

Bowdon Vale Cricket Club Match Reports - 2010

Saturday 18th September:

1st XI: versus Winsford away: WCC 205-8. BVCC 57-10. Lost by 148 runs.

Accusations of suspicious scoring patterns were proved to be unfounded as once again the Vale collapsed for a score under 100 for the 8th time this season. Nothing suspicious about that; it has actually become quite predictable. In a rain affected match, Winsford shuffled their batting order & came up trumps as most of their line up made runs, B. Smith top scoring with 53. Steve Barrett was the pick of the bowlers returning 2-23 off 8 overs. In reply Vale were soon in trouble as Winsford rotated the bowling through 8 bowlers, allowing each a maximum of 3 overs. This tactic must have disoriented the Vale batsmen so much that they became confused & gave away their wickets, recording 4 ducks in a score of 57. Again, B. Smith was the lead performer taking 3-6 off his 3 overs. Thus ended the season for the Vale in which they recorded only 2 wins & 4 draws. They now start the 2011 season in Division 3 & are already in second place, alphabetically of course. Thanks must go to John Roylance for scoring all season.

2nd XI: versus Alderley Park at home: APCC 37-10. BVCC 38-7. Won by 3 wickets.

The final game of the season saw a cliff-hanger at Priory Street. Vale won the toss & asked the visitors to bat on a damp wicket. Opening bowlers Rick Allan (2-13) & Ian Willson tore into Alderley Park each taking 2 wickets to send them reeling at 4-3. Only Adams with an aggressive 16 put up any resistance as the visitors recorded 6 ducks. Ian Willson was twice on a hat trick & returned 7-21, Williamson taking 3 catches. Danny Conroy took a sharp catch in the gully, Gareth Roberts pouched a catch at slip & Dominic Turner gave a creditable performance behind the stumps taking a smart catch & a run out to close the innings. Vale made heavy of work chasing down the visitors' total & after a flurry of 4's from Gareth Roberts (14) the Vale collapsed to 31-7 to leave Rick Allan & Dominic Turner to take the Vale over the winning line as the rain started to fall. So the 2nd XI ended the season on a high note, finishing 10th in the table, recording 6 wins & 3 draws (only 5 teams in the league scored more wins). Thanks to all who played & supported, especially to Sharon & Jess for another season of marvellous teas.

Saturday 11th September:

1st XI: versus Over Peover at home: OPCC 182-6. BVCC 153-7. Match drawn.

Responding to being relegated after last weeks result, Vale delivered a spirited performance against visitors Over Peover in a match full of incident. Ten overs of the match were lost to rain & Vale were in the driving seat having the visitors at 34-4 off 13 overs. However Tucker decided to tuck into the Vale bowling, hitting an unbeaten 110 to allow Peover to declare after only 38 overs. Unfortunate skipper Nigel Halsall suffered a serious finger injury that ended his game & his season & nephew Jack was pick of the bowlers with 3-46. In reply the Vale made a rapid start with late replacement Gary Webb hammering 47 at the top of the order & useful contributions from Noman Hasan (30) & John Ryan (28) gave the Vale a good chance of victory. The match degenerated into acrimonious accusations as umpiring decisions were contested, with some of the opposition players allegedly capable of starting a fight in an empty room. It was left to Colin Smith & Iain Johnson to bat out the final 6 overs to close the game as an unsatisfactory draw. Expect reports from both umpires & captains to have an x-certificate.

2nd XI: versus Romiley away: BVCC 61-9. Match abandoned - rain.

A already depleted Vale 2nd XI faced league leaders Romiley having received a last minute cry-off on the way to the game, leaving no chance of getting a replacement. Having lost the toss, the Vale struggled to make 61 in a rain interrupted match. Paresh Solanki (7) & Dominic Turner (15*) dug deep to keep the Vale innings alive, Paresh taking 10 overs to get off the mark. Extras were joint-top scorer. D. Garner returned 3-12 for the home side. The deluge arrived at the end of the tea

interval & despite the sterling efforts of the Romiley players, the conditions were deemed too dangerous for playing cricket, albeit perfect for mud-wrestling, and the game was abandoned.

Saturday 4th September:

1st XI: versus Prestbury away: PCC 208-6. BVCC 184-5. Match drawn.

With relegation threatening Vale needed a good performance to boost morale as the season comes to an end & duly delivered. Prestbury declared after 43 overs having rattled up 208 for the loss of 5 wickets, skipper Nigel Halsall being pick of the bowlers with 3-21. Prestbury opener Constable's innings of 44 was certainly no oil painting but in truth gave them a good start on which Battersby (42*) & Urenderan (41) built. In reply, Jack Halsall continued his good form with an unbeaten 85 & together with veteran John Ryan (24) steadied the innings as Vale tottered at 30-2. Steve Barrett added 31 to the score for the Vale to gain a creditable draw in 47 overs & gain 10 points.

At the start of the day with 3 games left, Barrow required 2 points to send Vale down to the 3rd Division. They managed to secure 4 points so that with 2 games left, Vale have 155 points & cannot catch Barrow (223), leaving Over Peover (200) to battle out the second relegation position & Vale relegated.

2nd XI: versus Chester CO at home: BVCC 110-10. CCOCC 111-1. Lost by 9 wickets.

The Vale 2nd XI's great form of late came to an abrupt end at Priory Street with a 9 wicket defeat to title hopefuls Chester County Officers. Batting first Vale made an encouraging start losing opener Hopton for 21 & moving nicely to 88-2 at the 23 over drinks break. They say that "drinks bring wickets" & on this occasion they did just that - 8 of them in fact, within 10 overs & for only another 22 runs. Skipper Williamson (31) led the collapse & thereafter the only bright spot was the debut of Mark Fletcher (5) who with Damien Paul (0*) added 12 for the last wicket. The Roberts father & son combination claimed 9 of the wickets with skipper Alan taking 5-36 & son 4-43. Chester opening bat D.Hickey added an unbeaten 53 to his huge tally of 600+ runs for the season as the visitors reached the Vale total in 24 overs. Ian Willson was the solitary wicket taker with 1-40.

Saturday 28th August:

1st XI: versus Barnton away: BVCC 112-9. BCC 85-5. Match abandoned due to rain

Following last weeks performance, at 17-3 off 11 overs this was looking like a groundhog day but skipper Nigel Halsall dropped anchor to build an innings of 59 which was the core of the Vale score in a rain affected first half, well-supported by Colin Smith (18). Vale declared after 41 overs (one too early) but that had no impact on the game other than to bring an early tea to allow the players to tuck into nice samosas & mini spring rolls. Barton got off to a flyer but bowling changes at both ends has the desired effect bringing wickets to Mark Nicholas & Steve Barrett. Nicholas continued his purple patch opening with 2 tempting full tosses which left the batsman in 2 minds, whether to hit it into the field or the school & then promptly bowled the still-confused opening bat. Nicholas (2-17) & Barrett (3-24) put the brakes on the Barnton reply to leave them at 57-5 off 13 overs. One more wicket & the game would have been up for Barton but the deluge arrived after 25 overs leaving both teams to retire to the pavillion to watch Sky Sports & take 7 points each from the game.

2nd XI: versus Pott Shrigley at home: PSCC 157-10. BVCC 159-5. Won by 5 wickets.

Vale 2nd XI continued their fine run of form in the second half of the season with a 7 wicket victory, but the margin could (and probably should) have been wider and nearly lost out to the weather. Winning the toss and electing to bowl on a damp track, the Vale managed to drop 9 different catches, including the opener 2nd ball and again a few overs later who went on to make 25, and after Halsall and Allan had ripped through the middle order leaving Pott Shrigley on 110/9, promptly managed to drop the number 11 on no fewer than 4 separate occasions, as he blasted the

unfortunate Roberts for 24 in one over to leave the Vale a target of 157/9 off the allotted 45 overs (instead of 39 overs) with menacing black clouds overhead. It must be also said that the ground fielding was excellent though, with very few extras and 2 run outs. In reply, Vale knocked off the runs in 24 overs, with Pott Shrigley bowling poorly in favourable conditions and getting put to the sword by the excellent Halsall (85*) and Stevenson (46) in an opening stand of 80+ that left the result beyond doubt. After an appalling start to the season in which we didn't get a victory until the 3rd July, the Vale 2nds have now put an impressive run together reading 5 wins, a winning draw and 2 defeats in the last 9. The next two games being against top and second will give us a true indication to the teams' improvements over the last two months.

Saturday 21st August:

1st XI: versus Lymm OP at home: BVCC 55-10. LOPCC 59-0. Lost by 10 wickets.

Posting their 4th consecutive score of 80 or under, the only thing the Vale did right at Priory Street on Saturday was to put the covers on. They shouldn't have bothered taking them off again as only 3 batsmen reached double figures & 5 failed to score, the innings finally closing in the 34th over. The visitors took 10.2 overs to reach their target for no loss as the match finished so early that there was nobody available to take the call to record the match result. And the best thing about the day? The tea - thanks Sharon!

2nd XI: versus Woodford away: WCC 186-8. BVCC 105-10. Lost by 81 runs.

We did alright in the field, a few too many byes and dropping Weir on 6 (went on to get 26) and Anwyl on about 10 (went on to get 38) - the 186 probably flattered them by 30 or so runs. Grimes (43) opened and batted well before succumbing to the excellent 7 over spell from Tom Moncur (7-3-21-3) other knocks of note included Anwyl (38) who chased Jack Ryan before holing out to an excellent slower one that he skied for a caught and bowled. Jack in his 7 overs got 3-46. Pete Morgan took an excellent diving catch as well. The only other wickets were taken by Rick Allan 15-4-37-2. In response, we had the option of chasing the runs or batting for the weather - and duly did neither. Zac Stevenson (30) opened the batting well, and T. Moncur got a start on 15. We were really suffering at 50-6 until Rick Allan (26) who will be teaching the aforementioned Tom Moncur and Jack Ryan that beamers are no balls and need to be shouted before they get caught at deep square leg! And Paresh Solanki (14) who got a horror of a delivery that was the biggest long hop you've seen that promptly pearolled and stopped under his back leg for the worst LBW delivery you'll ever see in your life took us on to 99-8 and the others added 7. Just as skipper Rick Allan got out the rain got heavy, but it seemed more than a bit unfair to deny Woodford a deserved win with two U-16's at the crease when they needed 2 more wickets and they duly wrapped the game up. If the skipper had still been in, we'd have been off the park and in the pavilion!

Saturday 14th August:

1st XI: versus Barrow away: BVCC 90-10. BCC 98-7. Lost by 3 wickets.

In a bottom of the table clash, the Vale snatched defeat from the jaws of victory after a topsy-turvy afternoon where fortunes changed every 30 minutes. Asked to bat first on a drying wicket, the Vale were soon in deep trouble at 13-5 off 12 overs & then 27-7 off 17. An excellent partnership of 59 between Steve Bottomley (26) & Steve Barrett (38*) lasting 80 minutes (24 overs), gave the Vale some hope of making the game competitive. Rolling the wicket at the break only created more problems for the batsmen as skipper Nigel Halsall (2-38) made use of the conditions. In-form spinner Mark Nicholas took advantage of the conditions to return excellent figures of 9-4-14-4, even snaring Barrow ringer Barclay with an outrageous long-hop caught in the deep. At 46-7 off 26 overs things looked good for the Vale but Elwood (23*) & Barrow (25*) saw the home side to victory with 10 overs to spare.

2nd XI: versus Barrow at home: BCC 107-10. BVCC 110-7. Won by 3 wickets.

The Vale 2nd XI reversed the 1st XI result in a similar bottom of the table clash. The Vale continued their impressive form to bowl out Barrow for 107. Paresh Solanki was the hero returning

4-3-4-5 & taking 3 catches, Rick Allan & Danny Conroy chipping in with 2-21 & 2-11 respectively. In reply, the Vale got off to a good start with Gareth Roberts (27) leading the attack, supported by Tom Moncur (17), Jack Ryan (15) & Sam Moncur (23*) as the Vale cruised to victory in 29 overs.

Saturday 7th August:

1st XI: versus Cholmondeley at home: BVCC 56-10. CCC 57-1. Lost by 9 wickets.

The match against Cholmondeley at Priory Street was almost a carbon copy of the first game at the visitors ground back in May, with Bristow improving on his 7-37 to take 7-31 & Hockenhill beating his 30 to register 32*. The game was effectively over after the first 2 balls when the Vale were 0-2. Only resistance from John Ryan (15) took the home side to 37-4 off 20 overs but by the 29th over, the Vale were all out. It took Cholmondeley only 13 overs to knock off the necessary runs & to head home victorious.

2nd XI: versus Trafford MV away: BVCC 177-6. TMVCC 143-8. Winning draw.

Vale lost the toss & were asked to bat on a damp wicket & an overcast day which added movement & swing to the conditions. Openers Hopton (78) & Williamson (74) put on a first wicket stand of 140 with some careful batting. At 56-0 off 20 overs, Vale reached 100 off 30 & then kicked on. At 167-2, there was a flurry of wickets as Vale went for more runs with Walsh (3-34) & Pomfret (3-59) doing the damage. In reply the Vale attack of Solanki (2-34) & Crowson (3-33) tied the home side down for the first 30 overs putting them under pressure to play shots & striking at key moments, Crowson frustrating & then bowling danger-man Khan who hit 107 in the first match. Shakespeare bowled tightly only conceding 13 runs off 8 overs for 1 wicket & all 4 juniors (Conroy, Mullen, Morgan & Dean) fielded brilliantly, with Connor Dean on debut taking 2 excellent catches. Home side skipper Lee (48*) led a late response as Vale tried to buy the last 3 wickets at 88-7 but chances went begging & the visitors finished with a creditable winning draw & a great all-round team performance where everyone contributed.

Wednesday 4th August:

Over 40's: versus Cheadle Hulme away. BVCC 109-10. Cheadle Hulme 109-8. Match tied.

Four years ago the Vikings tied their match at Cheadle Hulme when they should have won. In a dramatic finish this year's game amazingly produced the same result with the Vikings this time the happier side. Batting first, last week's star Mark Nicholas went from hero to zero with a third ball duck. He failed to time a short ball on a pudding of a pitch to give a simple return catch to Battey. Peter Thorpe and Garry Webb then put on 35 when Gary called for a second run and Thorpey was run out with a direct hit. Gary batted well to retire on 30 and Gareth Roberts rediscovered his form, hitting two sixes, before being plumb LBW for 25. The rest of batting was disappointing and the Vale were all out for 109 setting the home team a target of 110. Bob Hutton again bowled well at the start of Cheadle Hulme's innings in tandem with Neil Halsall. Bob got two wickets to end his spell with 4-0-18-2. His second wicket saw the back of the dangerous Potts when he skied what looked like a simple catch to keeper Colin Smith, who held on at the third attempt. Neil bowled just the two overs and conceded one run in each. Peter Thorpe, Pete Shakespeare and Will Crowson bowled the middle overs and three sixes into the bushes put the home team in a very strong position. After 17 overs they were on 103-4 needing just seven to win. Perhaps remembering last week's performance of 4-4, the skipper tossed the ball to Mark Nicholas. His first over conceded three runs but yielded two wickets, both sharp catches by Pete Shakespeare, leaving four to win with two overs to go. Late call up Graham Stacey bowled a tidy penultimate over leaving the scores level. Mark's second over began with three dot balls. The fourth ball resulted in a smart stumping and Surendra, who got 3-9 in his two overs, came to the wicket with two balls left. He missed the first. He also missed the second and Colin Smith appealed for another stumping. His back foot hadn't moved however so his partner charged down to his end. Colin calmly under armed the ball to Mark and Surendra surrendered his wicket, run out off the last ball. Mark had bowled a wicket maiden, finishing with 3-3 from two overs, and the buoyant Vikings left the pitch with a tie to avoid ending up with the wooden spoon!

Saturday 31st July:

1st XI: versus Aston away: BVCC 80-10. ACC 81-1. Lost by 9 wickets.

At 20-0 off 10 overs, things were looking good for the Vale but then Aston opening bowler Leese struck his first blow & with Nicholas out for 25, the innings collapsed with Leese taking 9-36. Only Steve Barrett provided any resistance with 23* as Vale were all out inside 39 overs. In reply, Aston cruised to 50-1 off 20 overs & finished the job in the 28th over, Jack Halsall taking the only wicket for 17 runs.

2nd XI: versus Aston at home: ACC 159-10. BVCC 160-4. Won by 6 wickets.

The story of Aston's innings of 159 was about 1 man, R.Taylor, who hit 104 & held the innings together as the Vale attack chipped away at the rest of the line up, with Crowson (2-48), Roberts (2-52) & skipper John Ryan (4-17) all successful to end the Aston innings in 38 overs. At 120 off 30 overs Aston looked dangerous but 3 wickets from Ryan brought the Vale back in control. In reply, John Ryan dropped anchor to record an unbeaten 68 & the rest of the team chipped in to score at a rapid rate reaching 109-4 off 26 overs, after which Matt Sullivan (17*) & Ryan finished the job to record an excellent win.

Wednesday 28th July:

Over 40's: versus Brooklands at home: BCC 102-10. BVCC 105-1. Won by 9 wickets.

To gain mid table mediocrity the Vikings needed to win their final two matches of the season. Stage 1 was accomplished with a resounding win against Brooklands. Bill Crowson opened the bowling and set a good standard. When he gets it right he is almost unplayable and he finished with excellent figures of 4-1-12-2. Both victims were clean bowled and his last over was that rare 20-20 event, a wicket maiden. Bob Hutton, Neil Halsall and Phil Knowles bowled economically and after 17 overs the visitors had 95-6 including one retirement. Neil then tossed the ball to Mark Nicholas. This proved to be a master stroke as with the last 3 balls of his first over keeper Ian Johnson took two catches and the hat trick was achieved with a Rocker LBW decision. He wrapped up the innings after 2 balls of his next over to finish with astounding figures of 1.2-0-4-4. Mark was sent in to open with Pete Thorpe and carried on the good work, retiring after getting to a sprightly 30. Rod Howell, cleverly saved for his batting by the skipper, came in at number three and proceeded to dismantle the bowling. Deciding that running between the wickets is a mug's game, he hit 5 fours and a six to retire on 32. Pete Thorpe was still there, providing the backbone of the innings, but was out trying to hit a six to win the match. Steve Bottomley had the privilege of hitting the winning boundary and he and Gareth Roberts were greeted with warm applause on their victory stroll back to the pavilion.

Saturday 24th July:

1st XI: versus Kingsley at home: BVCC 150-10. KCC 152-8. Lost by 2 wickets.

Batting first Vale reached 38-1 off 10 overs but then lost 2 quick wickets to put them at 38-3. Noman Hasan (28) * Steve Whipday (27) put together a recovery stand & then skipper Nigel Halsall increased the pace of the innings with a quick 55 but the Vale failed to use all their overs & were all out in the 40th over, T.Martin returning 6-67 as the pick of the home team's attack. In reply, Kingsley made a rapid start with 49 runs coming off the first 10 overs for the loss of 2 wickets. At 119-6 off 30 overs the Vale were in with a chance but K.Ollier saw them though with an unbeaten 65 to finish in the 42nd over, despite the loss of 2 quick wickets at the end. Willson (2-35) & Nicholas (218) were the pick of the Vale bowlers.

2nd XI: versus Kingsley away: KCC 183-7. BVCC 110-10. Lost by 73 runs.

Batting first, Kingsley posted a challenging total with Elliot (72) & Ashley (32*) being the main contributors. Pat Mullen bowled well to return 4-40 striking twice early in the innings & then twice again towards the end. Vale were always struggling to reach the home side's total with only 3 batsmen making significant contributions: John Ryan (29). Danny Conroy (27) & Gary Webb (31).

Kitchen (3-20) & Story (3-29) were the nemesis of the Vale rely as they bravely passed the 45 over mark & were out for 110 in the 47th over.

Saturday 17th July:

1st XI: versus Lindow away. LCC 267-2. BVCC 234-9. Match drawn.

This high-scoring game belied match conditions of a damp wicket & outfield plus a pitch that gave bowlers plenty of assistance. Vale's decision to insert the home team almost paid off when Lindow were 46-2 off 10 overs but then Marshall (100*) joined Farmer (130*) to crash the Vale attack to all parts of the ground, moving from 102-2 off 20 overs to 202-2 off 30 overs, eventually declaring on 267-2 after only 37 overs as Marshall reached his ton. Ian Willson was the best of the Vale attack taking 2-53 but Vale gave Lindow plenty of assistance spilling an arguable 7 catches. There were no maidens in the Lindow innings. In reply Vale raced to 50-0 off 13 overs & after 23 overs were within 1 run of the Lindow score at the same point. Mark Nicholas hit an excellent 94 in only 27 overs & skipper Nigel Halsall was unlucky to be given caught at the wicket on 40. Ian Willson hit some lusty blows before holing out to a boundary catch, after which Colin Smith & Syed Hussein batted out the last 8 overs for 12 runs, the Vale hanging on for a well-deserved draw.

2nd XI: versus Bunbury at home. No play due to rain.

Wednesday 14th July:

Over 40's: versus Sale at home. SCC 124-6. BVCC 68.1. Match abandoned.

The farewell game for Kiwi-bound Ian Froggatt was heading for an exciting finish until rain intervened. Ian was fittingly the Vikings man of the match. Sale batted first after rain delayed the start and were restricted to 124-6 from a reduced 18 overs. Froggy's spell of 4-0-24-3 included good catches from Gareth Roberts, tumbling forward to get his hands under the ball just in time, and from Colin Smith behind the stumps. Ian then opened the innings with Mark Nicholas. He retired after getting to 30 and Mark scored a good 26 before being run out. With seven overs to go 57 more were required to secure a shock victory but he heavens opened again and everyone retired, this time to the bar to wish Ian bon voyage.

Saturday 10th July:

1st XI: versus Runcorn at home: RCC 217-9. BVCC 175-10. Lost by 42 runs.

Vale came off second best in a high scoring game at Priory Street. Batting first, the visitors were struggling at 4-2 but recovered to 139-4 off 30 overs thanks to a solid innings of 88 from M.Hill. At the 40 over stage Runcorn were 188-8 & the tail wagged to score 39 in the last 5 overs for the loss of 1 wicket. Skipper Nigel Halsall was most successful with the ball returning 5-45 & Syed Hussein (2-36) & Noman Hasan (2-72) also chipped in. Vale batsmen got going but could never really post the big score that was needed to anchor the run chase. Mark Nicholas (27) & Jack Halsall (28) both got started but Vale lost wickets on a regular basis & were 111-6 off 30 overs. At 170-8, enter Ian Willson (34) for a late rally taking the score above the 170 mark. Sheakey took 3 take wickets to finish with 4-42 as the Vale were bowled out inside 43 overs.

2nd XI: versus Disley away: BVCC 155-10. DCC 150-10. Won by 5 runs.

Vale posted what looked like a score 50 runs short of par on a warm day at Disley. From 29-3 off 7 overs, Zac Stevenson (40) & Pete Williamson (23) took the score to 115 before the fall of the next wicket. Rick Allan (21) & Sam Moncur (10) both made promising starts but Clarke with 5-54 & skipper Robinson-Moss with 3-55 curtailed the Vale innings. At 100-0 with ex-Vale player Stuart Reynolds (28) in full flow & opening partner A. Awan (49) starting to open up, things looked grim. But Steve Barrett removed Reynolds (did he ever bat like that for the Vale?) & man of the match Sam Moncur (4-27) came on to claim 4 wickets in his 7 over spell which ripped the heart out of Disley's batting. Moncur also claimed 2 catches. Jack Ryan (2-34) made inroads into the Disley

batting & Steve Barrett (2-44) & Rick Allan (2-37) returned to fire Vale to victory by 5 runs, Hopton pouching a screaming catch at the end to seal the 2nd victory in successive weeks.

Wednesday 7th July:

Over 40's: versus Timperley away. BVCC 112-9. Timperley 113-4. Lost by 6 wickets. The rain stayed away allowing an entertaining match to take place at Stockport Road. The Vikings had their moments but in the final analysis lost quite comfortably. Batting first for a change, the returning Paul Hunter and birthday-boy Iain Johnson got the Vale off to an excellent start getting to 41-0 after 5 overs. Iain was then out for 20 and Paul was caught for 24. Two unlucky run out outs then precipitated the collapse of the middle order. Garry Webb was out when a direct throw hit the stumps at the bowler's end. Colin Smith then lost his footing and, despite a desperate dive, was unable to make the necessary ground. After such a good start three figures was beginning to look unlikely as the reliable Steve Bottomley was running out of partners. Lee Bowyer lifted spirits with a six over the pavilion and a straight four before being adjudged LBW. Last man Bill "sling-shot" Crowson joined Steve who was in danger of retiring on 30 and finishing the innings with balls to spare. Bill hit some lusty blows and Steve timed his hitting perfectly with a six into the car park off the last ball to end with a maximum 35 not out. Phil Knowles opened the bowling and showed good control. Pete Shakespeare was more expensive but made some in roads finishing with 4-0-35-3. He also took a catch on the boundary when a Exocet missile hit him full in the chest and he clung on to give Phil a wicket in a good spell of 4-0-14-1. Bill Crowson bowled well with no luck as Pete Shakespeare and Gareth Roberts dropped easy catches. Ian Johnson did the same to rob Lee Bowyer of his first Vikings wicket and Timperley cruised home with almost 3 overs to spare.

Saturday 3rd July:

1st XI: versus Winsford at home: BVCC 225-6. WCC 226-6. Lost by 4 wickets. Vale emerged in 2nd place in a high scoring game at Priory Street against Winsford. At 0-2 off 3 overs & 10-3 off 4 overs it looked to be an all too familiar case of poor Vale batting but Jack Halsall put a smile on the Vale faces with a magnificent unbeaten 102, superbly supported by Nigel Halsall who scored 88, racing to 122 of 30 overs & crashing 45 in the last 5 overs. Unfortunately Vale's fielding was not up to the task, spilling 4 catches & missing a vital stumping to allow Winsford hero Clarke to score 99 & Webb 42 to lead their side to victory by 4 wickets.

2nd XI: versus Alderley Park away: BVCC 177-9. APCC 167-10. Won by 10 runs. Vale 2nd XI registered a much needed win as many of their batsmen contributed to a challenging score at Alderley Park. Hopton (34), Barrett (25), Allan (38) & Solanki (29) all made useful runs. Ramegonda was the pick of the home side attack returning 5-57. He was also the pick of the batsmen registering 64 runs as skipper Rick Allan (5-52) & Syed Hussein (4-56) grabbed the wickets to give Vale victory by 10 runs..

Wednesday 30th June:

Over 40's: versus Urmston at home. UCC 171-4. BVCC 125-6. Lost by 46 runs. After a promising start the Vikings again succumbed to Urmston in a similar fashion to the first game of the season. Phil Knowles open the bowling and conceded 4 off the first over. Excellent work by Colin Smith behind the stumps gave Pete Shakespeare 2 wickets in the first 2 balls of the second over, a stumping and a caught behind doing the business, and after 4 overs Urmston appeared to be struggling on 9-2. But 4 of their batsmen then went on to retire after getting to 30 and the run rate accelerated. Playing on the wicket closest to the fence was bad news for bowlers of the odd overs. In particular Ian Froggatt, bowling decent deliveries in a 5 day game, was dispatched many times to finish with 4-0-57-1. A catch from new boy Tim Norman giving him his solitary wicket. The Vikings never looked like getting the asking rate of 8.6 runs an over and only an entertaining cameo of 26 not out from Phil Knowles brightened up a otherwise gloomy performance.

Saturday 26th June:

1st XI: versus Over Peover away: OPCC 229-5. BVCC 127-8. Draw.

At 99-4 off 30 overs, Over Peover were well placed to hit the standard target of 180 but thanks to Ingargiola (64*) & Nightingale (42*) they outperformed expectations to score 130 runs in 15 overs, with 75 coming off the last 6 overs. Jack Halsall was the pick of the Vale attack returning 3-22. Vale were never in the frame & lost wickets on a regular basis moving from 39-3 off the first 10 overs to 69-4 off 20 & 87-7 off 30, Jack Halsall (23) being the main contributor. Only a solid rearguard action by first Steve Bottomley (21) & then Iain Johnson (11*) & Colin Smith (14*) made it possible for the visitors to hold out for a draw.

2nd XI: versus Romiley at home: RCC 240-2. BVCC 123-10. Lost by 117 runs.

On a scorchingly hot day at Priory Street, Vale lost the toss & duly spent 3 hours of hard labour in the field chasing leather. Romiley openers made a steady start against a lively Vale attack of Rick Allan & Steve Barrett pushing the score to 61-1 off 15 overs & 122-1 off 30 overs. With 118 runs coming off the last 15 overs, the visitors were firmly in the driving seat. Opener Coupes scored 105 not out but led a charmed life surviving run outs, dropped catches, caught behind appeals & a blatant stumping. Skipper Chris Evans led the reply with 27 & was supported by Steve Barrett (36) but the last 7 Vale batsmen could only muster 38 runs between themselves as Hooton (4-32) & Badrock (3-15) carved their way through the Vale innings.

Wednesday 23rd June:

Over 40's: versus Cheadle away. CCC 128-7. BVCC 127-5. Lost by 1 run.

Another beautiful evening saw a close encounter with the Vikings just losing out against a strong Cheadle side. Phil Knowles got early success when his first ball loosener was pouched by Mark Nicholas to dismiss C Grindey. A second wicket came when Pete Shakespeare clung on to skier to get rid of J Bardsley leaving Phil with 4-0-28-2. Cheadle were looking dangerous, getting to 70 from 9 overs, when Bob Hutton came into the attack. Bob's excellent control, that he has shown all season, continued and his figures of 4-1-14-3 included a wicket maiden and restricted the opposition to 128. Vale's response was hampered by the early loss of the in form Garry Webb but was balanced by good efforts from Mark Nicholas and Pete Thorpe who both scored 29. With 5 overs to go the Vale were falling behind the rate but a quick 15 from Gareth Roberts helped to keep us in touch. Steve Bottomley then put us in the driving seat by hitting 16 from his last 4 balls to retire on 33. This included a superb straight 6 leaving 5 runs for victory with 8 balls left. Too many fresh air shots by Pete Shakespeare left Phil Knowles needing a 4 off the last ball, bowled by Cheadle's best bowler D Dooler. He got bat to ball but a 2 was not enough leaving the Vale 1 short of a tie and 2 short of victory.

Saturday 19th June:

1st XI: versus Prestbury at home: BVCC 91-10. PCC 94-1. Lost by 9 wickets.

Batting first, the Vale returned to their old habits limping to 36-3 off 10 overs. Only Mark Nicholas (37) made any impact & with cameo innings from Johnson (14), Roberts (11) & Willson (11), the Vale moved from 49-4 off 15 overs to 91 all out after 30 overs. Nichols (5-20) & Murray (4-21) were Prestbury's strike bowlers. In reply, Mason (42*) set the pace to reach the Vale total in the 21st over.

2nd XI: versus Chester CO away: BVCC 153-10. CCOCC 154-2. Lost by 8 wickets.

Vale 2nd XI fared little better than the 1st XI as they made 153 on an excellent track at Chester County Officers. Hopton (57) was the mainstay of the Vale innings making good partnerships with Webb (13) & Williamson (18). At the end Barrett (25) & Crowson (8*) put on a valuable 30 for the last wicket. Pearce picked up 4 wickets for 43 runs. The total was never going to be enough with Vale's weakened bowling attack as opener Hickey (64) crashed a series of full tosses & long hops

to the boundary. At 61-0 off 10 overs & 125-1 off 20 overs the home side were in full control. Youngsters Power & Faupel both held on to good catches but Chester cruised to their target within 24 overs.

Wednesday 15th June:

Over 40's: versus Cheadle Hulme at home. CHCC 117-10. BVCC 119-4. Won by 6 wickets. A beautiful evening at Priory Street saw the Viking get back to winning ways. Bill Crowson bowled a steady spell at the start and, thanks to a tumbling catch by Gareth Roberts, had tidy figures of 4-0-13-1. Pete Shakespeare came on first change after Phil Knowles and took a stunning return catch to dismiss Balderson. A low off drive stuck in his wrong hand as he dived to the left. A good catch on the mid-wicket boundary by Garry Webb off the same bowler kept Vale in charge. Bolger and Potts then took control and both retired on 32 helped by hitting 20 off Pete Shakespeare's last over. Ten man Cheadle were short on numbers and recognized batsmen. No one else could make much impression against excellent death bowling from Ian Froggatt (3-0-6-2) and Bob Hutton (4-0-15-2). Cheadle were all out off the last ball for 117. Garry Webb carried on his excellent form and was out for 31. A towering six into the middle of the bowling green a highlight. Mark Nicholas played well for 15 but retired after a Potts yorker crashed into his boot. A quick-fire 21 from Gareth kept the Vale ahead of the rate and sensible batting from Colin Smith (11 not out) and Rod Howell saw us home with 5 balls to spare.

Saturday 12th June:

1st XI: versus Barton at home: BCC 175-8. BVCC 177-7. Won by 3 wickets.

A superb all-round performance by skipper Nigel Halsall saw the Vale record their 2nd win of the season. Barnton openers Cross (70) & Coot (40) built a very strong position to reach 106-0 after 23 overs but Noman Hasan changed his bowling style to spin & claimed 4-56 off 16 overs, with Nigel Halsall chipping in with 3-54 off his 19 overs. Between them, they slowed the run rate to 60 off the last 20 overs leaving a competitive total to chase. In reply the home side hit trouble at 11-3 but skipper Nigel Halsall steadied the innings & hit 84* to take his side to victory in the 42nd over, hitting 11 fours & 3 sixes. He was well-supported by Bottomley (22) & Allan (18). Tong 4-38 was the pick of the Barnton bowlers. This result moves the Vale out of the relegation zone. Let's keep it that way.

2nd XI: versus Pott Shrigley away: BVCC 106-10. PSCC 107-6. Lost by 4 wickets.

Having lost the toss, Vale batted first at Pott Shrigley. Hopton (21) & Conroy were the main contributors as Conroy played a mature innings batting for 19 overs to remain 27* at the end of the innings, sharing cameo partnerships with Power, Solanki & Crowson. The home side openers Fairclough (20) & Lucas (23) made a rapid start and skipper Burgess (25) made the difference with some lusty blows to end Vale hopes of success. Barrett was unlucky return only 1-26 & Morgan (2-33), Crowson (1-6) & Solanki (1-8) all supported well to keep Vale in the game. Another 20 runs & the result could have been different.

Saturday 5th June:

1st XI: versus Lymm OP away: BVCC 179-9. LOPCC 181-7. Lost by 3 wickets.

Vale were unlucky to lose this tight match as Lymm OP passed Vale's total with 3 balls to spare. The home side were struggling at 45-3 off 15 overs until McIntosh (55) and Kimber (39) came together to build match-winning stand. Noman Hasan (3-32) and skipper Nigel Halsall (3-35) were the chief wicket-takers. Earlier in the day, Vale's middle order batsmen had built a solid total with Hasan (23), Jack Halsall (34) and Steve Whipday (53) being the main contributors. They were well placed to post a competitive score at 104-3 after 30 overs & kicked on to finish on 179, just not quite enough.

2nd XI: versus Woodford at home: WCC 245-7. BVCC 59-10. Lost by 186 runs. At the time, this did not feel like a resounding defeat as the Vale competed bravely on a sweltering day at Priory Street. However, the match scores show a different story. On winning the toss Woodford elected to bat & soon rattled up 54 off 10 overs. For a brief spell the Vale looked to be on top as Ian Willson (4-30) took quick wickets in successive overs but when Tonge (105) & Tadman (57) came together they punished the Vale attack to declare in the 41st over on 245-7. Jack Ryan picked up 2 wickets in his one over at the end. At 46-2 Vale's reply looked to be promising but Hopton's demise (31) led to a batting collapse with 5 of the next 8 batsmen recording ducks. Willams (6-33) was the pick of the visitors bowlers.

Wednesday 2nd June:

Over 40's: versus Brooklands away. BCC 162-7. BVCC 147-2. Lost by 15 runs. Short boundaries and good weather influenced the abundant scoring in this match. Brooklands piled on the runs to set a target that, in the conditions, was gettable. Bob Hutton again excelled with 3 for 20 helped by good work from the brave stand-in keeper Colin Smith. He stumped the dangerous looking Willard and also took a skier off the bowling of Rod Howell. Almost all the Vale recognized batsmen performed except the unlucky Gareth Roberts. Garry Webb timed the ball beautifully and Ian Froggatt continued his good form. Pete Thorpe hit a couple of big sixes towards the end of his innings and all three retired after getting to 30. Steve Bottomley almost made it before holing out for 28. Gareth top edged a ball into his ear and temporarily retired to repair the damage. He re-appeared with a bandage wrapped around his head to stem the blood. In an attempt to force a famous victory he was well caught on the boundary and the Vale fell 15 runs short.

Saturday 29th May

1st XI: versus Barrow at home: Match rained off.

2nd XI: versus Barrow away. Match rained off.

Wednesday 26th May:

Over 40's: versus Sale away. SCC 128-8. BVCC 81-10. Lost by 37 runs. Sale saved their better batsmen for the middle order and got off to a slow start. Bob Hutton (4-1-15-1) and Pete Shakespeare (4-0-14-1) restricted the opposition to 37-2 after 8 overs on a pitch of uneven bounce. Only Ian Froggatt (3-0-14-1) managed to control the run flow after that and, with a weakened batting line up, 129 to win was challenging. Top scorer for Sale was 35 by extras. Pete Thorpe with 16 and Garry Webb tried to build a platform but after their dismissal only Ian Froggatt, retiring on, 33 showed any resistance. A classic cover drive, all along the ground, was memorable in a match that will not live long in the memory.

Saturday 22nd May

1st XI: versus Cholmondeley away. BVCC 83-10. CCC 85-1. Lost by 9 wickets. Vale's excursion to the grounds of Cholmondeley castle was all too brief as the home side poured boiling oil on the visitor's new found confidence & quashed any sign of revival after last week's win. At 5-2 off 3 overs, Vale batsmen were again in trouble but Noman Hasan (39) & Jack Halsall (19) added 64 in the next 11 overs to rally the cause. However, Cholmondeley's Bristow cut through the any further resistance taking 7-37 as the Vale tumbled to 83 all out in the 24th over. For the home side, Hockenhill (30) led the charge as they achieved their target in the 14th over with 9 wickets to spare.

2nd XI: versus Trafford MV at home. TMVCC 203-6. BVCC 130-10. Lost by 73 runs. Despite capturing 2 early wickets, the Vale 2nd XI chased leather at Priory Street, with Trafford Metrovick's Khan the star of the day making 107, over half of the visitor's total. Vale bowlers toiled in the sun with Jack Ryan being the most successful returning 2-12 & Rick Allan bowling the

most overs returning 2-59. Vale's reply saw 9 batsmen bowled with Walsh (3-18) & Khan (3-20) doing most of the damage. Both Vale openers were dismissed for ducks & it was left to Hopton (24) & Allan (43) to stage the recovery but the target of 207 was always going to be too much.

Wednesday 19th May:

Over 40's: versus Cheadle at home. CCC 119-5. BVCC 92-10. Lost by 27 runs.

The Vikings bowled tidily in the early part of Cheadle's innings. After 9 over they had scored just 34-2 with Bob Hutton again showing excellent control to finish with figures of 4-0-10-2. Cheadle accelerated in their final 11 overs, though the brakes were put on near the end with Pete Shakespeare getting 2 for 8 from 2 overs. A target of 6 an over was looking like a stroll in the park with the Vikings getting to 60 for 1. The returning Paul Hunter retired at 30 and Steve Bottomley scored 24. The run out of Gareth Roberts for a duck, followed by effective ultra slow bowling by T.Brady, hastened a disastrous collapse. Despite a couple of massive sixes from Phil Knowles he was the last man out and the Vikings, snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, fell 27 runs short.

Saturday 15th May

1st XI: versus Aston at home. ACC 201-6. BVCC 202-8. Won by 2 wickets.

Vale's season finally came alive at Priory Street with a team performance to disappoint visitors Aston. Batting first, Aston openers raced to 40 after 7 overs & then continued their rapid rate of scoring to post 119-4 at the 30 over mark. Solomon (40) & Beesley (44) were the main contributors. The visitors confidently declared on 201-6 after only 42 overs. Skipper Nigel Halsall was the pick of the Vale bowlers returning 3-22 & Gareth Roberts picked up 3 catches. At 20-1, Vale looked to be in trouble but Noman Hasan (58) & Mark Nicholas (35) consolidated to add 47 runs before the next wicket fell. At 132-4 off 30 overs, Vale were in with a shout & solid contributions from Bottomley (17), Roberts (25), Nigel Halsall (25*) & Iain Johnson (11*) saw the Vale home with 3 overs to spare.

2nd XI: versus Aston away. ACC 195-7. BVCC 165-10. Lost by 30 runs.

Syed Hussein was the pick of the Vale attack, bowling unchanged to return 6-60 off 23 overs as Aston posted 197-7 off their 45 overs. Most of the home side top order scored runs, Mainwaring (34), Henshaw (33), David (31) & Hall (31) in a good team effort. After being 135 off 30 overs, Vale fell 30 runs short of the target, being all out in the 37th over as Chris Evans (32), debutant veteran Alan Whitelegg (50) and Richard Allan (34) all made valuable contributions.

Wednesday 12th May:

Over 40's: versus Timperley at home. BVCC 128-4. TCC 112-9. Won by 1 wicket.

Saturday 8th May

1st XI: versus Kingsley away. KCC 174-7. BVCC 129-10. Lost by 45 runs.

In a much improved performance from the previous 2 weeks, Vale failed to hold on to a draw & were dismissed on the final ball of the 45th over, bowled by Kingsley's T.Martin who returned match-winning figures of 7-20. Earlier in the day, Kingsley had posted 174-7, with opener Ainsworth (52) being the pick of the batsmen & Vale doing well to restrict scoring given the score of 112-1 off 30 overs. Jack Halsall finished with 3-44. Vale lost 4 early wickets for 13 runs but Whipday (54) joined Nicholas (41) & put on a partnership of 77 in 18 overs. Bottomley (26) continued the good work but Vale just fell short of a draw on the last ball.

2nd XI: versus Kingsley at home. KCC 179-6. BVCC 96-9. Match drawn.

Fighting spirit was the order of the day at Priory Street as Kingsley piled on the runs to declare in the 42nd over. Tasker (50) & Stoddart (51) were the main scorers. Young Pat Mullen returned a creditable 1-36 of his 8 overs & wily spinner John Ryan chipped in with 2-25 at the end. The Vale

batsmen dug in valiantly with Colin Smith on debut making a patient 16 & Damien Paul a steadfast 8. The heroes were Paresch Solanki (18*) & Graeme Stacey (10) who batted for well over 10 overs to hold out for a draw, despite Kingsley claiming an additional 3 overs from their early declaration. J.Rugan was the pick of the Kingsley bowlers with 3-28.

Wednesday 5th May:

Over 40's: versus Urmston away. UCC 165-3. BVCC 112-4. Lost by 53 runs.

Vikings lost the toss giving the Urmston batsmen the best of the light in the first league game of the season. Steady bowling by Pete Shakespeare (4-0-28-1) and Bob Hutton (4-0-21-2) reduced Urmston to 25-3 after 6 overs. After conceding 3 fours in 3 balls Bill Crowson recovered well (4-0-26-0) but last year's champions bat long and 4 batsmen retired after quick fire 30s to post a required rate of over 8 an over. The dull evening got darker and with the lamp posts shining bright along the main road Vikings did well to reach a respectable total of 112. Steve Bottomley and the nonchalant Ian Froggatt retired after good 30s. Pete Thorpe, after threatening the passing traffic with a straight 6, was out for 11 giving him a challenge to beat last season's batting average of 189!

Saturday 1st May:

1st XI: versus Lindow at home. LCC 204-9. BVCC 97-10. Lost by 107 runs.

In the first home game of the season at Priory Street, the 1st XI had Lindow in trouble at 60-4 after 15 overs. Even at 108-5 off 30 overs it was looking promising but 2 dropped catches & an aggressive 65 by Heyes scuppered the Vale effort & Lindow declared at 204-9 off 41 overs. The uncle-nephew combination of Nigel & Jack Halsall were the chief wicket takers returning 4-72 & 4-33 respectively. The Vale reply soon hit the rocks with both openers departing early & the innings moved from 34-3 off 11 overs to 42-5 off 15 overs. Recovery from that position was unlikely & the innings closed just short of one hundred in the 31st over, Groves taking a 5-wicket haul for 33 runs.

2nd XI: versus Bunbury away. BCC 237-3. BVCC 69-10. Lost by 168 runs.

To complete a miserable bank holiday weekend for both Vale teams, the 2nd XI made the trip to Bunbury only to see the home side rattle up a massive 237 for the loss of only 3 wickets. Greenbury (83) & Williams (78) were the chief architects of the innings which contained 32 extras. Pawsey returned a creditable 1-12 off 4 overs & Jack Ryan 1-25. The Vale reply never really started & wickets tumbled regularly. Only Hopton (25) provided any real resistance. McNeal (3-19), Eaton (2-7) & Lewis (2-9) were the pick of the home side bowling attack.

Saturday 24th April:

1st XI: versus Runcorn away. BVCC 49-10. RCC 51-0. Lost by 10 wickets.

The Vale opened their Meller Braggins Cheshire Cricket League season with a visit to Runcorn. Batting first Vale raced to 26 off the first 6 overs. The only problem was that they lost 5 wickets in the process. To make matters worse, the 15th over saw 3 wickets fall & the Vale stumbled to 49 all out in the 18th over. Sheakey (7-31) & Pretorious (3-14) bowled unchanged to cause the damage. Runcorn openers Booth & Yetes guided the home side to victory with 10 wickets to spare. As the song goes: "things can only get better". Let's hope so.

2nd XI: versus Disley at home. DCC 196-8. BVCC 166-6. Match drawn.

The 2nd XI entertained Disley at Priory Street for their first match of the new campaign. The visitors scored freely posting a score of 196-8 after their allotted 45 overs, Boardman top scoring with 35. Pawsey (2-33), Hopton (2-17) & Hampson (2-30) were the pick of the Vale bowlers, with young Jacob Daldry picking up his first wicket on debut. Skipper John Ryan led the response & played a captain's innings of 83, supported by Hopton (22), Jack Ryan (21) & Solanki (21*). In the end, Disley had too many runs on the board & Vale finished 30 runs short for a creditable draw.