

Dramatic Finale Not in The Script



[A dramatic sky to match the game at Alstonefield](#)

What a thriller this turned out to be. A hugely enjoyable match, watched by a large contingent from Abbots Bromley CC, nonetheless had developed an air of predictability as the Abbots Bromley innings took its course. Alstonefield CC's 182 for 8 off 30 overs always felt a nudge over par and even with a strong batting line up, the visitors had struggled to dominate the Gargoyles' bowlers, scoring at a consistent 5 runs per over throughout their innings, when they actually needed 6. So to the last over and the maths held true, with 29 runs needed for victory...

The Gargoyles batted first. Jon Lane and Will Siddons respectful of accurate bowling, but able to keep the scoreboard ticking and strike rotating, put on 33 for the first wicket, before Lane miscued on 11. John Curry, Ben King, Simon Smith and Neil Shotton all just reached double figures as Siddons anchored the innings. At the halfway mark, 71 for 2 off 15 overs was a decent platform for someone to inject some fireworks into proceedings. Enter stage right, Liam Duffy to direct proceedings. With calm assurance his 17 deliveries were dispatched for 30 runs. Andy Bray made 12 off 4 balls and Siddons rounded off an excellent 65 not out with 13 off the final over.



Will Siddons with an excellent 65 not out

The second 15 overs had yielded 111 runs.

182 for 8 at the interval felt more than competitive as long as the Gargoyles' bowlers had learnt their lines.



Ben King with a super display of bowling

Ben King certainly had, opening with a maiden. Captain Bray raised the stakes with a wicket maiden in his first over, courtesy of a smart Siddons stumping. King splattered Phillips' stumps in his third over on his way to the superb figures of 5 overs, 3 maidens, 1 for 11, putting Abbots Bromley on the back foot.

There was too much talent and experience in the Abbots Bromley side not to get back in contention and that's what Bailey and Meads did reaching 63 in the 11th over when Bailey was done by the flight and top edged to Siddons behind the stumps, giving Brian Stack his first wicket for the club. Meads and Haywood Snr took the score to 95 before Meads was bowled by Duffy. When Haywood was trapped lbw by McKay, 95 for 5 in the 20th over had the Gargoyles in the box seat. After 25 overs the score had reached 128 for 7, featuring a Neil Shotton stumping, and leaving 55 runs for victory from 5 overs and a sense of inevitability. However, Clay and Haywood Jr were no tailenders. They brought power and technique to the middle and made progress. Initially it was Haywood who caught the eye as he lined up the bowling before hitting four successive boundaries. There was some tension now and no foregone conclusion. Haywood got under a Duffy slower one and sent a steeper into the azure canopy. In spite of the well populated vicinity, only one voice courteously claimed responsibility for halting the ball's swirling descent; that of Jon Lane. Such was the height on the ball that the batsmen had run two, before outstretched digits met scuffed leather. The digits won and Lane had contrived a stunning catch, without ever looking like he would.



Jon Lane confounded everyone including himself by catching this skier ...

So, one over remaining and 29 required for the win. The old adage of always having your most experienced actors in the final scene meant it fell to Liam Duffy to do what he always does and avoid any unnecessary drama. Four balls later and Clay had reduced that target to just 7, drawing particular satisfaction from two sixes so straight they bounced back to the bowler off the sightscreen. The sight of all the Gargoyles' fielders spaced at intervals around the boundary rope was a most unlikely denouement. Two balls, and all to play for. Duffy didn't need the prompt. A superb yorker ended the fun and games. A final boundary closed the Abbots Bromley account on 180 for 9.

In such a close game when only two runs separated an afternoon's endeavours, there is always the post-match attraction of arguing over the match defining decisive acts. Certainly, Jon Lane's finger tips saved two runs and therefore a tie, but it was Ally King's bravery in stopping a certain boundary and turning it into just a single run, which ultimately was the three run difference between win and lose.

ALSTONEFIELD CC 182 FOR 8 BEAT ABBOTS BROMLEY CC 180 FOR 9 BY 2 RUNS