



Devon Over 50's v. Channel Islands Over 50's @ Bovey Tracey CC –Monday 18th July 2005

Tone set Early... Devon went into their final group game of this years County Championship against their counterparts from the Channel Islands, not having beaten their visitors since the Title winning season of 2002.

This task was made a little harder when, for one of the first occasions this summer, skipper Julian Page lost the toss and Devon were asked to bat first. The first was to set the tone for the afternoon as bowler Middleton charged in and bowled 4 wides in the over along with 3 runs and a bye. But, most notably, there also a wicket, that being the first ball dismissal of Pete Shepherd. After a run of impressive scores in this years Championship, Peter was hoping to impress once more especially as the game was being played at his club. But it was not to be and after 1 over Devon were 8 for 1. Skipper Page was then joined at the crease by his vice captain Bob Eames and the pair set out to repair the damage and set the platform for the rest of the side to build a more than competitive total. The left handed pair done this with great application and vigour as they pushed and prodded numerous singles as well striking the odd bad ball to the boundary. The key point of this partnership was the fact that the total was kept moving and when Bob Eames struck a square cut that was plucked out of the air at Cover Point by John Tall, the score had moved along to 80 in only the 17 over. Tall's catch was to prove to be the first of several splendid efforts that were snapped up by fielders on both sides through the course of the afternoon.

As so often happens after a decent partnership, when one wicket falls another seems to follow almost immediately and today was no exception to this when after the addition of only another 8 runs Page was caught by the keeper off the bowling of Kinder from a delivery that jumped sharply and rattled into the batsman's gloves.. 88 for 3 looked as though it could be the start of a wobble, but these worries were laid to rest by yet another left handed pair in Bob Macey and Chris Theedom. With Macey being a little more watchful on what was becoming a slightly unpredictable wicket, and Theedom pushing numerous quick singles, the total was taken up to 163. The pair added 75 runs in only 78 deliveries and when you take into account that Macey's 18 took him all of 52 balls, you can see that the tempo during this vital partnership was increased steadily throughout. After Macey was caught by Middleton at Long On off the bowling of slow left armer Birkett, the scoring was to take another leap forward when Nick Rogers joined Chris Theedom in the middle. Nick Rogers got off the mark immediately and raced to his 36 from only 34 deliveries. During the 72 runs that were added for the 5th wicket, only 67 balls were faced by Theedom and Rogers.

Chris Theedom Stars... The partnership also saw Theedom go past the 50 mark at the best part of a run a ball. With a short cameo from Nigel Mountford at the end of the Devon innings, the hosts had taken the total along to an impressive 250 for the loss of 5 wickets. This total was built on contributions from all but the unfortunate Shepherd, but the star of the innings was Chris Theedom's unbeaten 76, not only his highest, but by far and away the most impressive if Chris's innings for the side and his 2nd half century of the summer for the club. Devon's batsmen had certainly given their side a big chance of breaking their run of bad results against Islanders.

The visitor's innings started very much along the same lines as that of Devon's, but with one exception – there were no runs in the 1st over. But there was a wicket off the last ball as there was in the Devon innings. Left hander Robson smashed the final delivery of the over into covers only to see Bob Eames pluck the ball from the air one handed. A truly great effort, the visitors were left ruing their luck on 0 for 1.

Devon's bowlers, aided by some sharp fielder from all in the Devon camp, were in no mood what so ever to give away any cheap runs. Indeed, after the dozen overs, the Channel Islands had amassed only a paltry 24 runs after tight spells from both Rose and Jon Jenkins. But, the one thing that was in the batting sides favour was the fact that they had lost only one wicket. It was then that both skipper Dennis and Andy Gibbs started to increase the tempo quick significantly for their side. In the first 6 overs after the opening bowlers had been taken off, 39 runs were added to the total and until Nick Rogers got one to nip back and through the defences of Keith Dennis, it looked very much on the cards that it well prove to be a long afternoon in the field for the Devon side. But as in the first innings when Devon lost 2 quick wickets after a decent partnership the exact same thing happened to the Islanders when Fred Harding, in his debut season, continued his run of fine bowling performances when he trapped Gibbs in front to leave the total on 93 for 3. This was then the game rally started to warm up. When John Taylor made his way to the middle there was little indication of the fireworks that were shortly to arrive. Taylor hit 6 big sixes (all over long on) in his 24 ball stay. His 31 quickfire runs showed that the visitor's had no intentions in lying down and handing Devon the victory they craved. But his innings ended almost as quickly as it had begun when Stuart Lott hung on to a real steepler of a catch, again at long-on, and the 4th wicket of the innings had fallen with the total standing at 104.

Fourth Win of Season... Although all the remaining batsmen tried hard, their best efforts were not enough as the required run rate rose and rose steadily and after yet another good catch, this time low down by Jenkins, the innings was all but over and it was left to Nick Rogers to wrap the innings up when he picked up his 2nd wicket of the afternoon in hitting John Tall's stumps

with the total on 202. Victory was Devon's by the margin of 48 runs, a margin that was not lost on the Channel Islanders seeing that during Devon's innings, they had given away a monstrous 49 extras.

All the Devon bowlers had again contributed with wickets and it was truly a total team performance in the field. Skipper Page calling it by far and away the best display of the season.

Therefore, after the 4th consecutive win, Devon completed their Championship season with a record of 4 wins and three defeats. What might have been after the early season jitters. But the future looks bright with some of the "fresh new talent" that has become part of the squad this season.

The club would like to extend their thanks to Bovey Tracey Cricket Club for hosting the fixture and to Gill Mountford and her entourage of helpers for putting on yet another magnificent feast for the two sides. It was not an entirely easy time for everyone at Bovey after death of club stalwart Ken Bond the previous week and everyone concerned with the Devon Over 50's Cricket Club would like to extend their best wishes and support to all at Bovey during this sad time.

Man of the Match: Chris Theedom (Sandford CC)