

Swinging Googlies vs Broadway

8th May 2011

Is it that time already? It only seems like yesterday, when the Googlies were out on tour, frolicking in the balmy Mediterranean sun and getting seven bells knocked out of them by those frisky Croatians. Indeed, spring is here once again and as the midday sun peeps over the picturesque ramparts of Tolworth Tower and the air resounds with the first police siren of the day, the delicate and rather poetic tones of the local youths can be heard as they skip daintily across the greensward - 'o my days sup im a chav innit sa don b dissn me mate al get me ma on yer, blud and butters innit'. Ah lovely.

But yes, there are some things that you can count on in this uncertain world. As Wills and Kate get hitched, Clegg gets trounced and Bin Laden whacked, there is something just a little reassuring in the sight of the Googlies congregating once more on the boundary line... as they emerge from their collective winter hibernation, dust themselves down and begin to reacquaint themselves with a hard red ball and a piece of wood. The little wheels might spin and spin but it's the big wheels that turn around (Buffy Sainte-Marie 1966) and the faded fabric of our community, strained at the seams by the stress of modern life, once more gets pulled together and given a quick upholstering by this ragtag bunch of journeymen who are drawn together though their collective love of the game. Ah, the sweet rhythm of life. But enough of this nonsense...yes, it's your match reporter Ron Googly here, in a slightly reflective mood, reporting on the Googlies opening match against Broadway CC down at Alexandra Park.

I must say, the Googlies were looking calm, relaxed and quietly efficient as they rolled up for this first match of the season. As cries of 'whose got the match ball' echoed around the park, Barry nonchalantly produced a boiled egg from his pocket, gave it a bit of shine, dubiously tampered with the shell and sent a swinging (well, slightly oscillating) delivery straight down the old billy goat. Now that, my friends, is class. Meanwhile, Tomo sauntered into the fray looking quite pleased with himself as he proudly displayed his latest item of cricketing paraphernalia. Yes folks, it's true...and as the legendary Mr J Brown would say 'he ain't too hip, he ain't no drag...tomo's got a brand new bag' (cue Tomo throwing down a few moves).

New bags aside, another first for the Googlies was the fact the phrase ‘strength and depth’ could be applied to the team. Not only did they have a full team but they had a subs bench, courtesy of Rakesh and Mike A. Mind you...as things turned out it didn’t help too much. Andy, in the spirit of democracy, had decided to select the team using the AV approach. Now, for anyone of you who don’t understand this, it really is simple. Each player numbers their team preference 1–11. If anyone doesn’t get 50% in the first round they are eliminated and each player’s second choice then goes in the hat. Again, anyone who doesn’t reach the magic 50% is booted out and so it goes on to the third choice. Anyway, after 11 rounds and nearly four and a half days the selection process was complete. Of course, the slight flaw in Andy’s plan was that with ten players being eliminated the Googlies were left with only one player in the team. Still, that’s democracy.

The Googlies lost the toss and were put into bat by Broadway and it was down to Barry ‘the egg’ Sutton and Kevin to open the account. The two of them looked to be settling in for a good spell when suddenly Kevin decided to go for an unexpected stroll down the wicket and got himself run out. From this point on the, the wickets began to tumble, Vinay and Russ both going cheaply (well, for nothing actually), and that old familiar feeling began to descend upon the Googlies. Dave L gifted a nice little catch to the man close in (so nice in fact he may as well have wrapped the ball in pretty paper, tied a bow round it and written ‘happy birthday Broadway CC’ on it).

Things then became a little confused when Broadway brought on a new bowler called Bama –momentarily misheard by the scorer as Obama. Blimey, had Broadway really brought on the US president to try and mix things up bit in the middle. Was this going to be a display off stealth bowling? The situation was further confused by the American flag flying high from a potato patch in the allotments just a few feet from the boundary line (I kid you not...you couldn’t make it up). Had Bin Laden in fact been spirited away by the CIA and held captive in one of the sheds down on the Alexandra allotments? Thing is, there are so many allotments and sheds down there that they might forget which one it is they are hiding him in. Another case of the American’s losing the plot. Hmm...yes well.

The midwicket conversation spot was apparently taken up with much heated debate on the fate of the Lib-Dems, the future of Nick Clegg and whether Vince Cable should resign out of pure pride (as well of course a few words about whether Bin Laden was really dead

or just hiding in the aforementioned allotments). But it has to be said, the Googlies team today had a distinctly ‘cleggy’ shape to it, to coin a new adjective. Basically, they showed a lot of promise but delivered nothing. In fact, being Nick Clegg must be remarkably similar to being a batsman with the Googlies. You step up the mark, full of hope and optimism for the future and leave a few minutes later, shamed and humbled, to the sound of ironic applause and a few mournful cheers. Ah, bless him.

Anyway, it was looking like a seriously early tea, but then Andy and Steve steadied the creaking ship and put together a useful partnership that once again took the Googlies from humiliation to simple embarrassment. Steve top scored with 18 and Andy scored 15, both of them hitting some fine shots. However, in the end this fine little partnership proved to be merely a pause in the Googlies batting collapse and normal service was quickly resumed. Joe and Ant went quickly and Tomo did well to shore up the rear, so to speak. Mind you, with Anto in the vicinity it’s an idea for everyone to shore up their rear. Anyway, the Googlies departed the field with a rather miserable 75 runs on the board and it looked more or less like game over at this stage.

Tea was then taken and Ms Lovelace’s baps were looking especially impressive (sorry...I am now contractually obliged to use the word ‘baps’ in any sentence involving Ms Lovelace). The Googlies, feeling that their fate on the pitch was sealed, tucked in with gusto (gusto...who’s he?) and once again took to the field clutching their stomachs and groaning loudly – will they never learn?

As it was, Vinay and Joe opened the bowling (I think) and Broadway fast began to rack up the runs so that everyone thought they might just be able to make it to the pub in time for the United/Chelsea match. But then, Broadway suddenly hit a collapse of epic proportions, with four or five wickets going for about 11 runs. Vinay bowled superbly, with a pace and accuracy that Pravin would be proud of. Andy and Ant also bowled well and Steve came on and also sent down some solid overs. It looked for a moment like the game might turn, but Broadway still had three wickets in hand with only a handful of runs to get. At this stage of the match the game was again fast slipping away from the Googlies and Captain Chris was considering the option of trying a bit of spin on the springy wicket. Now, we all know that Tomo likes to toss off a few in the rough...unlike Prince William of course, who since marrying Kate Middleton likes to be tossed off *by* a bit of rough (okay, okay...I’m

sorry...enough already). I think your match reporter is suffering from a touch of double-entendritis...it's a clinical condition and he needs help. Of course as you all know, my Uncle Gilbert has had a few problems upstairs himself. One time, he went to see his psychiatrist whilst totally naked and wrapped only in cling-film. The psychiatrist took a good look at him and said 'well, I can clearly see you're nuts'.

Anyway, for moment or two it looked like the Googlies might snatch the game, and even Russ could be heard to mutter – 'I think we can do this'. Where's Rob when you need him – he would never tolerate talk of that kind on the pitch. But as it was, when they needed to Broadway put their foot on the gas and knocked of the remaining runs with ease. Still, a good game all round and top marks to the chaps from Broadway CC who play social cricket in the spirit that it should be. And credit to them also for allowing the Googlies, just for a moment, to think that they might win. Cheeky chappies. Still, on a positive note the Googlies fielded superbly. Everyone looked sharp and didn't let anything through. Dave L swooped around the mid-wicket area and took a great catch, as did Anto who took a good low catch to his left – although word has it that he was just tying his shoelace and the ball landed in his hand. Credit also to Barry for a great performance behind the stumps.

Touching exchange of the day goes to Tom and young Joe, who had a rather moving discussion on the bench about the youth of today and the merits or otherwise of the modern education system. Tom managed to defensively prod away Joe's initial attack – 'I blame the teachers'- with the subtle response of 'watch it you young scallywag'. But Joe had hit his line and length by now and pinned Tom back with a 'yeah, but all teachers are crap'. Tom, on the back foot, gave Joe a clip round the ear and an hours litter duty. Harsh but fair methinks.

Man of the went to Vinay for his great bowling spell – even though he was out first ball.

Champagne went to Dave L for his great catch.

Tragi-comedy moment goes Kevin for his run out.

Comedy moment goes to Barry for his epic shout of 'MIIIIINE' and twenty metre dash to catch the ball.

And apologies for touching on a few controversial issues in this week's report. The Bin Laden situation is particularly sensitive. That said, some may think his treatment at the hands of the Americans was somewhat harsh...especially having his body dumped at sea. Surely, being surrounded once by seals is enough for any man.

That's it – I'm off to hide now.

Ron G

Match Reporter