

Report

Rain had the last word when Sonning and Gerrards Cross, the top 2 sides in the division, locked horns this Saturday at Dukes Wood. On a hot day and with a wicket that had seen 800 runs scored on it the previous 2 days the Cross batted first.

Sam Bracey and Charles Cemlyn-Jones set about the opening bowlers in their usual style, Cemlyn-Jones was severe on anything short and Bracey was launching the ball over the top at any opportunity. The score quickly went past 40 forcing Sonning to bring on a left arm spinner in the seventh over.

With the pace now taken of the ball from one end, Sonning's Australian overseas bowler bowling tightly at the other, Bracey found scoring difficult. In an attempt to push the spinner for a single he planted the ball into the hands of long on.

It seems to be becoming a Gerrards Cross habit of losing wickets in pairs and sure enough Cemlyn Jones was caught 10 balls later at backward point from a loose shot.

This brought James Easter in to join Sonny Grover. Five balls later Grover was guilty of ball watching and didn't respond to his partner's call for a single and Easter was on his way back to the pavilion. From 40 for no wicket the Cross were now 46 for 3.

Dan Simpson the third of five under 17s in the Cross side joined Grover and set about repairing the damage. Grover put away anything loose and Simpson defended well. Between them they put on 50 for the fourth wicket. Grover was finally bowled for a well made 24. Simpson, in an effort to accelerate the scoring rate, offered a catch and was out for an excellent 34.

Johnny Hughes, playing with an eye infection, pushed the ball around and Billy Hunt played well for 27. Gregor Wallace on debut kept the score board moving. But with 200 in sight, the usually reliable tale failed to wag and the Cross were bowled out for 185. 50 short of a par score.

With the league's top run scorer and an Australian overseas player in their top four, Sonning were confident of a comfortable run chase.

Mark Wildman clearly had other ideas and in an inspired spell removed the Sonnings top three in the space of four overs. At 34 for 3 Sonning were in trouble. They continued to attack and pushed the score onto 72 before Richard Thomas replacing Hunt had Parr LBW.

With the ball starting to seam around Sonning were simply hanging on. With Hughes waiting in the wings to clean up the tail Gerrards Cross were confident of a win.

Sadly a series of thunderstorms forced the players from the field and despite both teams wanting to play, too much time was lost and the Captains shook hands on a draw, both claiming that their side would have won.

All in all, Sonning are expected to win this league, but they left Dukes Wood knowing that a side with five under 17s and a few old heads had given them an almighty fright.