

November 2015 Newsletter

Season Review

Nothing excites like live sport with its topsy turvy unpredictability, which can take you from euphoria to despair and back again in a matter of seconds. There is an adrenalin rush from performing well and in the good times everyone unites, like a loving family as they cheer each other on. But there are times when the sun does not break through the clouds and it is then that the true extent of team spirit can be measured. And I think it's fair to say that a roller coaster of emotions have been experienced by the players and supporters of Tanworth and Camp Hill CC this year

The 1st XI are a comparatively young team with over half of them having played their way through all the junior age groups, from under 9 onwards. Whilst the target this season was to win as many games as possible, the general consensus was that another year in Division 1 would not be a bad thing, for everyone to continue their learning curves, before taking on the challenge of the Premier Division. The football analogy was Alan Hansen who nearly got it right all those years ago when he proclaimed "You don't win anything with kids" (and he loves being reminded about it!) . But another important consideration is for it to be fun for everyone, which translated into the language of competitive sport means winning.

Consensus opinion tends to vary with circumstances and after the first 3 matches, the benefit of another season in this division was being endorsed, as unfortunately the league table showed 3 games played and 3 games lost. Indeed, there was a danger that we would not be playing in the first division next year. In the parlance of the timeless board game, the danger was of us sliding down the snakes rather than climbing up the ladders. However there was a logistical issue that could (and would) prove to be material and that was the matter of player availability.

In professional sport this tends to depend on the fitness or otherwise of the team members but it is a much wider issue in amateur sport when matters such as holidays, other events and attractions and family matters are all added to personal fitness and well being, as barriers to turning out every Saturday. And with younger team members, they tend to go away to University and so are not available until the end of term, which is often quite a few weeks into the season. And so, as the students drifted back, so the team strengthened and improved and went on an amazing sequence of 10 wins from 11 matches, which was the key to the overall success eventually enjoyed. By the time we suffered a couple of reverses near the end of the season, the hard work had been done and promotion secured, as a result of being Division 1 runners up.

And despite some memorable individual achievements, there is no doubt that the key component was teamwork, with everyone playing for each other. And noticeably, everyone had a spring in their step and a smile on their face.

Leading the way, in every sense was captain, Chris Barber who engendered a fantastic team spirit, made good use of an astute tactical brain and personally excelled with the ball, in the field and particularly with the bat, where he scored an incredible 854 runs from 14 innings, at an average of 94.9 (This average is calculated after allowing for the occasions when the batsman is not out at the end of the innings) This included a couple of centuries and a highest score of 115 not out. Even on those days when all around him wickets tumbled, he batted serenely on. Not only was his performance outstanding when measured against his team mates, it also proved to be the leading performance in the whole of the division where he was the most prolific batsmen overall. When you combine this with the fact that he took 19 wickets when performing with the ball, you realise the extra ordinary contribution he made. It was simply outstanding and was maintained throughout the season.

Other notable contributions with the bat came from Kieren Patel, with 315 runs from only 7 appearances and which included a century in our last home match of the season. Rich Hopkins and James Carey also both totaled over 300 runs.

With the ball, Rory Turnbull enjoyed most success with 30 wickets, followed by his brother Andy on 24. Top of the averages was however John Robb, who took 14 wickets at an average of 9.2. Other notable achievements came from Asam Raza with 20 wickets and Kully Gill with 10.

Sharp and confident fielding was another important ingredient. It really was a huge team effort.

So, what were the highlights? Gaining promotion was a huge high and was well celebrated. The consistent form of Captain Chris was a great inspiration and motivation. The century from KP was also exquisite and Gowersque. But, my personal highlight of the season was the performance of our bowlers in our match away at Rowington when, in a breathtaking display of hostility, they had the opposition floundering on 25 for 7 after 15 overs. Rowington are a very capable team who finished 4th in the league and yet were simply destroyed by our attack. It was impossible to take your eyes off the action.

It was a story of ups and downs for both the 2nd and 3rd teams, with unfortunately more downs than ups. It was a real trial for both teams with the ever changing level of availability affecting our ability to put out a full side. For the 3rd team in particular, captain Pete Carey faced a thankless task in getting a team on to the pitch. If the first team needs players they simply raid the 2nd team, who in turn raid the 3rd team. So, Pete has a headache and nowhere to turn. For example, based on the number of wins they achieved, the 3rd team would have finished in the top half of the table were it not for the fact that they had points deducted on several occasions for not being able to put out a side.

Highlights for the 3rd team included an early season win against Astwood Bank followed by a good win against Warwick, the following week. We also completed the double over Exhall. The emergence of some younger players augurs well for the future but right now the club is around 5/6 regular players

short. If anyone is interested in playing, please contact Pete Carey on 07899 873564

The midweek team had a mixed season, finishing mid table in their league and although the juniors were featured in last months' issue, it is appropriate to mention again the ability, energy and enthusiasm that they bring, not only to their matches but also to the training sessions. They are keen to learn, and with their talent channeled in the right direction let's hope that they can continue to progress and land some silverware next season. It is with a great deal of pride that we observe these youngsters, in their smart kit and caps and wonder how long it will be before they are playing for the 1st XI. Thanks should also be extended to their parents for their unstinting support.

And so, as the temperature drops and the daylight hours reduce, the only cricket available to the majority is either indoor nets or Sky TV. Whilst professional players follow the sun and ply their trade in the southern hemisphere at this time of year, this is rarely an option for the amateur. This winter is slightly different however as James Carey is playing cricket in Australia over the winter and Andy Turnbull has just come back from a stint in South Africa where he has been coaching, mainly under privileged children, in the Cape Town area.

Over the winter months we can speculate on and look forward to 2016, which will be challenging for all the teams, but in particular for the 1st team. We don't know what the results will be but one thing for sure is that it will be a roller coaster ride. We are talking about live sport after all.

Finally, thank you to the players, supporters and those who contribute in any way to the club. There is an army of support and help, often behind the scenes and in no particular order this includes:-

Steve Hartley and John Whale for their devotion to umpiring
Every one who did teas
Ground staff for all the hard work which make us the envy of most
Every one who helped with the scoring.
Social event organisers and attendees
Fundraisers.
Supporters and spectators.
All of the juniors' parents and families for their help and support
New match shirts for the juniors, sponsored by Decorus Flooring
The new scoreboard has been a great success. Thanks again to Pertemps.

Here's to 2016 !!

Alastair Turnbull