark camp that an early afternoon may be on the cards.

Brand King, who had replaced Lee, was by now keeping a tight rein on things from the non-Pettigrew end, bowling two maidens in an opening five over spell that cost just nine runs. Along with Steele's two wickets at a cost of eight runs, Chilmark went into the drinks break well placed, with the Lobsters 56-3.

Immediately after the break Max Allen took up the attack and struck with his first ball, knocking back the middle peg. Then Rod Taylor, bowling something resembling finger spin, snuck one through the Lobster's number six, to render the visitors 58-5. It was all looking very rosy for Chilmark. Unfortunately that was the high-water mark, and the tide was about to turn swiftly away.

With nothing to lose the Lobster's batsmen began to attack; Max Allen's five over spell ended up costing 28 runs, while Taylor's four went for 27. Reg 'Golden Arm' Allen then ventured to the crease and shipped 24 runs from his two overs, before King returned and went for 19 from his last two overs. Suddenly the Lobsters were racking up a total. But not without offering Chilmark some chances. Off King's bowling a ball was skied towards mid-off, where a nervous Ben Fowles was stationed. I use the term 'stationed' as that is exactly what Fowles was: unmoved, like a container ship on a sandbank. The ball landed a few yards in front of him. He picked it up and gave it a good shine. Not long after DJ Gent took an excellent falling catch on the boundary, only to roll onto the boundary line in the process. It goes in the book as a six, but still rates as one of the catches of the season so far.

Steele returned for a final spell, briefly stemming the flow of runs. However he aggravated a back injury in his first over and Chilmark lost six balls from their best bowler. Darren Lee went for 26 in his last three overs, before Max Allen returned to provide a rampant Lobster batsman with some hitting practice. His final three overs leaked 41 runs as the batsman brought up his century and the Lobsters finished on 220-6.

The total was a bit more than Chilmark had expected half way through the innings, but with some decent batsmen in the side, it felt within reach. First though, there was the not insignificant issue of the first Chilmark tea of the season.

Opening the meal was Becky Lee with some delicious cheese, pickle and egg mayo sandwiches, while from the other end Claire Allen took care of business with tuna, mayo and cress. At first change Bev Small made a dramatic entrance with her curried chicken delicacies, before Merial Eaton's cherry & chocolate cake, Pete Corbin's chocolate extravaganza and Sara Woodroffe's chocolate brownies blitzed the middle overs. Bev returned for a second spell with a lemon drizzle cake, before the innings was brought to an exciting conclusion with scones and coffee cake delivered by Jo Ulliyot and Liz Thompson.

Back on the field, King and Fowles opened the batting for Chilmark, intent on setting a solid bedrock on which to build the chase. When nine runs came from the first two overs (mostly from wides) the going looked good, but then King, having just advised Fowles on the virtues of patience, left his crease in pursuit of a juicy looking slow delivery, missed it and was bowled for a duck.

Dave Ulliyot came in at three and along with Fowles did the batting thing. Boundaries through mid-wicket for both of them moved the total along to 32, before Fowles tickled one down the leg side and was caught behind for 12. As with Chilmark's bowling, then, it was youth that needed to come to the rescue. Max Allen's recent form earned his promotion in the order to number four and he immediately justified it by turning the strike over rapidly, before launching some well timed boundaries down the ground. Meanwhile Ulliyot got his pad in the way of a ball that was destined for the stumps and was given out for 18. In the 12th over Chilmark were battling at 45-3. Enter Rod Taylor.

Taylor knows only one way and after taking a couple of singles to get the blood moving, he took to the bowling, launching a boundary and a six off consecutive balls to get Chilmark back into the frame. With Max Allen seeing the ball well also, the home team's hopes were rekindled. Together the pair put on an even hundred for the fourth wicket, before Allen picked out the worst fielder in the opposition team with a pull shot. This fielder had already dropped a half chance, misfielded a couple of others, as well as plagiarising Carl Jacobs as he booted an otherwise safely stopped ball over the fence for four. So when Allen's pull shot was whistling in his direction there wasn't a soul at Cleeves Farm who thought he'd catch it. But of course he did, somehow, and in a manner that will never be found in coaching manuals, and Allen's excellent innings was done for 39.

The good thing about Chilmark is there are plenty of Allen's to go around, so when Max plodded off, his old man, Reg, plodded on. One ball later he was off again, bowled for a golden. Though there were three others on the sidelines, the day's quota of cricketing Allen's was unfortunately exhausted.

Taylor brought up his maiden half century for the club with a boundary down the ground, before taking one swing too many and losing his stumps. Chilmark were in trouble again at 152-6 in the 29th over, with 68 more still required.

Jason Stearman tried his best, swatting four boundaries before he was bowled for 17, while DJ Gent pulled out one of the shots of the day as he gloriously cut the ball to the fence at point, before he went the way of most of his teammates, losing his stumps for seven.

The writing was on the wall for the home side, but in Angus Steele and especially Archie Small, there was still enough fight to make sure it was an entertaining loss. Small crashed three boundaries and a graceful six into the horse paddock on his way to an unbeaten 26 from 17 balls, before Chilmark's 35 over allocation was exhausted with the team still 20 runs short.

Chilmark 200-8 (R Taylor 52; M Allen 39) defeated by The Lobsters 220-6 (A Steele 2-10; M Allen 2-61)