

September 2015 Newsletter

At the end of last month's cricket report I eulogised over the 1st XI's performance at Rowington and the success of our bowlers who continue to cause havoc with the opposition batsmen. As a measure of our bowling success, we have obtained more bowling points than any of our league rivals, in the season so far. Well done to everyone who has contributed to that very encouraging statistic.

Tanworth and Camp Hill were now in second place in the league table, with our destiny in our own hands and despite bowling exceptionally well, it was the batting prowess that came to the fore, in our match at home to Kenilworth Wardens.

In the absence of Chris Barber, who was on Stag Party duty, Rich and Fred opened and laid the perfect foundations. They have both had good seasons and have consistently scored well, to such an extent that optimism is always high when they go to the crease. Batting at number 3 was James and when it was his turn he carried on the good work, scoring 24 runs to support the 40 from Rich and 34 from Fred.

Next up was Andy Turnbull, followed by his brother Rory. Following the example of the earlier batsmen, they stroked the ball all around the pitch, taking singles where appropriate and dispatching the poorer balls to the boundary. And all the time they remained in control, hitting the right shots at the right time. Andy even picked out a brace of balls that he sent sailing for 6's. And so we glided to victory with Andy hitting the winning runs and finishing on 61 not out.

It was fine batting performances from all involved, with beautifully timed and well executed shots in abundance.

The bowlers kept Kenilworth under constraint, restricting them to 166 at the end of 45 overs. The wicket takers were Rory with 3, John Robb with 2 and Andy. Now there were 3 games left and the next appointment we had was a date with FISSC at their home in Stratford

We bowled first but unlike in recent weeks it all seemed like hard work and if anything, the mood was subdued and wickets were hard to take. There was a moment of glory however for 14 year old Seth Jordan when he came on as first change bowler and took his first wicket for the 1st XI on his first appearance. John Robb, as usual, was among the wickets as was Andy and Chris.

And Rory, having taken a wicket with the first ball of the innings the previous week now took one with the last ball of the innings to give him a total of 3 wickets. At the end of the 45 overs, FISSC had amassed 207 runs.

After a bowling performance that fell short of our normal high standards, the batsmen fared little better and regularly lost wickets. Captain Chris once again starred and carried his bat through most of the innings, but apart from his 69 only two other batsmen made double figures and we were all out for 140.

Following all the success and excitement of recent weeks this was a very disappointing performance.

But, if the wheels came off at FISSC, they were back on like a well oiled F1 pit stop when we entertained Kineton in our last home match of the season.

We won the toss and chose to bat. Chris and Fred looked very purposeful as they walked to the middle and soon had the scoreboard working hard to keep up with their scoring as they piled on the runs, reaching 90 after 15 overs. When Fred's wicket fell, for 58, Rich carried on in the same vein and he was followed by KP, who elegantly and smoothly scored well and in no time at all reached 50. He never looked in danger as he entertained the home supporters to a batting master class. With what seemed to be little effort he was soon in the 90's and then with overs running out he became more aggressive and to rapturous applause secured his century, in the final over. Well done KP, not just for the century but also for the style in which it was achieved. We closed on 304 for 4, with Chris also making a huge contribution of 86. The batsmen had done their job and now it was up to the bowlers.

And they didn't let us down. In the first over Rory removed the Kineton captain when he edged a shot into the safe hands of wicket keeper Rich. Soon afterwards, the other opener fell to the same fate, before Andy then clean bowled their number 3 batsman. Their number 4 batsman came in and in their desperate circumstances swung his bat at every ball, to score a quick 20 before Rory removed his off stump with a peach of a delivery. Rich then took another catch off Andy's bowling and so Kineton were now 48 for 5 after 14 overs.

JR took the next 2 wickets, both courtesy of catches from Adam, who then claimed the next one, with the help of KP who took a fine catch. With one wicket remaining, Dan Williams came on to bowl and with his first delivery took a caught and bowled to bring events to a close. We had won by a massive 212 runs.

As we went into the final fixture of the season, away to Ashton-under-Hill we were in second place in the table, nine points clear of the third placed team, Norton Lindsey. And with the top two teams being promoted, the equation was simple. If we win at Ashton-under-Hill we'll be playing Premier League cricket next year. If we lose and Norton Lindsey also lose then we still go up.

The lure of Twenty/20 finals day at Edgbaston, holidays, injuries and a friend's wedding resulted in more personnel changes for the 1st XI and so as we drove south to Ashton we wondered what the fates would bring.

Well, it turned out to be one of those days when little went right. We bowled first and as has been the norm in recent weeks, Andy and Rory opened the attack. But luck was against them as shots in the air seemed to find the gaps, edges to slip didn't carry or went high over fielder's heads and those that went to hand were unfortunately dropped. Scoring was very slow however and the breakthrough eventually came when James took an exceptional catch at Gully, off Rory's bowling. Following the first bowling change, Del came on and took the next two wickets, whilst at the other end Andy Brazier got his reward, helped by a fine catch from Ferg. Del picked up another wicket in his 3-37 and both Turnbull's added another wicket at the death, with Andy also running out a batsman with a direct hit off his own bowling. Ashton finished on 231-8.

Our reply didn't get off to a great start with Fred out to the third ball of the innings. Unfortunately Rich soon followed him back to the pavilion with the score 5-2 from 5 overs! This was a most unusual set of circumstances as normally these two can be relied upon to score well.

James and Andy T set about trying to re-build the innings and James was hitting the ball to all parts, scoring quickly, but not taking unnecessary risks. Andy was more defensive but the pair were certainly giving us a chance of victory, before Andy fell to a very good ball for 16. James kept going though, supported now by Dave Hill and at drinks, the game was in the balance. Hilly fell soon after for 31 though and the pressure was again on us. James reached his 50, but wickets were now falling regularly and we were 170-8 when James fell, caught and bowled for 80, a tremendous knock. The tail then wagged vigorously as Del and Dan Williams scored freely and put on 40 for the final wicket to take us over the 200 mark, giving us maximum batting points. But, when the innings closed we were still 26 runs short of the target.

We were in touch with the other important match on the day, where FISSC entertained Norton Lindsey. And the good news was that when batting, FISSC achieved a very challenging 235 for 9.

Then, with 2 overs of our innings remaining and with a victory for us looking most unlikely, news came through that Norton Lindsey had been bowled out for 183 and had lost. The pressure was off, we coasted through the final 2 overs and then the champagne flowed. We had lost the battle but won the war.

And after a long hard season, we had been promoted. Well done to everyone involved in particular skipper Chris Barber for all his efforts and shrewd captaincy throughout the season. It will be Premier League cricket for TACH next year!

And then, on the drive home, the skies were ablaze with a vibrant red glow. Not only did the fates favour us on the pitch, but they acknowledged our success with

a breathtaking sunset, to bring down an appropriate curtain on the season.

As always, full details can be obtained on our website www.tachcc.co.uk or on twitter: @tachcc. We are also now on Facebook

Alastair Turnbull

PS – The date of the annual dinner and presentation of awards has changed and will now take place on Saturday 3rd October at Shirley Golf Club. Come along and support the club and enjoy a good night out. Let Alison Prosser know if you are interested - aliprosser1@hotmail.co.uk or [07769 880888](tel:07769880888)