

Match Report Playoff Sunday 25th September 2011

Forge Valley CC 186/5 beat Kirkbymoorside 182/7 by 5 wickets

In a tense encounter at Seamer CC both sides gave their all in a fine advert for Premier league cricket but Valley came out victors by 5 wickets with 6 balls to spare.

Kirkbymoorside won the toss and elected to bat with the dangerous Jodie Robson opening with Andy Marley. Valley's bowling options saw Mike Andrew open the bowling with Martin Shepherdson. After a cautious start, Robson decided to free his arms and swiftly moved to 26 before he fell brilliantly caught behind by Josh Cooper with the score on 38. Kirkby skipper Martin Charlton fell lbw in the same over and Valley were pleased to claim two early wickets. Kirkby possess a strong looking middle order and with Marley playing the anchor role this allowed the shot players to express themselves, Dave Gardner made fluent 27 but then fell in Andrew's final over from his opening spell. The game evenly poised with Kirkby on 76/3 after 20 overs. Valley skipper Dave Morris then introduced the spin duo of Andy Holden and Simon Dobson who started to exert pressure with some accurate bowling. Both claimed a wicket apiece, with Holden claiming the scalp of opener Marley, leg before for a well made 42 (3x4). Andy Bayes then strode to the crease and after a slow start started to time the ball well. Valley turned back to Mike Andrew for the death bowling and he kept things tight but the late assault of 67 runs in the final 10 overs saw Kirkby finish on 182/7, a good, competitive total.

Valley reverted back to type with Skipper Morris and Dobson opening the innings for only the third time this season. Morris fell early, caught when looking to work one from Martin Charlton onto the leg side that held up in the pitch. Nigel Kendrew joined Dobson and the pair started to look comfortable at the crease. At 44/1 after 10 overs and the batsmen moving up the gears the dreaded rain arrived. After a lengthy delay, the umpires took the players out and resumed the action. Kirkby used the option of their three spin bowlers well, giving them the ability to change things around when required. Kendrew and Dobson took their partnership to 90 before Kendrew was adjudged leg before for 25. Dobson then fell, brilliantly caught and bowled by namesake John Dobson for 54 (7x4) and with the score now on 107/3 after 32, a thrilling climax was in the offing. Mick Glew was now at the crease and survive a chance when on just 1. Sensible batting followed with singles being taken, mixed in with the odd boundary and with 5 overs to go, 35 runs were needed. Phil Holden had now joined Glew and played an excellent supporting role to allow Glew to cut loose in the 43rd over where he smashed two huge sixes of Sean Walker. A massive over in the context of the game and this had left Valley needing just 7 runs off two overs. Glew didn't allow the match to enter the final over as he clubbed the final ball of the 44th over straight back over the bowlers head for six to secure the win and premier league status for 2012.

This was a fine effort by both teams, who played hard, committed cricket in what would many describe as difficult circumstances given the problems which arose from this playoff. Good luck to Kirkbymoorside next season who showed their premier quality in this match and their return to the top flight, with this strength of team shouldn't be long coming.