

1st XI – Saturday 13th May – Ashford win by 2 wickets

OCC 223-7 (50ovs)

Ashford 224-8 (50ovs)

The OCC 1st XI went into the second league game of the season, fresh from a comprehensive win the week before. Week 2 was to present a much tougher challenge, in Ashford who had been relegated from the division above in 2016.

Captain Robinson won the non-toss by default, due to Ashford not having an umpire, and duly elected to bat on what looked a fantastic batting surface. Lessey and George opened up, both combining some lovely attacking shots with some not so lovely, but effective, ones. The 50 partnership was brought up in good time and a platform was being set for a sizable total. Unfortunately 3 quick wickets then followed. Fastest finger in Kent, Frank Penfold, got the ball rolling for Ashford, giving Lessey out LBW to one which certainly looked high enough for him to at least get the benefit of the doubt. Athers came and went quickly, and George managed to throw away all of his hard work snicking a wide one behind. The rebuilding job was done by Rat and Robbo for the second week in a row, both batting extremely well again. Rat's nudging and nudling, and lightning quick speed between the wickets once again threatening a hospital visit for Robbo. Rat finally fell for 53, and Robbo for 78 towards the end of the innings. A four from Dom in the last over and some quick ones and twos meant that we posted a total around about a par score, of 223.

Ben and Hayden opened up the bowling, and 3 early wickets for Hayden meant that Ashford were reduced to 40-3. There was then a partnership between the Ashford opener and their number 5, which grew slowly but steadily. Far too often, all bowlers were guilty of the good work of a tight first 5 balls of an over being undone by a bad last ball, which the batsmen never seemed to miss out on. This just about kept Ashford in the hunt, as the rate slowly climbed up to 7 an over, 7.5 an over. Ben returned to break the partnership, an important catch taken by James at cover. Hayden then did the same at the other end, to pick up his 4th wicket, and complete an excellent spell. As the oppo gradually upped to ante, a couple of misfields, and a couple of dropped catches cost us. Dom bowled well, and was probably slightly unfortunate to not pick up more than his one wicket. There's no denying that the Ashford opener batted well, as he carried his bat to score a hundred and win the game off the last ball. But on another day the numerous chips in the air early on in his innings would go to hand, and the end result would have been entirely different. The game can serve as a lesson for us all to 'want it' a bit more, and to keep working through the tough middle overs, even if things are not going entirely our way. A game we should probably have killed off, and got at least a winning draw out of. On the positive side, despite missing a couple of players, we competed toe-to-toe with a side that are very likely to finish at the top end of the table. With a few minor improvements here and there, hopefully this season will end up being a successful one.