

Littlewick Green U/15 132 for 7 beat Hurley U/15 129 for 7 by 3 runs.

With McGuinness and Dawkins paddling in rock pools with school, Skelton making sweet, sweet music, Patrick attempting to be the next David Hasselhof on Baywatch for D of E and Cooper no doubt doing something way beyond my limited intellect, a depleted Lions team went into the LG fixture knowing a win would secure a play-off place. Alas it was not meant to be...

Hurley fielded first, opening the bowling with the big guns from the U11s. At 34/4 off 6 the Drews had well and truly made their mark - Noah (2-0-2-1) and Henry (2-1-5-3!!) led the way, ably assisted by Mennie and Dunn. The U15 bowlers had a big act to follow but struggled to find their lines.....after the lack of extras in the previous game, Johnny Wide and the Byes (just back from their Glastonbury triumph) returned with an almighty bang.

At 64/4 off 10 the LG confidence grew and their batters started to find the boundaries. The fast outfield meant anything not to the fielders hand was guaranteed to race away, and LG made full use of the rope. Wickets fell sporadically, Bussell taking a skier off his own bowling, Calliss stumping Nick, again off Bussell and Ballard getting reward for his accuracy with Jamie caught by Hill at mid on. With 18 coming from the last 2 overs LG had set a good total of 132/7 and couldn't hide their own surprise at the achievement. In fact they all disappeared off into the pub for a drink at half time. Top scorers for LG were Dan with 21 and Max with 30... and Trevor Extras with 40.

The Lions needed a solid start - Calliss found the boundary with powerful ease twice in the first over but fell to a top edge in the second. Out came Howell and found the middle of his bat from the off. His confident shots deserved more runs, but fielders kept getting in the way before he was bowled by Nick for 2. With Bussell and Hill now at the crease things began to swing in Hurley's favour - lots of sumptuous stroke making pushed the field back and frustrated the growing and vocal LG crowd. The nervous Hurley supporters club began to breathe easier, only to be back biting their nails again when Hill was given out LBW for 36. Hill's frustration was plain for all to see...and from mid wicket I have to say it didn't look out to me ...although less time was spent painting the Forth Bridge than it took for the umpire to finally raise his finger.

Bussell continued his elegant march to retire at 50 but was running out of partners. Arjan Bagri was bowled for 2 and Ballard was bizarrely given out caught behind after the umpire signalled a wide. Suffice to say, and I'd like to apologise to my learned scoring companion (aged 8) from LG, that I struggled to hold in my exasperation. With Kunchur feeling under the weather and not himself at all, he bravely went out to bat for the cause. In the fading light, he and his U11 batting companions got us close but 9 from the final over was a big ask and despite a few wides it proved to be a few too many. The Lions finished on 129/7 off 20 - a valiant effort. The play offs are still possible 'mathematically' ...but in true Arsene Wenger style, we are relying on other results going our way.

A big thanks goes to the U11 boys who turned out, you guys were excellent and showed great commitment.

I'll leave the final word to my afore mentioned scoring companion, who whilst closing his book and tucking his pencil behind his ear said 'some dodgy umpiring decisions cost you in that one...'. He'll go far that young chap.

MOM Bussell

(2nd place to Henry Drew for his outstanding bowling spell)