

Barnards Green Cricket Club Second Eleven Review 2012

The bare stats show the side played 15 (out of 22 – the rain won all too frequently in this wettest of summers). 60% of games were won. 25% were lost and the remaining 13.3% of games were drawn.

The final result - a third place finish only behind Bromsgrove and Brockhampton, established Birmingham and District Premier Cricket League clubs, is something to be rejoiced for the whole of the club as the second eleven acts as both a proving ground and as a nursery for players, new and established, young and old.

Poor player availability through illness, injury and holidays meant that 36 players were used throughout the season with 9 new faces making their second eleven debuts. Equally, with new players came exciting prospects; Duncan Cooper displayed back-footed elegance and reliable keeping although the equilibrium was restored with his horrendously smelly kit. Although playing only two games, the young keeper Jack Dickenson threw himself around with gusto and showed that he is one for the future. James 'Swampy' Marsh brought pace, hostility and aggression to the side as well as some useful lower order run scoring ability. Sam Daffin bypassed the third team and quickly made the step-up to BDPCL cricket, taking wickets as easily as he acquired nicknames. Sam quietly went about his business but learnt quickly and impressed all who played with him. Dannie Rees, Ben Alamuto, Dave Sutton, Lee Smith and Steve Lamb all appeared this season and their contribution was welcomed. Unfortunately, like last year we played one game with only 10 men and, were it not for individuals making last minute sacrifices, this could have easily been a more regular occurrence. For a BDPCL club with four Saturday teams the seconds should not struggle for players with such regularity as not only does it weaken the cricketing product and potentially damage player progress, it is an unfair burden on those who have to act as private detectives in tracking down and sweet talking players late on a Friday evening.

Of the 'old guard', from previous seasons, only one was able to make a hundred. Kev Golder batted fantastically well on a wet wicket against Berkswell to record 119*. Other batting highlights include Roger Thompson 85*, Tom Clack 88*, Georgia Hennessy 60* and Jack Macintosh 35* off 15 balls at Old Elizabethan's to win against the odds. Jon Lewis, when available scored some classy runs and Andy Wheeler biffed the ball in his accustomed fashion. I struggled to convert starts whilst Dannie Rees scored good runs and injected some energy in the games he played.

With the ball Shane Thompson led the way with 23 wickets. At times Shane was unplayable, swinging the ball at pace. James Marsh supported Shane well and was unlucky not to take more than 13 wickets although suffered from dropped catches all too frequently. Lewis Hooper and Tom Clack took 18 and 14 wickets respectively and were very effective at drying up the run scoring, particularly at the end of the innings. Georgia Hennessy gave the side control and rarely bowled a bad ball whilst picking up 9 wickets in a similar style to Matt Brookes 8 and James Scullion 7. The occasional bowling of Eliot Hennessy saw him pick up 5-41 in the home fixture against Berkswell in a season curtailed by injuries. Jack Mackintosh picked up 10 wickets and has found an extra yard of pace from last year making him a genuine allrounder at this level.

The fielding, for so long a strong point of this side, came unstuck on occasions, particularly with catches in the slip cordon and gully region. With a crop of fast bowlers likely to find the edge, this

must be addressed for next season. Despite this, only Bromsgrove out-fielded us and many opponents complemented the quality of some of the ground fielding and throwing we displayed.

Thanks go, as always, to Anne Wilson and Winnie the dog for not only keeping score each week but for all of the 'behind the scenes' work and support they offer. Equally, despite the terrible weather we were all privileged to play at the best looking ground in the league yet again and our thanks go to all of the volunteers who spend many hours preparing the ground for our enjoyment.

Next season holds much promise. With just a couple of key areas strengthened this side could, with continuity of availability and a little luck, become a genuine force to be reckoned with and continue to prove a producer of first team quality players for a club well and truly on the up!

See you in April!

Judders