

Cricket. What's the point?

Well it was by a very important single point that the 1st XI retained their place in the First Division of the Cotswold Hills league, with a thrilling win on the last day of the season. Points are awarded for wins and ties and in addition there are bonus points based on wickets taken and runs scored. And after a full season of endeavour and toil, we produced some exceptional moments in the last month of the season, leaving everyone thinking about what might have been. And it was not for the faint hearted, but when the calculators took over from the willow and leather, it was confirmed that the sleepless nights had been overcome and Chris Barber would be leading his men out again next season, still in the First Division. Results aren't everything but Chris can feel justifiably proud of his first season in charge as he has brought enthusiasm and leadership skills to compliment his popularity. It has been noticeable that everyone has been playing with a smile on their face and the long term prospects are good for a team with a huge bias towards youth. What we now need is some consistency.

So, how did the story unfold?

The turning point was early August when we traveled to Norton Lindsey and overcame the hosts in one of the most memorable matches I've ever seen. A separate match report is set out below.

The momentum was lost the following weekend however when we went down at home to Chipping Campden. Our batting failed and we were all out for 94. Valiantly though our bowlers tried, this was a total they just could not defend. Worse was the fact that we were locked in the relegation battle with Chipping Campden and so in football terms this was a "six pointer".

The glorious uncertainty of our performances again then took a turn for the better when we visited the picturesque setting of Alcester and Ragley in the penultimate match of the season. Batting first, we lost an early wicket and so the other opener, Andy Turnbull was joined at the crease by James Carey, who proceeded to bat as well as I've seen him and which progressed to a well deserved century. This was a measured, well constructed innings, where the bad balls were dispatched to the boundary with aggression, but where the good balls were treated with respect. Well supported with a 50 from Andy, we amassed a total of 236 for 6. This was a total that Alcester and Ragley could never threaten and we ran out winners by 92 runs.

There was now one match left and we were three points ahead of Chipping Campden. It was all down to this last home game against Rowington.

Chris won the toss and chose to bowl. Very soon this seemed to be a sound decision as Rory Turnbull made sure there was a steady flow of traffic between

crease and pavilion, by taking the first 3 wickets, which included a sensational caught and bowled. His brother Andy then entered the fray and took the next 2 wickets to fall. The party was carried on by Paul Townsend who claimed 3 wickets, the first being with his first ball. Assam rowed in with a single wicket leaving the visitors with a final tally of 120 for 9.

We had given ourselves a real chance to win but realising that bonus points would be important it was vital to knock the runs off with minimal wicket loss. And with the score on 15 the nerves were jangling as Fred lost his wicket. James Carey then joined Kieran Patel at the crease and together they batted sensibly to see us through with no further loss. In retrospect it was an easy win and when the bonus points were added we had amassed a total of 19 on the day. We started the day 3 points ahead of Chipping Campden so this gave us a lead of 22, pending their result. Then the news came in. Chipping Camden had achieved a convincing win. Oh no! They had amassed 21 points. Oh yes! We started our party!

The day was marked with a declaration of a separate type with it being the last match officiated by our triumverate of scorers, Geoff Henshaw, John Barratt and Liz Barratt. We'll still see lots of them next season, but in the leisurely role of mere spectators. A presentation was made to them to say a huge thank you for their long and distinguished service.

To mark a splendid day for the club, both the 2nd XI and 3rd XI also won.

A summary of the season for all of the teams will appear in next months newsletter and 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

Match report versus Norton Lindsey

Date : 9 August 2014

Place : Norton Lindsey Cricket Club

Nothing compares to live sport for drama, excitement, tension and then if you win, euphoria. All of these emotions and more were shared by those who participated in and watched this match. And I was there. On the world's sporting stage this can't compare to Liverpool winning the Champions League in Istanbul, Manchester United doing the same in Barcelona or England winning the rugby world cup in Australia.

But for those who care about Tanworth and Camp Hill Cricket Club this was a momentous victory. It truly was an " I was there" occasion. And the fingernails will take a long time to recover.

With regular captain Chris Barber away on holiday, James Carey stood in, won the toss and elected to bat. The first two gladiators to enter the fray were KP and Andy T.

There are opportunities for all sorts of legs in cricket, ranging from short to long and square to fine, as well as the art of leg spin bowling, but to my mind the most important legs are those of the batsmen that can run fast and keep the score card ticking over. This is exactly what the openers did and the score was on 47 before Andy was bowled. The total then increased to 81 before KP joined him in the pavilion, after making 40, our top score on the day. It's a point worth making (and I hope you don't think it a silly point) but slips can be made when fielding and the opportunity to take easy singles should be taken. If you bat first then you really need to give the bowlers a total they can protect.

The Third Man in to bat was Chris Mason and he quickly found the on/off switch at mid wicket, hitting the ball well through both mid on and mid off, as well as draining the bowlers energy with regular runs to the gully area. Chris eventually fell for 29 and although there were no more high scores everyone contributed to take the total to 168 for 8 after 45 overs. The question was "Is this enough?"

When we came out to field the attitude seemed very positive, even though it was not a huge total to defend and there was encouragement for each other all round. We looked like and acted like a team of spirited musketeers "all for one and one for all"

Now it was the turn of our bowlers. Bowlers can be medium paced, fast, swing, seam, leg or off spinners and they all have their jobs to do. But they also need the support of the whole fielding unit from wicket keeper onwards, to take the catches, avoid extras, avoid boundaries, back each other up and contain the batsmen scoring. And right from the start that's what we did. The opposition got to 59 before they lost a wicket but that was in the 21st over and so we were containing the run rate. Asam bowled well and deserved that opening wicket. Indeed Kully, Taz and Shabs all bowled well and helped contain the score.

Now Rory entered the fray, bowling a very tight opening over, keeping the batsmen on their toes. His first reward came on the last ball of the over when their number 3 batsman could only manage to get a top edge on the ball, which skied and went in the direction of Braithers. It went high and Ian had a long time to think about it but when gravity took over the ball nestled safely in his hands. It was another breakthrough .... but better was to come.

The remaining opener was now on 50 and proving to be very dangerous. Then Rory produced a peach of a ball, a yorker which swung in and landed on leg stump. The whole team jumped in the air, nearly as high as the bails. We were walking on air and the batsman was walking to the pavilion.

The consistently reliable Andy B got his just deserves when KP took a fine stumping, off his bowling. All the effort was starting to be repaid. You could see the growing belief in the players that they could win this. But, would they?

They needed 39 runs from 9 overs, with the score 138-3 and now the ball was thrown to Andy T, who did not disappoint. In as fine a spell of death bowling as you will see he not only restricted the run rate but also clean bowled two opponents, ending with the outstanding figures of 4 overs, 2 wickets for 8 runs.

Desperate for runs the batsmen were now taking chances and two run outs evidenced their panic.

And so, it came to the final over. They needed 11 to win and we had Andy B to deliver the final 6 balls. Who would keep their nerve? Who had the bottle? Having lost a number of matches recently in close finishes, was this our turning point?.

The batsmen now realised that they were not coasting to victory and started to lash out. Rory was dispatched to a catching position on the boundary at deep mid-wicket, and the batsmen were not to disappoint. The left hander middled a ball from Andy B. It went high and then higher. It went long and then longer. It was going straight to Rory and he had lots of time to ponder the catch. He took some steps forward and then some steps backward as he tried to position himself. Then, just as the ball was landing he stumbled backwards ending up flat on his back. He was at the opposite end of the ground. It was hard to see. Had he caught it? Then, from his prone position an arm was raised and clenched in his hand was the ball. What a momentous catch and what inspiration for his team mates who all rushed across to congratulate him. The belief was growing that we could win.

In a tense and dramatic final over, Andy B gave the outward impression of calm and coolness, guiding the team home to a 4 run victory. If he was nervous it didn't show. It was a magnificent finale. Norton finished 164-9.

The team maintained a very dignified presence at the end until they got into the sanctuary of their changing room, when all the euphoria and emotion overspilled into celebrations that were well deserved. This was a real team effort where everyone responded to the pressure with a very positive approach and no small element of ability. A huge well done to you all.