

Steep 1st XI V Midhurst

Steep's promotion campaign well and truly hit the rocks on Saturday as they were comprehensively outplayed by bottom side Midhurst. It was only thanks to other results going in their favour that they hang on to top spot in the league.

The afternoon started in a more positive fashion as skipper John Smith won a rare toss and decided to field on an afternoon perfect for cricket. The opening pair of Smith and Mike Murray caused early problems for the Midhurst openers but were unable to capitalise. Smith rang the changes but it was a superb piece of fielding by Tom Mercer that saw the breakthrough as a direct hit ended a 50 plus opening partnership. As so often one wicket brings another and so it proved as Lush was bowled by a Mark Turnbull snorter.

The third wicket proved more elusive and it took a fine catch by makeshift mid-off Graham Hughes to remove the stubborn Gough and give Ally Bone his first wicket of the afternoon. It was left to May to carry the Midhurst innings; something he did with aplomb finally perishing for 74 caught by Freddie Hughes-Stanton of that man Bone.

Midhurst lost their way somewhat and collapsed from 164 for 4 to 184 all out. The architect of their destruction was Bone who finished with 5 wickets from his nagging off-spin.

Steep set about the target with a flourish as Dale Collins peppered the boundary with a flurry of fine drives. He was unable to convert his start as so often this season and was soon followed back to the pavilion by Mike Preston who was unfortunate to get an unplayable ball in his first over. John Hegan and Dean Knight pressed on but both were adjudged LBW despite both believing they had got fine edges. It was left to the skipper to offer some resistance which he did to some degree, but he was unable to find support from the other end.

As it was Steep limped past 100 to pick up 7 points which transpired to be enough to stay at the summit of the league. This will not be the case next week unless a far better performance is put in against the unpredictable Hobos outfit from Basingstoke.