

MATCH REPORT

V&A v. JESMOND JOGGERS

STONOR, Sat. July 16

A GLORIOUS DAY, a cloudless sky and wonderfully hot and dry. But in terms of our performance not quite so glorious...

You correspondent (and captain) was late, which did not impress that strict disciplinarian Roger Smith. We were 10 men, pretty impressive considering all the youth element were playing in Cambridge (bastards). But one more goodish player would have made a difference, both in the field and batting.

Because we were 9 in the morning, before Linthwaite's arrival from needling (literally) his patients, we agreed to bat first. All went well, we were scoring briskly, and reached 90 or so for two.

Adam Jacot, who opened, and Olly H-P had managed nearly 6 an over, Adam eventually being out for a sparkling 45 and Olly for an elegant 20 odd.

Some of the Joggers bowling was pretty tame and runs were there to be had in abundance. But temptation proved too much for some. The turning point came when Andy Fraser, centurion in his last two innings, salivated at a wide ball and smacked it straight into gully's hands.

Then wickets tumbled, mostly to superlative catches. The Joggers tightened the noose by bringing on a very good fast bowler who promptly dismissed two batsmen in an over. Their very agreeable and sporting skipper, Adam Chataway, promptly took him off.

Rupert Morris and Bird N were in at the end with 125 on the board. There were still 10 overs to go. Their spinner needed watching but the pitch was benign. Your correspondent managed a rare on-drive for four. The batsmen agreed to wallop any ball wide of the stumps and block the rest. The next ball to Rupert was outside leg stump. According to the script it should have been whacked to the square leg boundary. But instead Rupert spooned it gently to silly mid-on. All out for 145. Not enough on such a pitch against 10 fit young men (average age 23, V&A average age 47, V&A average weight 12.7 stone, throwing range 17 feet).

Roger opened the bowling with Adam and because of physical collapse bowled slowish tweekers. They were damnably effective. Their opening pair had threatened to demolish us but Roger bowled their best batsmen with a wonderful, unplayable off-break. Jacot bowled his 7 overs tightly and claimed a wicket, only one over going for more than 4 runs.

Olly H-P, after two looseners which disappeared to the boundary, found a destructive length. James Nixey got a wicket (good catch by Roger at mid-on) and Chris Moore and Peter Linthwaite slowed their run rate down with precision bowling, Mooroo

enticing a good stumping by Andy Fraser. Andy donned the gloves owing to Bird N's dodgy confidence after missing a tricky chance or two a couple of weeks ago. But Bird is not an asset in the field - he loped after one ball while the batsmen ran 5 (!) - and may return to his erstwhile role.

But their innings was notable for a truly astounding catch by Rob Noble at mid-wicket. Their skipper banged a long hop from Olly and all eyes were on cow corner. But Noble's right hand reached out and plucked the ball from behind him. Extraordinary. And yet more extraordinary and weird was Noble's ground fielding – impeccable is the only appropriate word. This former Duff Fielder of the Year, who can rightly claim permanent ownership of the cup as he has won it three times, swooped and stooped and threw with precision. Some put it down to clean living, others to the absence of his lady friend, whose provocative presence is clearly distracting.

But it was not enough and they reached the total with 4 overs to spare. Never mind, there was plenty of time to enjoy the pub and mine hostess and their new doggy.

Their captain revealed that their last pair were their last proper batsmen. We would have prevailed perhaps with another 40/50 runs, not difficult given the pitch, and their mostly friendly bowling. Ill-discipline had cost us, ill-discipline and their catching; our catching in contrast – apart from the superlative Noble, and Smith – was also partly to blame, to name no names like Rupert Morris.

Nicky Bird