

Steep –v- Hawkley – Sunday 12th July 2009 (By: Mike Dale)

A year ago Steep were beaten by Hawkley on the last ball of the game. On that memorable day Martin Dodd supplied the short pitched gift and was duly hit for six. Martin had 'bad ball' nightmares for several weeks.

Surely history would not repeat itself?

It didn't seem that way as Dean Knight set out in his usual swashbuckling style. He was quick to his fifty then given out by the most dubious umpiring decision this season. Dean has given the club plenty to be proud of this year as his blistering form has been the backbone of a promotion pushing first team. The former Steep youth player has garnered many an admiring comment for his rapid progression over the years.

The phlegmatic Tim Passingham batted in the anchor role, nearly the entire innings, for 42, and Mark Turnbull made his dad proud as he hit an impressive 92 not out.

Captain Matt Evans looked content with a score of 236, so much so that he was somewhat generous with his recently acquired new style of 'spin' bowling. Hawkley were very appreciative and took turns to see who could hit the biggest six. But Matt stuck at it certain that one of the batsmen would hit across the line and give a catch.

But the only catches came several yards over the boundary and he finally handed the ball to Turnbull who showed that line and length had not gone out of fashion.

Turnbull was able to restrain the run rate but the Hawkley batsmen were getting close to the Steep total.

And so, it all boiled down to the very last over. Hawkley needed 7 runs to win.

Up stepped the ginger gladiator, John "Don't mess with Me" Smith.

Having been punished in his penultimate over, which included a six and two fours, he had something to prove.

The field was set to stop the boundary and Smith must have fancied his chances against the new batsman. He looked focused and confident as he strode in for his first ball.

"WIDE" was the call.

Everyone looked confused at the first team captain's choice of delivery. Was this a cunning plan to perhaps lure the opposition into a false sense of security? Hawkley batsmen certainly look bemused, as they now needed one less to win off the same amount of balls, but it looked like Smith's strategy was working as the Hawkley batsmen could only manage a few stunned singles from the next few balls.

Come the last ball two runs were needed for a Hawkley win. The clever money favoured Steep, as the field was set to save the single.

Smith ran in, bowled..... "NO BALL" came the shout.

"WTF" must have been the thought of anyone watching but who obviously didn't understand the complexities and nuances of the beautiful game we call cricket.

Those of us in the know, however, felt confident that Smith was holding his trump card up his sleeve.

But was it an Ace or a joker?

Hawkley now needed one run off the last ball of what seemed a very, very long over.

Smith scuffed his foot at his bowling mark like a raging bull ready to gore the matador. He wiped a bead of sweat from his furrowed brow and set his laser like vision on middle stump. His ginger locks glistened in the sun as he started to pace down the track like a valiant steed.

The scene was set.; The first team strike bowler versus the Hawkley no. 7 bat.

The number 7 looked nervous and daunted at the apparent impossibility of his task.

A few Hawkley players crossed their chests and muttered last rites to their player who was now trembling with fear and crying for his mummy.

Smith was now at full steam, charging down the track with only the thought of misplaced stumps in his mind. He rose majestically at the crease and launched his trump card.....THWACK!

David had just downed Goliath. Or to put it less metaphorically Smith had just been hit for four.

The Hawkley crowd erupted in joy, and Steep, for the second year running, snatched defeat from the jaws of a draw.

The Last Ball Nightmare Club now has two members!

And below is Hawkley's view of the same game.....

Hawkley vs Steep – Sunday 12th July 2009

Hawkley (242 for 5) beat Steep (238 for 5) by five wickets

The Steep versus Hawkley derby has gained a reputation for fierce rivalry and cliff-hanger finishes. England's performance in Cardiff was completely overshadowed as the two local teams met once again in an enthralling "Hangers Ashes" encounter at the Steep ground.

Hawkley skipper Rich Humphreys won the toss and invited the home side to bat first. Steep's openers Knight and Smith were quickly off the mark and the ship's bell in the Steep pavilion rang each six as local tradition requires until Chris Huntley struck back for Hawkley by dismissing Smith caught behind by Jarrett. Passingham joined Knight and the Steep innings continued strongly until change bowler Burkie trapped Knight LBW for 50. At the other end, Hudson found enough movement to induce Morris to play on and Dale to edge to first slip where Brown senior took a sharp catch. Thereafter the wicket increasingly favoured the batsmen and the score mounted rapidly, Turnbull in particular punishing any loose bowling. Hawkley heads were starting to droop when Huntley changed ends to come up the hill and bowl Passingham for 49. Hawkley spent the remaining overs before tea retrieving the ball from the surrounding paddocks as Turnbull accelerated to finish a fine innings unbeaten on 96.

Both teams were probably stronger in the batting rather than bowling line-ups and Steep's score of 238 was not out of reach on a true wicket with short boundaries. Opening Hawkley's reply Batten quickly departed as he guided Jones into gully's hands, but thereafter Madeley and Jarrett made hay in the hot sun. Madeley looked in particularly fine form and the six bell tolled regularly as Hawkley pursued their target. After Jarrett was stumped off Turnbull for an excellent fifty Nigel Brown played some elegant strokes until caught off Smith. Chris Head then joined Madeley in a stand which took Hawkley past 200 before Madeley was finally bowled by Smith for 83 having led the Hawkley innings within sight of victory. Humphreys and Head continued the momentum, Head hoisting a six onto the pavilion roof in the penultimate over. Humphreys was caught off Smith for 19 leaving five to win off the last over. Smith bowled a tight line and two were needed to win off the last ball with Todd facing. Hawkley faces fell as Todd played and missed, until the umpire was seen to have signalled a wide! With the scores level and the field closing in to save the single, Todd drove a four down the ground to hand Hawkley victory.

Scorecards below:

Hawkley vs Steep Date: 12-Jul-09

Innings of:		Steep		
Batsman	How Out	Bowler	Score	
D Knight	lbw	M Burkie	50	
J Smith	ct Jarrett	C Huntley	17	
T Passingham	b	C Huntley	49	
J Morris	b	N Hudson	1	
G Dale	ct Brown	N Hudson	6	
M Turnbull			96	
Seddon			9	

Extras 10
TOTAL For 5 238

Bowler	Overs	Maidens	Runs	Wickets
N Todd	4		32	0
C Huntley	12		79	2
Burks	9		47	1
N Hudson	9		44	2
H Brown	5		34	0

Innings of:		Hawkley		
Batsman	How Out	Bowler	Score	
K Madeley	b	Smith	83	
H Batten	ct Dale	Jones	1	
M Jarrett	st	Turnbull	50	
N Brown	ct Seddon	J Smith	25	
C Head	Not out		40	
R Humphreys	ct Turnbull	J Smith	19	
N Todd	Not out		5	

Extras 19
TOTAL For 5 242

Bowler	Overs	Maidens	Runs	Wickets
R Street	6		33	0
M Jones	5		30	1
M Dale	5		24	0
M Evans	6		42	0
J Smith	10		53	3
M Turnbull	5		23	1
B Seddon	3		23	0