

Match Report 20/03/06

Isn't education a wonderful thing? I am so excited to learn that the current position the Almonds find themselves in – rock bottom of Division 2, for anyone whose notice it has escaped – is being attributed to my good self; apparently, the Match Reports aren't upbeat enough. I did not know that, but thank our Craptain profusely for enlightening me, cutting me to the bone and rubbing salt in the wound. Ever heard the expression "you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear"? Ex-Almond also took it upon himself to offer criticism of the aforementioned reports at Bomber Barnesy's 50th bash, which is a bit rich coming from someone who deserted the Team without a second's thought because he couldn't hack it. May I refer ex-Almond to peRV's web site message of 22/3. Everybody will join me I am sure in sending the Team's best wishes to Mrs. Ex Almond – we hope she recovers quickly from the nasty infection she suffered when a wound in her thumb took a turn for the worse.

As us Almonds gathered for our fixture against Lockleaze Monday 20/3, there was a detectable air of excited anticipation, if you knew where to look. Despite the copious amount of pain & discomfort I was in and hiding bravely, I scarcely winced when Craptain 1st-paired me with aRCe. Some would argue that being paired with aRCe is enough to make anyone wince, but as that isn't very upbeat, I will not pursue that argument any further at this time. aRCe did all right for opening batsman, scoring himself 21. I struggled, a bit. You see, I had a bad arm, but it wasn't until I closed my hand around an Almond ball and tried to lift it that I realised I might be in a bit of a bind – manoeuvring it round once it was in my grip to get it comfortable was quite pleasant, but when it came to swing and release it wasn't really happening.

As I don't want anyone getting the wrong idea about how I came to overuse the muscles in my right forearm, I will satisfy your curiosity with how it actually came to pass. The damage was incurred whilst spending time out of doors on a sunny and not hideously cold day, carefully adjusting the size of my shrubs: anyone remember that classic Gina G hit, "Ooh Ah, Just A Little Bit"? Well, it just so happens that I was employing precisely that method of pruning, slicing away with my beefy seccateurs all the unwanted bits – "just a little bit", "a little bit more" – & it was all going quite well until I stepped back and noticed a teensiest squidge of unevenness creeping in, and it was about now I had to resort to the Bad Boy loppers because the branches were getting a little bit thicker right back there in the midst of the shrub. How much fun is using loppers?! Those babies could cut through quite thick wood – I had a fabulous time testing how much girth they could cope with, and it wasn't until they reached their limit that I remembered the real reason I was out there – Personally, I think there is a lot to be said for stumps, they can look quite artful if you leave a few tendrils draping around and about – think bald man comb-over and you should be able to picture it quite nicely.

I needed some new plants anyway, and what with Mothers' Day coming up it was an ideal time to effect my cull, and once John had calmed down and seen the funny side, he agreed with me that it "opened out" the garden rather nicely, and turf doesn't actually cost that much anyway. So, after all that gripping, squeezing & releasing, you can probably empathise with the sort of ache I had in my arm – if not, by the time you employ Reg's new Team Technique for better skittling, you will: apparently, another area of development for you boys is polishing your balls more – I'm sure you will all look forward to that training session!

Anyway, back to the plot – where was I? Oh yeah, so I had a bad arm and didn't start out my turn very well – I wasn't getting an awful lot of sympathy in amongst talk of Cheltenham races & football scores, but eventually I was lucky enough to have the hand of God, aka MaraDouglas, on it: CD marsarged my arm for me and I know I am never going to hear the end of the fact that I actually then went out there and hit something worthwhile following x 3 ducks and a 2! A further bout of magic before my last up produced another positive result, so much as it pains me I must thank my esteemed colleague for his attentions. It reckon it might have been more impressive though had he worked his magic from my feet upwards.

I thought Pete was a bit quiet, but apparently he was getting himself psyched up. I didn't realise until later that he meant for Sue returning from her Ann Summers party, I'd automatically assumed he meant for skittles! In Barnesy's absence I offered to multi task and keep score in the book, this also provided me with the opportunity to position myself better for picking up gossip for my report, although I didn't much like the men standing behind me joshing in their merry way about grey hairs – those are very expensive highlights Boys, as well you know.

aRCe & I had left us 18 pins down, & peRV, ably assisted by Taffy, managed to limit further damage to only adding 2 pins to that deficit, putting us 20 behind after he scored a quarter century against Taffy's 24. Jocky & Turk turned the game by pulling back a very sweet 16 pins, Jocky earning himself top score with 28 whilst Turk took care of scoring the 16 – he lodged a complaint about being robbed of a pin on his second up when he scored 6 but was only recorded as hitting 5, but he left his appeal too late & almost certainly left swearing under his breath.

Craptain put our 2 Exocets on next: Orical racked up another quarter century, whilst Compact put 20 on the board. Orical employed a questionable manoeuvre when, ignoring all the pins grouped together on the right side of the alley, he went for the copper stood all on its own on the left. Compact, on the other hand, was suffering from premature ball-drop

syndrome – having commented that it was the 4th time he’d dropped the ball too soon, aRCe, in the spirit of support and camaraderie, let Compact know we were paying close attention to his every move, and the excitement being generated by his prowess, by announcing “we noticed”. 3 pins were dropped, leaving us only 7 behind as Craptain played Barnes Jnr with Sparky.

Junior made sure we all knew he’d dragged himself from his sick bed nursing ‘man flu’ to help us out, and obviously Day Nurse doesn’t have quite the same effect on his system as 10 pints of beer because he only managed 13. Sparky scored 27, and is taking his competitiveness with Pete for pole position in the averages a little too far: the week before we’d had Pete throwing his toys out of the pram and saying he was going to pack it in just because he couldn’t hit what he was aiming at, and this week Sparky found it necessary to offer up the same promise / threat. Some of us can obviously shoulder not playing so well better than others – you don’t hear me whining about packing it in when I don’t score so well, oh no. Mainly because I’m too frightened about being asked to put it in writing, actually.

We lost another 6 pins at this point, and were left an unlucky 13 down as ‘ankers Craptain & Chuckle 1 stepped up to the line. They perfectly matched their opponents for skill (!!), but could only manage to hold our losing position not improve on it. Craptain scored a 19, C1 27 – not realising Jocky had 28 or he’d have tried a bit harder for sure! – and we lost to Lockleaze by 14.

There is no match this week – our next fixture is on Tuesday 4/4 at home against Trymside.

It only remains for me to point out that far from it being anything to do with the match reports, the way we throw the ball, the size of the balls, the weight of the balls, the size of the pins or whether they are placed 100% accurately on their spots, whether the wife has put out or not, what direction the wind is coming from, how fast you draw or how well the football is going, the real reason we have struggled this season is our Craptain’s failure to inspire his Team to greatness and show his faith – we’ve been playing all season under the banner ‘Division 3’ on our web site!!