

## Blackheath U14 Tour to Sussex 2019



Friday 10th of May had us all rummaging around for blankets, fleeces and winter coats as we prepared for the annual Blackheath cricket tour. Having suffered in previous years and having indeed had to leave cricket matches in order to purchase extra blankets, we decided not to be caught out again. This year we were off to Sussex, specifically Uckfield and the rather delightful self-catering Nutley Edge Lodges.

On arrival on Friday the boys had supper and then benefited from a squad talk and some knotted bonding activities with Chris. Mostly they seemed to remain knotted to each other, but I'm not entirely convinced that was the purpose of the undertaking! They were given their rather smart cricket tops and settled contentedly for some chilled out downtime seemingly very happy with life at Nutley Edge. Adults enjoyed Lesley's delicious curries and chocolate cake, whilst reminiscing about previous cricket tours; we shared hilarious stories which became even more hilarious after a couple of glasses of wine before getting to bed at a surprisingly decent hour.

Saturday morning dawned and Alex set about cooking a multitude of fried eggs and both boys and adults tucked into her sumptuous breakfast. Once full and rearing to go we travelled the short few miles to our first cricket match of the day at. The destination was Buxted Park Cricket Club, a beautiful setting with very hospitable parents and club members. The weather was a little overcast and those who had bought said blankets and wrapped up warm were feeling suitably smug. Blackheath fielded first and opened with some spiteful attacking bowling. Consequently the run rate was satisfyingly low. The first breakthrough came with the introduction of spin when Curtis was brought onto bowl and Genillard behind the wickets claimed a skilful and speedy stumping. Curtis claimed another wicket as slowly Buxted Park's resistance began to crumble. Blackheath performed well in the field with Jones bagging a caught and bowled and Fahy claiming a sharp run out. Buxted Park ended on 92 for 4. Buxted Park had one accomplished batsmen who was retired on a creditable 31.

Blackheath felt that 93 was an eminently gettable target and batted confidently to start. Stanley opened with admirable composure, amassing an impressive 21 runs. He showed his class, playing some stylish shots and also increasing maturity in his calling and running between the stumps. The star of the show,

however, was undoubtedly Bushell who amassed an outrageous 31 in an unimaginably short amount of time (11 balls), hitting six after four after six after four. Buxted Park simply scratched their heads in amazement. The power of our leading batsmen was extraordinary. He opened his shoulders and hit to the adult boundaries. Blackheath did have a small wobble which was made a little but little more nail biting by the onset of some pretty heavy rain and the determination of the groundsmen to cover the main square to protect the adult fixture that afternoon, but Genillard and Fahy managed to steer us across the line. Blackheath prevailed and were, ultimately, deserving victors.

We returned to our base at Nutley Edge for some much deserved lunch and another small sided football kickabout before finding yet another gem of a cricket ground in Sussex. This time it was called Temple Grove and was beautifully hidden away with a Catholic Church perched pretty much on the boundary. Chris and Pete organised a pairs competition which was enjoyed by all the boys and spectators alike. Special mention should go to Curtis who racked up 22 off one over and then bagged 4 wickets in one remarkable over. Bushell's fine form continued, however, and once again the boundaries were no match for his timing and strength. Fielders with heavy legs traipsed into the distance, sometimes into the bushes to fetch the ball that he had so effortlessly despatched. Bushell and Fahy were the winners of the afternoon's pairs competition.

With all the cricket done for the day, Blackheath returned to Nutley Edge for more relaxation, banter, football and reminiscing of the good times before the delivery of our fish and chips. Once again Blackheath enjoyed a terrific junior tour away and I would like to record my thanks to Chris Poil and Peter Stanley, but also to Lesley for all her hard work in arranging, organising, steering with such tact and diplomacy, and making sure that we all had such a brilliant time. Thanks everyone for making it such fun.



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### Match Coverage: Heathfield U14 vs Blackheath U14

**Stan(ley) and Ollie deliver another fine match for Blackheath**

**A resounding 81 run victory over Heathfield at School Hill meant Blackheath finished their tour unbeaten. Will Stanley's 4 wicket haul set up Warren and Bushell to shine in the Sussex sun.**

After the indifferent weather of the first morning the boys of Blackheath and the slightly jaded parents and coaches needed a fine morning to close out the tour and Heathfield certainly delivered. The collective group basked in the sunshine whilst enjoying the beautiful view over the Sussex downs.



There was some early drama as Heathfield had some issues with their ballcock back in the clubhouse but eventually the match began to a chorus of Church bells from All Saints. The umpires took their place with Heathfield's representative sporting a nifty black t-shirt, pink floral shorts topped off with a grey 'tam' – Chris contrasted this with a more conservative white shirt/black shorts combo – proof positive that he is “a gentleman...”.

### Heathfield Innings

With the local sheep bleating a morning chorus, Bushell rushed in with Heathfield scoring an early boundary before Blackheath's first breakthrough with a great catch from Charlie BR – the first over finishing at 6 for 1.



Will Stanley joined the attack conceding just 1 run off his first over – tighter than a clam with lockjaw that one. Bushell is back and it's not long before another wicket falls – a fine catch from Seb. 13 for 2 off 3.

Will returns, a few runs for Heathfield (including a fine 4), then a half chance for a catch, they run, Ollie Styles picks it up and smashes the stumps for a fine run out. Heathfield are 21 for 4.

Ben finishes his stint with a fine maiden, that's 2 wickets for just 12 runs off 3.



Will's straight back with a caught and bowled; that one went down his throat like a cold beer in heatwave. 5 wickets down for just 22 😞. Even Jurgen Klopp would struggle to turn this around now.

Seb joins the attack, good penetrating line and length cutting through like kitchen knife in a postcode war. Maiden. Stanley's final over and its clinical, another wicket, the stumps tumble, they're no sooner

up than they are down again - what a performance. Heathfield are 22 for 7 off 8. Stanley finishes with 4 wickets for just 9 runs – a game changer.

With Heathfield firmly on the back foot, clouds drifted over, and a cold chill came across the ground like a harbinger of doom.

Ollie Warren up to bowl. 1 run added against his tricky spin bowling. Luc gets his chance, the batsmen aren't getting near these early on, then there's a good smash that goes over the bowler's head as effectively as irony on an American.

Dan's turn, looking for a maiden here – what will Mandy say? Fairly tight before a boundary on the fifth ball. James BM up now, and it's a fine caught and bowled off his first ball, Heathfield grab a couple of runs off the last ball to deny him a wicket maiden.

Charlie BR steps up, a tight start and then Dan dares to stick out an arm and it's a catch! Another tight ball and Seb's second catch ends the innings for Heathfield. Just 44 runs scored using 13 overs. A great all-round bowling and fielding performance from Blackheath.

### **Blackheath innings**

The sun comes back for the start of the Blackheath innings, the mini-pasties, pork pies and crisps are going down well amongst the Blackheath supporters. Leroy Jethro Gibbs looks on hopefully with a little drool dripping from his eager mouth.

However, there is a little tension in the air – we expect Blackheath to do this easily, but sport is rarely predictable.

We start off with a pair of Ollie's, Styles and Warren. They start slowly but sensibly, effectively blunting the home team's opening bowlers and hopes. The first 5 overs going for just 15 runs but crucially no wickets. Like Boycott and Tavaré in the 80's. Solid, and with less swinging than the Grantley on a Friday night.

Ollie Warren now begins to open his shoulders and it's a couple of boundaries, sadly Ollie Styles cannot keep the pairing together as his off stump is lifted out of the ground by a great delivery. Fine batting there for 18 runs – great performance from the opener.

Will Stanley comes to the crease, off to a shaky start surviving a top edge before he falls to a great ball that clatters his stumps.

Next up is Ben 'basher' Bushell, he casts an ominous shadow over the crease and the Heathfield heads drop. 2 dot balls and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ball goes for a magnificent 6. The ever-present Ollie Warren supports him well – the anchor of this innings for Blackheath.

Once again Big Ben strikes 6 and it's time's up for Heathfield as Blackheath stride past the target guaranteeing a perfect result from the trip.

The match may be over, but the teams agree to let Blackheath bat out the innings. Both Ben and Ollie retire unbeaten at 30 runs, James BM joins and hits a few singles and a fine boundary before knocking an easy catch straight to a fielder. Archie hangs around with some clever shots delivering 6 runs. Dan survives an early chance before a good run of shots for 9 including a boundary towards the end.

Luc faces a Heathfield player with an uncanny resemblance to Ed Sheeran, he's not short of skills and is roaring in, Luc plays a few balls without scoring before submitting to a great ball from Ed – clearly has his girlfriend over from Galway and wanted to get home...

Charlie BR and Seb face the final couple of overs scoring a few runs and facing out the Heathfield attack.

The innings closes with Blackheath scoring a mighty 125.

### **Match Summary**

Whilst the result suggests an easy victory for Blackheath the real story is that of disciplined bowling, fielding and batting from a side that is really beginning to show its maturity. If only the same thing could be said of the writers...

