

# Glory Gardens 2

# Bound for Glory

Bob Cattell

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## About the Book

Glory Gardens C.C. is now in the North County Under Thirteen League, and the pressure is on. Hooker, as captain, worries that the team won't be able to hold it together: arrogant Clive is always picking fights, Ohbert is still as useless as ever, and there are all the usual rows and injuries. But there's also Mack, the new player; the lucky mascot. 'Gatting'; plus the whole team's unwavering determination to win against all the odds.

# BOUND FOR GLORY

BOB CATTELL

Illustrations by  
David Kearney

RED FOX

# Chapter One

“WE’RE MOSTLY A year younger than all the other teams,” said Marty.

“What if we are?” said Frankie. “We’re going to win the League - so smile!”

We were lining up for our team photograph before the big game against Barmewell. It was Glory Gardens C.C.’s first game in the North County League.



*Back Row: Frankie, Clive, Cal, Marty, Erica and Tylan  
Front Row: Jo, Matthew, Hooker, Azzie, Jacky and Ohbert.*

My name is Harry Knight - you can call me ‘Hooker’ because everyone else does. I’m the captain and leading all-rounder of Glory Gardens Cricket Club - the best team in the universe.

What you see is almost our strongest line up. To be honest, we’ve only got twelve players to pick from. Jason Padgett normally plays for us but he’s become really keen on chess and he’s in a school chess tournament today - which is why Ohbert’s playing. Marty calls Ohbert ‘the

worst number eleven in the world' and you can't argue with that.

Fortunately we've got some good players, too. Clive and Azzie are both brilliant batsmen and Erica, Cal and Matthew score plenty of runs. Erica's a useful bowler, too, but the opening bowling attack is usually Marty and Jacky with me as first change.

We're called 'Glory Gardens' because that's the name of the Rec at the back of Bason Street where we all started playing together. But we're 'officially' the Under Thirteen XI for East-gate Priory C.C., the best cricket club in town. The Firsts have been County champions for the last two seasons. We're playing on the Priory ground today.

The big trouble with playing in the Under Thirteen League is that we're all really 'under twelves'. But there isn't an Under Twelve League this year in our area.

When the Barmewell team arrived, I could see why Marty was a bit gloomy about our chances. Mind you, Marty is always gloomy about everything.

"Cor, they're big!" said Jacky.

"Bigger than Cal even," said Marty. Cal's the tallest in the team. He's built like a fast bowler but he surprises everyone by bowling tricky, slow off-breaks.

"Look, it doesn't matter how big they are. We've got class on our side," said Frankie, our wicket-keeper.

"Yeah, a lot of great cricketers are small," said Azzie. "Look at Alan Border and Sunil Gavaskar."

"And Jack Russell and Brian Lara - not to mention Azzie Nazar," said Frankie.

Azzie's our shortest player. He hardly comes up to Cal's elbow, but that doesn't bother him when he's got a bat in his hand. He moves his feet so quickly and I think his timing is even better than Clive's - though, of course, Clive wouldn't agree with that.

"We'll beat them, won't we, Ohbert?" said Frankie giving Ohbert a huge slap on the back which nearly

knocked off his Walkman.

“Oh but ... who?” said Ohbert who, as usual, hadn’t been listening. You can see why we call him ‘Ohbert’.

I gave Jo the batting order for the score-book and went off to meet the Barmewell captain.

Glory Gardens (in batting order) v Barmewell

Matthew Rose	Frankie Allen
Cal Sebastien	Marty Lear
Azzie Nazar	Tylan Vellacott
Clive da Costa	Jack Gunn
Hooker Knight	Ohbert Bennett
Erica Davies	

Close up Barmewell looked even bigger. Their captain was a red-faced boy called Dave Bickerton. We walked out to the middle and he spent ages looking at the pitch and poking it. We tossed and he won.

“You can bat first,” he said.

“Thanks.”

I don’t know whether he thought there was something wrong with the wicket but I knew it was a good one. The Priors pitch is always good, especially after dry weather. I was quite pleased to be batting.

“Get your pads on,” I said to Cal and Matthew. “They’ve put us in.”

Kiddo Johnstone came over with old Gatting puffing and wheezing behind him. Gatting is an ancient mongrel and the model for the team mascot that my sister, Lizzie, made for us. He’s almost round, short-sighted, rather smelly and black all over except for a sort of grey patch under his chin. Kiddo’s had him for ever and they’re always together.

Kiddo opens the batting for Priors Firsts and he’s also the Glory Gardens C.C. coach. The bad news is that he is also one of our teachers.

Most of us - except Jacky, Matt and Clive - go to Hereward Middle School which is not far from Bason Street

on the Hereward Road. Kiddo was our class teacher last year but he teaches us only French now.

“Remember it’s twenty overs a side, kiddoes,” said Kiddo. “Plenty of time to get a good look at the bowling.”

Kiddo’s great at training but his ‘team talks’ are not good news. He used to be a professional cricketer – a good one according to Azzie’s dad – so he knows what he’s talking about. It’s just the way he says it.

“And don’t forget what I’ve told you – don’t try and knock the leather off the ball,” said Kiddo. “The runs’ll come quickly enough once you get your eye in.” He gave a double thumbs up sign and walked off with Gaffing waddling behind him.

“Remember, kiddoes,” said Frankie, doing his not-very-good Kiddo impersonation. “Always hold your bat by the handle and get the flat bit pointing towards the bowler. And, if you like, you can give it a nice little pat after it has played a good shot.”

“Oh, do shut up, Francis,” said Jo. “I’m trying to concentrate on the scoring.” She was writing down the weather conditions and the names of the umpires and all the other things which have to go in the score-book. Jo is the team secretary and scorer. She doesn’t like to miss anything out. She gets very organised before a game with her pencils, rubber, pencil sharpener and her watch all propped up in front of her. Next to her sat ‘Gatting’, our so-called mascot.

I forgot to mention Jo is Frankie’s sister – though you’d never believe it. She’s the only person I know who calls him Francis. Even his mum and dad call him Frankie.

Matthew and Cal were at the wicket. Matthew took guard and Old Sid Burns, the Priory’s regular umpire, shouted, “Play.”

The first ball flew past Matt’s shoulder. It was quick and it spelt danger. We looked at each other. Frankie whistled.

“Outrageous,” said Tylan.

The bowler took a ridiculously long run-up but his arm action was fast and high. The first over was a maiden. Six fast, straight balls. Matthew watched each one like a hawk. That's what you'd expect from Matthew. He doesn't have all the shots in the book - like Clive, for instance - but he doesn't give his wicket away easily. And he never backs off against fast bowling.

They brought a spinner on at the other end and Cal took a leg-bye from the first ball to open the Glory Gardens scoring. Matthew played the next five balls carefully. A second maiden.

"Another great Test Match innings from Matthew," sighed Frankie.

"You can't blame him for being careful against bowling like this," said Erica.

"There's such a thing as too careful," said Tylan.

That's obviously what Cal thought. The quick bowler - his name was down in the score-book as 'B. Silver' - sent down a short one just outside the off-stump and Cal cut it hard for four. The next ball was a fast yorker on middle stump but Cal got his bat down just in time and it flicked off an inside edge for four more.

Cal looked up and grinned, "Good ball." But Silver wasn't amused. He bowled a short, fast bouncer which rose head high to Cal.

"No ball!" shouted Sid, judging that the ball had risen over shoulder height which it had.

Both Cal and the bowler were now getting really steamed up. Silver was sweating and grunting and bowling very fast. Cal swung wildly and missed a couple of times and then he tried to drive the last ball of the over back over the bowler's head. He got it too high on the bat and gave an easy return catch. Silver threw the ball up in the air with a cry of triumph.

The whole Barmewell team surrounded him and there was a lot of hugging and high fives and slaps on the back. It

was a bit over the top. Kiddo didn't think much of it. I could see him shaking his head.

"Look at them, they've gone barmy," said Frankie - he should know.

"The Barmies of Barmewell," said Tylan.

Azzie joined Matthew who was still having trouble scoring off the spinner. He was bowling a tight off-stump line and turning the ball slightly to leg. With his field set close, it wasn't easy to push a single.

"Hit him over square-leg," shouted Frankie.

"What? Matthew?" sneered Clive. "He's never hit a ball in the air in his life."

Matthew took a lot of stick for being slow and boring but there've been plenty of times when he's held things together for us while wickets were tumbling at the other end. I knew he was really one of our most important players.

Off the last ball of the spinner's over, Matthew played a lovely sweep all along the ground, but it only went for a single. Frankie groaned, "That means he keeps the strike."

The third ball of Silver's next over lifted a bit more than usual and hit Matthew in the chest. For a moment it looked nasty but Matt didn't even blink; he just waved aside the fielders and faced up to the next delivery. It was edged for a single past slip and Azzie took guard for the first time. He got a bouncer which sailed over his head. It wouldn't have been a no ball to Cal but Sid had no hesitation in calling it. It was definitely over Azzie's shoulder. The last ball of the over was also short and Azzie stepped inside the line and hooked it savagely for four.



*This is the field that Barmewell set for the spinner.*

He scored two more from a sweep played very fine against the spinner but when he tried the shot again he got a top edge and the ball ballooned into the hands of backward square-leg.

Clive came in, determined to get on top of the bowling right from the start. He drove Silver beautifully off the back foot for three twos in succession and then he was dropped in the slips attempting a cut.

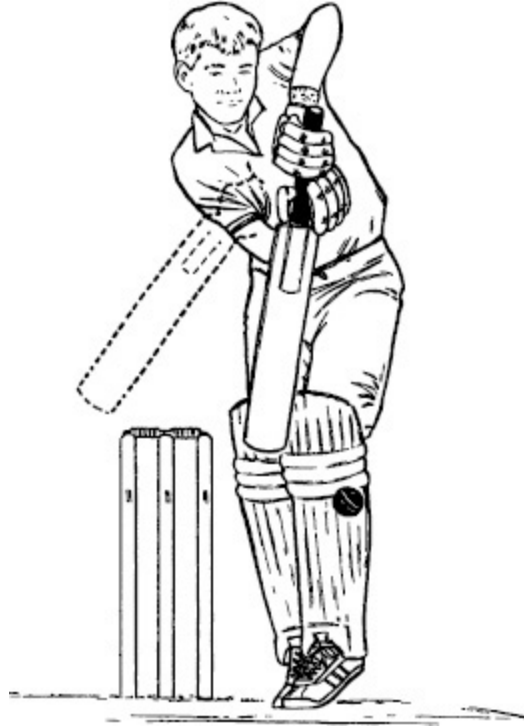


*The sweep is a useful scoring shot against off-spinners. Matthew plays it with his head over the ball, his front pad guarding his stumps and a well-balanced follow through. It's a difficult shot to play because the bat must make contact with the ball just after it pitches. If you're a fraction late you can easily get a top edge.*

After eight overs we were 31 for two with Clive on 9 and Matthew on 4.

An over later we were 32 for four.

Dave Bickerton came on to bowl and trapped Matthew lbw on the back foot with a quick off-cutter. In came the captain and leading all-rounder. I played two classic forward defensive shots, but then I tried to force a shorter ball outside the off-stump and played it straight into my wicket. It was a stupid shot to attempt so early in the innings and I paid for it with a duck.



*Instead of playing across the line with an angled bat (see dotted line), I should have moved into position and played straight with my body right behind the line.*

“Give Clive the strike if you can,” I said to Erica as she walked past me to the crease. “And don’t play a stupid shot like that.”

“As if I would,” said Erica with a smile.

There was a lot of talking and nudging amongst the Barmewell fielders as Erica asked the umpire for ‘middle and leg’. This often happens when we play teams for the first time.

“Erica’s bringing out the silly side of the Barmies,” said Frankie. They were laughing, whispering to each other and pointing.

“So, they think girls can’t play cricket, do they,” said Jo with a quiet smile.

It didn’t take them long to realise Erica was as good as any of them.

Erica's played for us right from the start, so now we don't even think about it being strange having a girl in the side. There are lots of girls who are really good at softball cricket but for some reason they don't want to play in the league. Still, I was very glad Erica did.

The main thing about her batting is concentration. She seems to know instinctively when to attack and when to defend. She's got a good range of shots, too. Her cover drive played almost down on one knee was one of the best strokes of the game.

She and Clive batted well together for three overs. Then Dave Bickerton switched the bowling and brought on another spinner who immediately had Clive stumped attempting a big drive over the top. It's not the first time he's got out that way. Frankie was next and his first shot was an ungainly four over mid-wicket - that's how Frankie plays. Next ball he was out, bowled, playing the same horrible shot.

"Typical Francis Allen," sighed Jo.

Dave Bickerton came on at the other end and picked up the wicket of Marty - lbw for two. We'd limped to 55 for seven with six overs to go.

"If someone can just stay there with Erica we might still get 75 or 80," said Cal, half speaking to Tylan who was going out to bat.

Tylan did just that - for four overs he and Erica battled away, nudging singles and twos. But then both of them were out caught, trying to raise the run rate. That brought Jacky Gunn and Ohbert to the wicket with eight balls to go and 68 on the board.

"Not much chance of reaching 70 now - with Ohbert," said Marty, in a Martyish way.

Ohbert missed his first delivery by at least two feet. He was even further away next ball with an immaculate forward defensive stroke. This is Ohbert's favourite shot but the trouble is he shows no interest in the ball when he