

## Steep 1<sup>st</sup> XI v Hurstbourne Priors

Despite being well below their best, Steep kept their 100% record intact with a comfortable 7 wicket victory over promotion chasing Hurstbourne Priors.

A breezy but sunny afternoon at Steep HQ saw the game start in normal fashion as skipper John Smith lost the toss and was asked to field first on a track packed with runs. Opening bowlers Tom Callingham and Mike Murray probed away with Callingham bowling Nautiyal around his legs with the score on 19. Murray cleaned up the dangerous looking Matthews with a brutal delivery and when Tom Mercer ran out Hopkinson with a direct hit, the innings was in tatters.

However, Hurstbourne had plenty of experience in their ranks and looked to score at every opportunity. Key all-rounder Alex Bone picked up two wickets with his usual guile but could not stop Budd from reaching a well-deserved 50. It was down to Mercer to remove him, but still the runs came from Trinder who appeared to be batting too far down the order. His 36 saw the target set at 160 runs, very reachable on the firm track, but probably 30 more than deserved.

The Steep reply started in typical fashion when Dale Collins hit a long hop to square leg and Mike Preston was bowled for 1. It was down to Sean Noble and Dean Knight to repair the innings which they set about doing. The scoreboard moved slowly but the bowlers soon lost their bite allowing both batsmen to unfurl some classical scoring shots. The partnership was worth 110 when Knight was adjudged LBW for a circumspect 42. Noble glided to his fifty and then offered support to the flashing blade of Graham Hughes who closed the game down with a quick-fire 26. Noble's innings was left stranded on 69, his first for many a year.

Farley are the next arrivals to Harrow HQ, but the Steep missing key players a much better team performance will be required.



Standing (L-R). Tom Mercer, Tom Callingham, Mike Preston, Mike Murray, Dale Collins, Alex Bone, Dean Knight

Seated (L-R). Graham Hughes, Sean Noble, John Smith (Capt), Mark Turnball.

Mascot Finlay Noble