

## **It's still 100 per cent for the Over 60s thirds!**

*But it's a mixed bag of results elsewhere this week as the weather and the opposition intervene!*

The Oxfordshire Seniors Group flying start to the season slowed down somewhat this week as both the Over 60s seconds and fourths lost and the Over 70s were beaten by the weather, however there were also handsome wins for the Over 60s firsts and thirds.

There were also some outstanding batting partnerships spread around the games with no fewer than three century stands and some noteworthy individual performances the best of which was Steve Partington's two and a half hour 82 from 115 and 3-23 from five overs to seal the thirds win over Staffordshire.

Shropshire were the visitors to Banbury XX CC where the Over 60s 1<sup>st</sup> XI secured a comfortable win by 107 runs having won the toss and choosing to bat, whereupon they posted an imposing total of 246-4 in 45 overs.

Their innings was anchored by the rock that is Charlie Anderson, who displayed a commanding presence at the crease in scoring an unbeaten 83 off 92 balls, including eight fours and one six, ably supported by Micky Thomas, who also remained unbeaten after a fluent 67 off 59 balls, as the pair posted a fifth-wicket stand of 134 runs in just 86 balls, to steer their side to a formidable total.

In reply Shropshire faced an uphill battle and struggled against the host's disciplined bowling attack as they were eventually bowled out for 139 in 43.4 overs, despite a battling 34 off 45 balls from Paul Humphreys, with no batsman really able to take charge of the innings. Peter Hayes (29 off 58) and Lol Woodhall (21 off 35) made the only other noteworthy contributions under the relentless pressure of the Oxfordshire bowlers.

The Oxon bowling attack was spearheaded yet again by the miserly Steve Roberts (3-15 in 9 overs) well supported at the other end by Tim Mahoney (0-19 in 9 overs), while Paul Hemming (3-36 in 7.4 overs), Darryl Woods (2-20 in 7 overs) and Rupert Taylor (1-7 in 6 overs) ensured that wickets kept falling at regular intervals.

After the game skipper Darryl Woods said: "This was a dominant display with both bat and ball today and will help us with our push to qualify for the knock stages of the competition, but we need to both maintain and even improve this level of execution as we progress towards playing the stronger counties in the latter stages of the season. So far - so good!"

The Over 60s 2<sup>nd</sup> XI were also at home this week as they hosted Hertfordshire at East and West Hendred CC and the game proved to be a great advertisement for seniors cricket as Oxon narrowly failed to chase down the visitors formidable total of 274 for 9 having won the toss and elected to field.

Herts initially made a steady start passing 50 runs in the 14th over, thanks to solid contributions from Minesh Patel (46) and Robert Collins (30). The visitors winning total was however built around a spectacular century from skipper Jerry Dovey, who smashed 100 runs off just 69 balls, including 12 fours and two sixes, with further good supporting contributions from John Collins (28) and Duncan Watson (29).

Oxfordshire's bowlers worked hard, with Andrew Slater, Stephen Kelly, Adrian Manger, and Andy Haynes all claiming a wicket each, while well backed up by a determined effort in the field, on a very large outfield with long boundaries.

In response, Oxfordshire's batsman made a great attempt at what would have been an epic chase had it been successful.

Adrian Manger led the charge with 75 off 89 balls, while Graham Nelson added a brisk 56, featuring three sixes. David Warner also kept up the momentum with 42 as he and Manger added 103 for the third wicket, but there was always just a bit too much for the incoming batsman to do as the reply eventually fell just 12 runs short on 262-8.

The Herts' bowling attack was spearheaded by Indran Thavendra, who claimed three wickets, while Nick Webb, Duncan Watson, and John Collins also played crucial roles in restricting Oxfordshire's chase.

Seconds skipper Andy Slater said afterwards: "It was gutting to get so close and not be able to close the game out. After conceding that big total and only taking four wickets it would have been easy to have let our heads go down, but we didn't and we showed great character and discipline with a batting performance that would have won us the game most weeks. We'll be back to winning ways next week I'm sure!

The Over 60s 3<sup>rd</sup> XI meanwhile managed to get on the right side of another high scoring game, this time at Cropredy CC, when they hosted Staffordshire who won the toss and opted to field.

However, good partnerships and a standout batting performance from opener Steve Partington ensured that the hosts set a formidable total of 242-6 in their 45 overs, with Partington anchoring the innings with 82 off 115 balls, well supported by Tim Riley's fluent run a ball 68, as the pair added a 131 for the second wicket to put Oxon firmly in control

Staffordshire's bowlers battled hard, with Kevin Jeffries (2-46) and Martin Wynn (2-41) picking up key wickets.

In response, the visitors got off to a steady start, with Richard Buxton crafting a well-made 57 off 88 balls, while Mark Taylor added 41 from 48.

Oxfordshire's bowling attack kept things tight, with Steve Wilson leading the way with 4 for 56 runs from 9 overs, however it was Partington's crucial breakthroughs late in the innings, with 3 for 23 from 5 overs that tipped the result in Oxon's favour as Staffs fell just short at 224-9.

A relieved home skipper Clive Ricks said; "This was a great contest played in a good competitive spirit which really showcased seniors cricket to the full. Great credit must go to Staffordshire who really gave it a go and ensured they were always in the game. We look forward to the return fixture later in the year when hopefully we will still be defending our unbeaten record."

There was no West of England Cricket League action for the Over 60s 4<sup>th</sup> XI this week but the side were still in action with a friendly against The Fossils XI at Pershore Cricket Club, which saw the hosts register a comfortable win by 56 runs.

Opting to field after winning the toss, Oxon were looking to restrict The Fossils to a chaseable total and looked to have done so when the hosts compiled a relatively modest 155 for 6 in their 40 overs, with Taylor top scoring on 41 from 55 balls, striking seven boundaries along the way, well supported by Sample (36), Morrissey (23) and Turner (17 not out).

The Oxfordshire bowling attack was led by Hugo Ritson-Thomas who claimed 2 for 23 runs, while Colin Houseman, Nigel Walker, Nick Warry, and Suresh Patel all chipped in with a wicket apiece.

In response the Oxfordshire reply struggled to build momentum against a disciplined Fossils bowling attack, as Adrian Beecroft fell early, which was then followed by further quick wickets that left them reeling at 16 for 4. The innings was steadied by Roger Hutchence with 21 and the visitors' standout performer on the day Hugo Ritson-Thomas, who retired not out on 46.

However, the lower order was not able to complete the job in hand, and Oxfordshire were eventually bowled out for 99 with seven overs still remaining.

For The Fossils, Cull, Denton and Tugwell shone with the ball, each grabbing three wickets apiece.

Oxon skipper David Beck commented: "This was the proverbial game of two halves! We bowled and fielded well to restricts them to 155, but the batting then was something of a contrast as we left ourselves too much to do from 16-4, despite Hugo's best efforts to turn things around."

The joint Oxs/Berks Over 70s were due to play Wiltshire away at Goatacre CC this week but sadly that match fell victim to the weather and has now been rescheduled for the 19<sup>th</sup> of June.