

Match report

SFDWP vs Marshalswicket

Tuesday 7th May 2024

Sandridge

"A life spent making mistakes is not only more honourable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing." Thus spake George Bernard Shaw, who lived but a few miles from the parish of Sandridge in the lovely village of Ayot St Lawrence. And despite being the home of some cricket-shy residents of ill repute, Sandridge itself was looking beautiful despite the months of rain that had threatened this fixture even taking place.

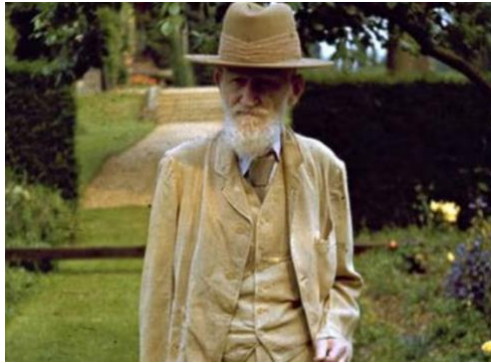
Luckily, the drainage system at Sandridge resembled Glenno's ability to neck pints at a fair rate of knots and consequently the game was declared 'on' after an early afternoon pitch inspection. To say the pitch was a little soft would be an understatement and bounce was almost non-existent, but we had a game to play and the cricket whites saw their first outing for nearly a year. Some players' kits were in a better condition than others. Busted's sun hat resembled a scientist's petri dish while Williams' shoes smelt like a rather overripe Welsh cheese.

Since last season, some Saddoes have retired from full time work, deciding instead to dedicate their lives to teaching others, sharing their skills from the world of cricket (but thankfully not about life) to other Saddoes.

Corporal Jones, (not retired from work but almost certainly retired from two handed batting), has been one of the club's leading coaching gurus, offering his advice, even without the other person's asking. And although a lovely gesture from our beloved Corporal, results plummeted and he was politely asked to stop. Yet despite this another has given up his valuable time and decided to take up the role of teacher – James Grasshopper Longbottom.

"Paggers, you're absolutely shite at cricket. But I will teach you," said Longers not a few days before the match. As you can imagine, a grateful Paggers was looking forward to seeing his new coach pull out all the stops in this first fixture.

And so, with the sun shining and everyone in good spirits, the Saddoes gathered on the boundary with some special guest appearances. Firstly, from the aforementioned Sir Michael Jones MP (Reform) who couldn't play as he was being whipped later that night at the Liberal Club. Then another appeared, who could easily have been mistaken for GB Shaw - who else but WG - ambled up. He had probably wandered into Sandridge by accident but here he was nonetheless. And then Lord Wilson arrived, who gave up a precious evening counting his money, only to be sent off to collect the chips by Anil.



Left: WG

The Saddoes were fielding first and our bowlers soon found that the damp pitch required some oomph to get the ball down the track. After a strong opening from the oppo batsmen and a couple of decent opening overs from Winners and Clampers, Frazer launched a mortar bomb that flew high into the azure sky, somehow evaded a no ball call - and the bat - and took the Sad's first wicket of the 2024 season! Delighted, Frazer declared his immediate retirement from all future matches, only showing off once more when pretending to dive for a catch later in the innings.

The Sads were on the up and the bowling attack began to bite. Granty took a lovely wicket clean bowling the oppo, and Longers bowled a decent ball for an LBW shout that was instantly given. "Watch and learn," he was heard saying as he strode back to mid-off, tapping the side of his nose.

Suddenly the ball flew off the bat, as if in slow motion, at a beautifully catchable speed and height. It was then as if the ghost of George Bernard Shaw had descended among us, pointed at Longers and recited another of his famous quotes;

"Those who can't, teach."

Oblivious, Longers, already visibly half-erect thanks to his recent lbw, was licking his lips.

As the ball floated towards its almost certain destiny, Longer's eyes moved sideways towards his new student, Paggers (who was having an exemplary game as wicket keeper by the way). A grin, as wide as a Cheshire Cat's appeared on Longer's face as the ball dropped into his waiting paws.

And dropped out again.

"Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance," said George and floated back to Ayot St Lawrence via Uber.



Left: Jedi master Baby Yoda (aka Longbottom) immediately after dropping catch

While Longers was regrouping ready for his batting masterclass, a very well taken catch off Robbo's bowling soon put things right, while Busted still somehow got his balls to skid (no not like that) and cause problems. He was unlucky not to take a wicket in what would prove to be an outstanding match for the mouldy hatted one. Pointer and Dan also delivered two good overs and the total was set at 110 to win.



Left: Dan flings
one down

Who else would you want to open your batting than Longers and Williams, the latter a man who had confidently declared not a few days earlier he was to reach the milestone of 1000 runs this season?

Safe in the knowledge victory was almost secure, their Sads teammates settled back with a couple of jars of what appeared to be a pot of out of date smegma Pointer had found in the local Costa Coffee. Not that we had chance to finish them as our superstars both returned to the pavilion within just a few balls.



Left: Morris dancers

The Sads were in trouble and Winners and Pointers had to try and rescue the situation. Powered by the small jars of god knows what, Pointer was unlucky to play on to his own wicket after a very positive start and Winners soon succumbed too. Big trouble at 24 for 4.

Enter Granty and Busted. What can we say, but this was a fight back to behold and after playing themselves in, these two really started gaining momentum. Busted even smacked a

6 – until that point the only one of the night. Gradually the target got nearer and nearer. It was at this point Frazer, who was scoring, realised he had given all Granty's runs to Winners. Still, not to worry. And just as it looked like this pair would survive Busted's wicket fell and the Captain – Robbo – entered the fray. 99 runs with 3 overs to play.



Left: A “do-able” scoreboard

A tough rearguard action from Marshalswicket now ensued with Anil bowling some fine tight overs and this wily opposition captain had saved some of his best bowlers for this part of the match.

Being a “cricketer’s cricketer” or a “c**t’s c**t” as his team mates like to call him, Robbo clocked the short boundary and said “I’m fucking having some of that.” And he did, playing a lovely looping 6, Joe Root-style, and getting the scoreboard right up there.

Sadly Granty fell and in came Paggers with five runs needed to win off the last over.

Having watched his inspirational teacher, he had learnt a lot and following the example set by Longers scored one and departed swiftly, meaning we needed 4 runs off the last few deliveries. In came Dan who fought valiantly with Robbo, but it was not to be. One run short and a loss, albeit a great match played in exactly the right spirit. It was then time for chips and beer.

It was a glorious evening despite the defeat. As George Bernard Shaw said;

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

Man of the match: Out of date pot of smegma