

## June Newsletter

Having started the season with two successive defeats, a spirited display by the 1st XI away to Norton Lindsay on the 16th May was not enough to give us our first win of the season. The team worked hard and took a regular flow of wickets but when it was our turn to bat we could never quite get ahead of the target run rate and eventually fell short.

So, when we entertained Rowington on the bank holiday weekend at the end of May, the pressure was on. We hadn't been playing badly, but needed to up our performance if we were going to turn things round. Played 3, lost 3 was not part of the script and another entry now in the "lost" column of the league table would surely put the managers job at risk (if we had one!), even this early in the season.

Rowington batted first and their openers were steady and solid as they built their partnership. Indeed, the omens did not look good as they progressed to 80 for no wickets. But then events took a dramatic turn for the better and we were reminded that there are 3 main facets to this game of cricket. Batting, bowling and fielding. And never underestimate the value of the latter.

First of all, Assam struck with a beautiful delivery that simply bamboozled the batsman who could only watch and admire as the bails went flying.

The remaining opener was applauded by all when he secured his 50 but a few balls later it was the home team only who were cheering as Andy Turnbull took a spectacular catch, off the bowling of Chris Barber, when he dived straight ahead of himself to grab a firmly hit shot that was never more than a few inches off the ground. This then triggered a massive collapse when catches were held and the bowlers took complete control. Incredibly, Rowington went from 80 for no wickets until they ended their innings on 123 all out. There were some excellent bowling figures with the highlight being a 6 wicket haul for Raza

Tea was enjoyed and then it was time for the run chase. Surely this was a match we could, should and would win.

Chris Barber and Rich Hopkins opened and the strategy soon became clear. With only a modest total to meet, this would be a safety first approach, designed to keep wickets intact. It was not so much a "run chase" as a "gentle Saturday afternoon stroll" chase and slowly but surely the score edged up, with both openers looking in complete control. Just when it looked likely that our openers would steer the team home to victory, it was Chris who was making the solitary trek back to the pavilion as he lost his middle stump. James Carey then joined Rich and the strategy remained the same, with James slotting in to replicate the efforts off Chris, until he also fell foul of the Rowington attack, who laboured valiantly despite having a nominal total to defend.

Adam then joined Rich at the crease and we eased home very comfortably with no other dramas to report. Rich did get his 50, which was well deserved.

It was an impressive team effort, especially considering that the Rowington openers got their team off to a very useful start and built a solid platform.

There were also some strong individual performances including Raza and Chris, but special mention needs to be made of Rich, in particular, who kept wicket immaculately and who batted with style and purpose. There was never any doubt that he would lead the team over the line as he comfortably picked off the Rowington attack without ever looking in danger. Well played everyone, but in particular, well played Rich.

The midweek games also started and after coming second to Old Edwardians in the opening match, the following week we entertained Lapwoth at Rumbush Lane. And I have never seen a more bizarre or controversial finish to a match.

We batted first and because of a rain delayed start, it was agreed that the game would consist of 12 overs per side, with each over comprising 8 balls.

We batted well and reached the satisfactory total of 104 for the loss of only 3 wickets

Now it was Lapwoth's turn to bat and although they had some big hitters, we regularly took wickets, so that their score was 89 for 9 at the start of the last over. Either side could win as Rory Turnbull was handed the ball for these crucial last deliveries. His first 4 bowls yielded a dot ball, a single, a 2 and a mighty 6. ie 9 runs in total. He noticed however that the scoreboard was now showing 99 and so interrupted the action to have the scoreboard rectified.  $89 + 9 = 98$  was his simple statement. Lapwoth accepted that Rory was right and the score board was corrected, but they then challenged our score which they claimed had been exaggerated by 4 runs. Steve Hartley, the home umpire soon put them right on that score in that, irrespective of the facts, it was far too late to challenge our total.

So, back to the match and Lapwoth still needed 7 runs from 4 bowls to win. The next 3 balls yielded no runs and so another good delivery from Rory with his final ball, would see us home. In he raced, the batsman swung at it and connected and incredibly the Lapwoth umpire cried "no ball." If you were cynical you could marvel at the co-incidence of this latest development, but more was to follow. The batsmen ran with their umpire repeatedly shouting "no ball" and having completed one run they then stopped in the middle to discuss their situation, whereby they were promptly run out. Game over.

Our visiting umpire continued to scream "no ball" and expected therefore that there was still one more ball to be played. He seemed unaware that you can be run out off a no ball. And whilst normally another ball would be played, this wasn't possible as his team had lost all of their wickets and so their innings was closed.

I didn't have a conversation with any of the visiting team but sensed that the majority of their players were embarrassed with the way events unfolded. I suggest that the visiting umpire at least carries out a quick resume of the rules before he officiates again.

Next stop on the fixture list for the 1st XI was a trip to Kenilworth and with Captain Chris Barber away at Wembley to lend his support to Aston Villa in the FA Cup Final, it was left to James Carey to lead the side.

Kenilworth batted first and had no initial response to the opening onslaught from Andy Turnbull who collected the first 3 wickets, leaving the home side struggling on 57 for 3. However, Kenilworth regrouped and their fourth wicket partnership gradually started to take control until Assam struck and removed the bails of their number 5 batsman. A run out followed, but otherwise the batsmen were relentlessly scoring and their innings came to a close on 189 for 6.

James Carey and Rich Hopkins opened the batting and soon settled into a steady rhythm until Rich was caught by the keeper, from a ball that debatably should have been called a "no ball" on the grounds of height. Dave Hill then entered the fray and kept the momentum going until he edged one into the gloves of the keeper.

Now it was Andy Turnbull's turn and he and James were soon into a smooth rhythm with Andy taking singles which kept the scoreboard ticking over, but also kept the big hitting James on strike as much as possible. As a sign of things to come though, Andy did hit a glorious 6 to the leg side boundary, just before James was unlucky to be given out LBW for an impressive 86.

Matt Hill then strode out to the middle to join Andy and they maintained a steady flow of runs until Matt lost his wicket. Cue, Dave Baines who proceeded to hit a quick fire 22 at just the right time. His contribution got us ahead of the run rate and when he was out it left Andy and Assam to steer us home. The countdown was gentle, with us needing 20 runs off 6 overs, 10 runs off 3 overs and then 4 runs from 13 balls, at which stage Andy settled matters with an enormous 6 to match the one he hit earlier in his innings.

It was a very satisfying victory and the league table could now be viewed without wincing with pain.

Now we need to maintain the momentum when we entertain FISSC in the next match

As for the other teams, the Second XI are finding life difficult so far, whilst the 3rd XI are enjoying good successes in their league.

Mention should also be made of the Junior team who only started playing last summer and who initially found the going very tough. Progress has been good however and the extent of their improvement was underlined when they won a 4 team, Under 9's tournament at Cookhill, remaining unbeaten and taking the scalps of Wellesbourne, Cookhill and Kenilworth, all by more than 10 runs. A fantastic achievement, so well done to everyone concerned.

Off the pitch the big news is that the FA have approved our grant application and have awarded us a further £200K to go with the £93K we have already secured from Sport England. It has been a very long journey, which has involved many meetings with the FA, Architects, QS, and Drainage Consultants and in excess of 200 hours preparing the application forms. We have a design that has passed planning permission and we are now submitting the necessary building regulations to Solihull Council. We will put copies of the plans up at both Club Houses. We also have an agreed proposal for drainage of the two football pitches. at Rumbush Lane, but are awaiting further fund approval from Sport England. We are planning to start this work in September. We hope to have it completed by the beginning of next cricket season latest. Thank you in particular to Phil Webb and Mike Shaw for all your hard work.

This is a positive move for the club, which will enable us to increase the revenue at Rumbush Lane, which in turn will enable us to spend money at the Tanworth Lane ground. It involves the FA because Leafield Ladies FC hire the use of Rumbush Lane, which is used for both cricket and football. Tanworth Lane is exclusively a cricket ground and we are currently talking to the ECB & Sport England again for a possible grant for covers & drainage.

As always, full details including fixture list can be obtained on our website [www.tachcc.co.uk](http://www.tachcc.co.uk) or on twitter: @tachcc

Alastair Turnbull