

FLYING START!

Outlane v Stones, April 2009

By David Brenchley

Outlane made a flying start to the 2009 season with a 50-run victory against Stones. Openers Stephen Helliwell and Dan Crosland put them in a commanding position early on but, at one point in the visitor's innings it looked as if they would cruise to a first win of the campaign.



The venue: Outlane's Old Lindley Road ground

Helliwell (51) smashed the first ball of the season for four while Crosland (56) did similar with the first ball he faced. With the short boundaries at Outlane's Lindley Moor ground, the youngsters quickly put on a century partnership. In seeing off the opening three bowlers, Helliwell thumped eight fours and a six, while Crosland hit six fours and four sixes.

When young spinner Ben Watkins came on, though, the scoring soon dried up and the teenager bowled Helliwell. The turning point, though, was the controversial dismissal of Crosland as Mick Taylor 'trapped' him LBW with a ball that was, seemingly, going high and past leg stump.

This wicket signalled a collapse as the home side went from 112-0 to 161-3 all out. Captain Graham Hughes (17) and Paul Lorraine (15) looked like they would take over where the openers had left off but they put on 33 before Watkins bowled them both. Opening bowler Simon Ainley looked to boost his team's score but his 18 became more of a cameo as he was bowled by Taylor.

Watkins then dismissed Peter Lorraine (2), A.Zulfiqur (5), Gavin Roberts (1) and Al Leeson (0) to finish with figures of 7-58. Taylor helped reduce Outlane to 200 all out, disposing of Anwar (0).

Stones' innings started slowly, with wicketkeeper Crosland catching Matt Dunn (4) off Leeson and Karl Whipp (10) off Ainley early on. The impressive Watkins then put on 21 before Leeson had him caught by Roberts.

At 41-3, things were looking cosy for the hosts but Kevin O'Roarke and Stephen Hepptinstall swung the game in the visitors' favour, putting on 68 for the fourth-wicket stand. Anwar dismissed Hepptinstall for 29, the wicket which Hughes described as "crucial" because "[Hepptinstall] was batting well and they fell apart [after the wicket]."

O'Roarke wasn't finished though and the away pavilion felt that, as long as he was in, they were the favourites to win. He was rapidly running out of partners and, in the end, his 64 wasn't enough to see them through.

After an expensive start, Anwar finished with a five-wicket haul, including another controversial leg-before decision against 'keeper John Kershaw (0). Duncan Brundell weighed in with 2-44 as another bowler's cameo, in Graham Mellor (15), looked like it could turn the tide again. In the end, though, Stones fell short of their target and Outlane ended with the 10 points.