

## Steep v Steeple Langford

In the battle of the two unbeaten records in Div 4, Steep triumphed in a hard fought game against the best side by far they have played this year.

In perfect cricketing weather skipper John Smith won the toss and inserted the visitors from Wiltshire in order to see their much vaunted batting at first hand. However, the side that had only dropped one batting point all season had not seen a bowling attack like Steep's before and were soon in disarray.

The architect of this was fast man Mike Murray who dismissed the first three batsmen for ducks; one bowled, one caught by keeper Dean Knight and one by makeshift slip Graham Hughes. It should have been four ducks but Murray was unable to hold the simplest catch off his own bowling from Dennis. This proved costly as he hit a whirlwind 41 before a sharp stumping saw the end of his innings.

The Steeple Langford batting line up showed real strength in depth and a fine 6<sup>th</sup> wicket partnership of 82 put them right back in the game. However Steep kept up their intensity in the field and the stand was broken by Mark Turnbull in his first over. Tom Mercer and John Smith chipped in before Murray returned to mop up the tail and collect his first five wicket haul for the club.

The final total for victory was 205, generally felt to be well below par on a hard track and lightning fast outfield.

Steep opened cautiously against accurate bowling, but Dale Collins and Sean Noble kept the scoreboard ticking over. Collins was first out trying to hook but hampered by a nasty blow to the shoulder previously. Noble was caught at slip and Mike Preston caught in the deep, leaving the match in the balance. Hughes and Knight looked to stamp their authority and class in the game which they did to great effect until they both fell to consecutive balls and with 60 runs still needed.

It took a superb cameo from key all-rounder Ally Bone to put Steep ahead of the game: his 26 coming at well over a run a ball and taking the game away from the opposition. Although he was out before the end of the game Smith and Turnbull finished the match off without any more drama and with 2 overs to spare.

Next week, the unbeaten run travels to the unpredictable Wherwell; it remains to be seen which team turns up to try and derail the Steep bandwagon.