

Match reports w/c 18-8-25 r clapp

### **There's good news - and there's bad news!**

*Two Oxon Seniors sides make the semi-finals but two are also knocked out*

The Oxfordshire Over 60s 3<sup>rd</sup> XI and the joint Oxs/Berks Over 70s 1<sup>st</sup> XI are both through to the semi-finals of their respective County Championships.

However, on the down side both the Over 60s 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XIs were knocked out at the quarter final stage.

The joint Ox/Berks Over 70s will now be taking on Hertfordshire in their semi-final which will again be at home, while the 60s 3<sup>rd</sup>s will be facing old rivals Sussex, again at home at Banbury XX CC.

The Over 60s 3<sup>rd</sup>s secured victory in their quarter final thanks to a convincing 42 run win over a gallant Bucks side that never threw in the towel despite being set a mammoth 267 to chase in their quarter final clash.

Meanwhile at Bradfield CC the Ox/Berks 70s cruised past Gloucestershire by eight wickets thanks to a dominant performance with both bat and ball.

At Banbury XX CC, visitors Bucks won the toss and asked the hosts to bat on what is normally a good batting wicket which did not then disappoint, as the Oxon batting piled on the runs and put the visitors' bowling to the sword.

Chief tormentor was Tom Scrase who made a composed and compact 108 from 126 balls in two and a half hours, around which the rest of the side were able to push the total on past the 250 mark - aided by a very generous 32 extras.

Although opener Chalky White was bowled for just 14 with the score on 30, Howard Lancaster kept Scrase company for a further 14 overs as the pair posted 53 for the second wicket, when with the score on 83 Lancaster was caught by Khalid Kazim off Mike Parsonage for 14.

New batsman Fred Price soon settled in and with Scrase the pair upped the scoring rate as the Bucks bowlers began to tire. Price was very much the aggressor as he and Scrase put on 126 in 20 overs. His 62 came off just 53 balls before he was stumped by Peter Spinks off the bowling of Jon Dobbs, with the score on 209.

Scrase followed 12 runs later and only a late cameo of 18 from Gary Cook ensured Oxon had the cushion of a very large total to defend in the second innings, which proved to be decisive come the end of the game.

The pick of the Bucks' bowling were Andrew Connolly and Jon Dobbs, who claimed two wickets apiece, though as a unit all the visitors' bowlers struggled to contain the hosts' batting in the latter stages.

Needing six an over for their entire 45 overs the Bucks batters had a mountain to climb and were rocked early on as they lost three wickets for just 20 runs in the first seven overs.

Richard Cook gave Oxon the perfect start when he bowled Nick Zala with the first ball of the match, which was soon backed up by a good caught and bowled by his opening partner

Gary Cook, when he removed Keith Wallis for two, soon followed by John Holloway for three, again bowled by Richard Cook.

At the other end Nigel Field was watching all this unfold but remained unruffled as new batsman Jon Dobbs walked out to join him.

Field needed someone to dig in and support him and Dobbs proved to be more than equal to the task as the pair stopped the rot and then proceeded to add exactly 100 runs in the next 20 overs, with Dobbs making a patient 44 of 72 balls as Field began to dominate the hosts' bowling and gave Bucks hope of an unlikely win.

However, when Steve Wilson bowled Dobbs the incoming batsmen were unable to help Field to up the scoring rate when required.

Oxon held on grimly as they sort to contain the run rate in the hope of forcing wickets to fall under scoreboard pressure, which worked at one end but did not restrict Field as he strode imperiously on to his century and beyond.

Andy Connelly and Mahmood Ahktar made it into double figures but the wickets tumbled as the run rate rose and the overs ran out, with Field eventually almost 'carrying his bat' for a magnificent 132 as Bucks finished on 225-9 - 42 runs short of their target.

Richard Cook (2-17), Steve Wilson (2-42) and Clive Ricks, (2-28) all chipped in with a brace of wickets apiece on a day when they were hard to come by.

"We made hard work of getting over the line, but in the end we held our nerve and discipline and got there," said skipper Ricks.

"Tom's century and Fred's aggressive innings set the game up for us but we needed every run when it soon became apparent that Nigel Field was 'in for the afternoon' and it only needed another batter to have stayed with him a little longer and they would got very close to our total.

"It was a game well worthy of a quarter final and has given us a sharp reminder of how well we will have to play if we want to win this competition," he added.

There were no such worries down in Berkshire for the joint Ox/Berks Over 70s 1st XI where Gloucestershire won the toss and elected to bat, after which they found it hard going against the relentless accuracy of the Ox/Berks opening attack of Trevor Spindler and Jim Blackford.

Gloucs openers John Evans and Keith Daniels accumulated steadily for the first five overs but with the score on 21 Spindler struck and trapped Evans lbw for 14.

Daniels continued to look comfortable but Bill Lawrence, Peter Adams and Roger Beese all went quickly and cheaply to leave the visitors tottering on 59 for 4 in the 18<sup>th</sup> over.

Lawrence and Beese were again both trapped lbw by Spindler, while Adams was caught by Adrian Manger off Blackford.

Mike Pearson looked to have helped Daniels to stop the slide as they advanced the score to 76 before he too perished lbw for six – this time to the bowling of Ian Harvey, who struck again in the same manner 17 runs later when he ended Daniels battling knock of 32 off 65 balls spread over an hour and half.

At 93 for 6 in the 28<sup>th</sup> over the visitors were in deep trouble and in need of some spirited lower order resistance if they were to post a competitive score. Thankfully Ed Shellard and

Graham Clarke managed to do just that as they posted 58 for the eighth wicket despite the loss of Fred Bayliss for four along the way.

Shelland was eventually bowled by Manger for 44 off 74 balls, while Clarke made 30 not out from 40 deliveries to see Gloucs through to the relative respectability of 177 for eight from their 45 overs, to which the hosts contributed no fewer than 27 extras!

Spindler was the pick of the Ox/Berks bowlers with 3-27 from his nine overs while Harvey took 2-26 from nine and Manger 2-42 from nine.

In reply the Ox/Berks opening pair of Derek Watts and the prolific Charlie Anderson gave their side something of a dream start as the pair posted 109 for the first wicket in 18 overs before Anderson again went to the dismissal mode of the day - when he was trapped in front by Richard Carman for a run a ball 62.

Watts then paired up with Ronnie Brock and anchored one end as the new batsman continued the onslaught and the pair added all bar one of the remaining required runs in a stand of 67 before Brock was bowled for 36 by Richard Carmen in pursuit of the winning single.

Watts was 64 not out off 71 balls in his two hour stay at the crease as Ox/Berks clinched the win with a boundary to make the final total 180 for 2 with nine overs to spare.

"I'm happy with that," said skipper Manger after the game. "We should have perhaps kept them under 130 having done all the hard work up front and removed most of their batting cheaply, but to their great credit they battled back well and gave themselves a chance with the ball, which Charlie and Derek then snuffed out with that great opening stand to ensure we won with something in hand."

At East and West Hendred CC the Over 60s 2<sup>nd</sup> XI's gritty defence of their County Championship title was ended as they went down by 30 runs to Lancashire, in a mirror image of last year's semi-final between the two sides, when Oxfordshire travelled north and came home with the spoils in a similarly commanding fashion.

Oxfordshire won the toss and opted to field in this year's encounter and were then painfully treated to a batting masterclass from Ajmal Choudry, whose century powered Lancashire to a very respectable but not unsurpassable 240 for 3.

Initially though it was Oxon that struck the opening blows of the contest as Carl Needham removed Mike Davies for just three in the fifth over with the score on six and Glen Bullock in the 11<sup>th</sup> over for 14 with the score on 38. Oxon looked to be in the driving seat.

However, new batsman skipper Phil Sutcliffe, soon disabused the hosts of that notion and alongside Choudry soon had the scoreboard ticking over nicely.

And it continued 'ticking over nicely' for another 30 overs as the pair put together a mammoth partnership of 165 for the third wicket before they were eventually parted when Choudry was caught by Ivan Mulford off the bowling of Tim House for a very well made 119 off 131 balls in two and half hours at the crease, during which time he stroked no fewer than 16 boundaries.

Sutcliffe's masterful support act also garnered him a fine unbeaten half century as he made 61 with seven fours and a six to put his side in the driving seat at tea. Game on.

It was a torrid afternoon for Oxon in the field trying to defend a 'big paddock' against two well set batsmen, with only Carl Needham's early brace and a lone success for Tim House to show for their efforts.

In reply it was again the hosts that started well but ultimately flattered to deceive as their chase began positively with last week's centurion Andrew Hodder-Williams and Ivan Mulford both looking fluent as they put on 30 in just four overs.

However, once again the game turned Lancs way and in the space of just four overs, as first Mulford went for 12 caught by Sutcliffe off Paul Davies, soon followed by Hodder-Williams for 14 caught by Davies off Gary Hunt and then Phil Manger, bowled by Choudry for 10, to leave Oxon on 43 for 3 in the ninth over.

Mike Howat and Tim House looked to be steadying the ship as they added 31 in the next eight overs but Howat uncharacteristically chased a wide one and was caught behind off Dave Bunyan for 10.

Adrian Manger joined House and they again looked to be pulling it around as they added 52 and the fight back looked on just as Manger succumbed – bowled by Bunyan for 19 - while House was looking increasingly well set.

With Oxon needing 115 in 15 overs at seven and a half an over with five wickets down Lancs looked well in control, but the depth of the hosts' batting still gave them a 'puncher's chance' and the in-form Simon Oldfield was soon scoring at a run a ball alongside House.

Had they not been parted the result might have been different but the big wicket of House fell just 27 runs later to a familiar combination – caught Choudry bowled Sutcliffe – for a battling 63 off 80 balls in an hour and half at the crease.

Having to play a shot a ball Oldfield nicked off behind to keeper Adshead off Hunt and it looked like game over for the hosts at 157 for 7. Not quite. Carl Needham kept the runs flowing with a valiant 27 not out, while skipper Andy Slater at number nine slammed a rapid 22 off 18 before he walked past one and was stumped by Adshead off Sutcliffe with the score on 193 in the 41<sup>st</sup> over.

But there was to be no tail end miracle as the 48 runs required in four overs proved too much for Numbers 10 and 11 and Lancs eventually ran out winners by 30 runs as Oxon were bowled out for 210 in the 44<sup>th</sup> over.

After the game skipper Slater said: "I think we're all a bit disappointed with our batting today. We all got good starts but nobody except Tim kicked on and we were unable to establish a decent partnership that would have put us in control.

"While only taking three wickets I thought we contained them quite well with the ball and 240 was very chaseable on that wicket and that huge outfield. Disappointingly I think we lost this game rather than Lancs winning it."

Meanwhile the Over 60s 1<sup>st</sup> XI's County Championship campaign for 2025 has also come to an end as they went down by seven wickets away to a very strong Kent side that will now head into the semi-finals as one of the favourites to lift the trophy come September.

A somewhat depleted side finally made the long trip to Gravesend CC to play a fixture originally scheduled for Aug 12<sup>th</sup> which was called off by the host club because of concerns about the forecast high temperatures on that day.

So - unusually playing on a Sunday - Oxon skipper Darryl Woods won the toss and chose to bat and together with Nick Morman the opening pair made a nice steady start and had twenty on the board before Morman was adjudged lbw to Richard Thomas for nine.

New batsman – the ever reliable - Charlie Anderson settled in without any alarms and he and Woods had added a further 37 when just as they looked as if they were pulling things around Anderson too was adjudged lbw this time to Jim Phillips for 10.

Micky Thomas also flattered to deceive as he again looked set with Woods in making 12 before he was bowled by John Butterworth when the score was on 92. Not yet a crisis but Oxon needed someone to support the skipper as he grafted his way towards 50.

However things got worse rather than better. Howard Lancaster -with two centuries already under his belt this season - went for 0 off four balls, off the bowling of Dilrukshan Wijayaratnam, who then struck the decisive blow to put the hosts in control when he bowled the Woods for 56, leaving the visitors in trouble at 97-5.

Sadly thereafter it was all somewhat downhill as the last five wickets subsided for just 38 runs and Oxon were bowled out for just 135, with three overs unused and only Matt Todd reaching double figures in making 13 before he too was lbw.

For the hosts Dilrukshan Wijayaratnam was the standout bowler with four wickets for just 17 runs in nine overs, well supported by Chris Trevatt and Jim Phillips who chipped in with a brace apiece.

Under no kind of scoreboard pressure Kent's chase was both measured and effective. Openers John Butterworth (23) and Jim Phillips (37) laid a solid foundation with a 69 run opening stand, after which Phil Hulston (37) and Graham Nicholls (20) saw the hosts home with 12 overs and seven wickets to spare.

However, the Oxon bowlers made them work hard for their runs. Steve Roberts was his usual miserly self - conceding just 16 runs from his nine overs, while Rupert Taylor returned the best figures with 2-17 off his eight overs. The only other wicket falling by way of a run out from Matt Todd.

After the game skipper Darryl Woods said "It's disappointing to go out of this year's competition by such a wide margin but when you drop vital points in the qualifying competition you end up surrendering home advantage and having to play these tough away ties against the top sides just to stay alive.

"It didn't help not being able to play in our usual Tuesday slot with all our regular players available, but we can look back and clearly see where we didn't finish sides off at key points in games and ended up losing and tying games we should have won. Next year we need to be more ruthless if we are to progress beyond the first round of the knock out phase."

The Oxfordshire Over 70s 'A' XI were also in action this week in their final West of England Seniors Cricket League fixture of the season when they travelled to Nether Whitacre CC to play Warwickshire.

Skipper Tim Gush won the toss and elected to bat and thanks to openers Howard Voisey and Adrian Beecroft made a good start as they put on 51 for the first wicket in 12 overs before Beecroft was bowled by Brian Varley for 24.

Voisey kept the scoreboard ticking along nicely and new batsman Dennis Faulkner was soon striking the ball well and the pair smoothly added a further 53 runs before Faulkner was caught by Alan Evans off the bowling of Tim Fell for a run a ball 37 in the 22<sup>nd</sup> over.

New batsman Tim Yates again settled in with Voisey and again looked comfortable as the fourth wicket pair then proceeded to add a further 60 runs before Voisey's patient accumulation ended when he was caught by Phil Budd off Stephen Peak for 58 in the 32<sup>nd</sup> over with the visitors looking well set to go well past 200 with seven wickets still in hand.

However, the in-form middle order failed to fire as first David Beck, Jim Head, Tim Gush and Ralph Orchard all went for single figures as the hosts fought back in fine style, with only Yates 37 and 28 extras ensuring that the 200mark was passed as the innings fizzled out somewhat at 210 for 7 off the allotted 40 overs.

For Warks Clive Powers and Stephen Peal were the pick of the bowlers with 2-19 and 2-31 respectively.

In reply Warks made a measured and very effective start as Clive Powers and Phil Budd posted 70 for the first wicket in just 15 overs in the face of some steady Oxon bowling before Budd was bowled by Tim Gush for 30.

New batsman Mike Brooks soon looked at home and he and Powers were under no real pressure as they put the hosts well in control in adding 81 for the second wicket before Powers finally succumbed to the bowling of Ralph Orchard for 60 with the score on 151 in the 29<sup>th</sup> over.

Two quick wickets from Orchard and Colin Houseman then gave Oxon a glimmer of hope as Brooks went for 39 and Dave Poulton for 4 in quick succession, before a partnership of 33 between Paul Finlan (25) and Brian O'Sullivan (16 not out) steered Warks home by five wickets with and two overs to spare, again aided by a very generous 32 extras donated by the visitors!

Skipper Tim Gush commented: "Another very good game of seniors cricket and all credit to Warks for chasing down a very decent total – albeit we were a bit short of bowling today. Added to which we should have posted a few more runs than we did given the great start we enjoyed from the top order."

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