

## BGCC 3<sup>rd</sup> XI:

### The 2011 season in the Worcestershire County League (Division Four) (1st XI)

#### by our Newland correspondent

First, some unreliable statistics culled from the 2011 scorebook: a volume maltreated by various players and spectators, and with telling gaps.

With one game rained off (the last of the season, at Himley), the Green skippers participated in 17 tosses as follows:

Brown	2 wins from 10
Paddock	0 from 1
Ratcliffe	1 from 4
Greaves	0 from 1
Lewis	0 from 1

Overall, a tally of 3 wins from 17 presumably fair tosses might be expected once or twice in a district with several hundred teams, but it is annoying when it happens to *your* team. A tally at least as bad (3 or fewer wins) has the probability

$$\sum_{n=0}^3 \binom{17}{n} (0.5)^{17}$$

or about 157 to 1 against. Without dwelling on this, the Green tackled the problems of insertion on damp and otherwise unpleasant tracks:

In these 17 matches, they lost 145 wickets of which **36 or roughly 25%** were ducks (and 81 were for scores below 10). The average score for each lower-order batsman (numbers 7 to 11 inclusive), in the 11 matches where the Green lost all 10 wickets, was roughly 6.5, helped by Brown's final innings. The opposition, in contrast, lost 110 wickets of which **14 or roughly 13%** were ducks (and 57 were for scores below 10). The Green figures are appalling and may suggest that not all the players showed the necessary resolve early, or at all, in their time at the crease.

Next, we must descend to personalities.

**Steve Alamutu** played 6 games and made a fine 87 against Canon Frome in June.

**Dick Brown** bowled 1 over for 18 runs. Having taken regular abuse for his captaincy and toss-losing, he missed the second half of the season with an Achilles tendon strain. But his revenge was sweet and full; at every match the team and their stand-in captain were supported, cajoled, and audibly chuntered at from just beyond the boundary. Strong nerves were needed to ignore him, and one or two teammates cracked. He returned in time to brighten the August defeat against Canon Frome with his rearguard 66 (see above).

**Graham Baddeley** regularly opened the batting, or rather opened when able to find the ground, *and bring his kit*, before play began. He averaged 27 with a median score of 16.

**Clive Churchill** played the second half of the season, taking 14 wickets at 14 with a good strike rate. In 5 attempts he made 15 runs, with three solid ducks, but his unbeaten 10 in the late partnership with Brown will be remembered.

**Jack Cullity**, often our youngest bowler by far, and limited to spells of 7 overs under the League rules, showed improved pace and control this year. He took 17 wickets at 25, but dribbled nearly 4 runs per over; his figures were spoiled in the last few matches when he carried an ankle knock. In 10 innings he made 32 at an average of 4, with four ducks (see above). He will learn to stay in his crease, to hit the ball before it hits him, and to hit it generally downwards.

**Adam Greaves** impressed with 245 runs at 61 but could play in only 6 matches (and re-injured his knee in one of those). His one calming appearance as skipper brought a necessary win over Avoncroft.

**Chris Hill** featured as senior all-rounder, opening the batting and bowling (270 runs at 25; 139 overs with a tight economy rate of 2.35, but only 13 wickets). A spell of 16-13-9-2 against Brintons was a highlight. Becoming fitter and lighter during the season, he fell victim to several muscle strains, once during a Baddeley-inspired run-out fiasco. A broken bat at Stourbridge, and the forced purchase of a new one, precipitated a run of low autumn scores.

**Jon Lewis** caught the duck malady, contributing 75, 0, 25, 39, 0, 18 and 0. His early success with the ball did not continue through the summer, but he took 13 wickets in 25 overs – an outstanding strike rate.

**Dan Metcalfe** was another who fielded keenly but disappointed with the bat. Against Alveley at home, in the same match as Hill, he joined the growing band of Baddeley run-out victims.

**Dave Price** ran around in the field with great keenness as usual, and was one of the guilty parties in the lower order. After a decent 16 at number 10 against Tenbury, he was not seen with the bat until his late-season burst of 0, 0\*, 4\*, 4\* and 4. Do these asterisks hint at untapped potential? In 80 overs he took 18 wickets at 13, with 2 for 0 in 3 balls at Stourbridge and 4 for 33 at Avoncroft. He several times took a wicket very early in a spell, not always with a delivery of good length.

**Kevin Ratcliffe** battled mediocre form and ungenerous umpires all season, making 164 runs at 12, with no big scores but nine of 10 or more. He also suffered at the focus of one of the major 3<sup>rd</sup> XI problems. **Ash Brewer's** opening performance against Martley was most impressive, but he then disappeared into the upper teams and his elders had to elect a wicketkeeper. No blame attaches to Ratcliffe and **John Wheeler** (who served for five matches each), and **Mark Perkins** and **Dave White** (three each).

**Roger Thompson** scored over 500 exciting and aggressive runs, averaging 39, with a century in the drawn match at Amblecote & Wollaston. He took only 5 wickets, but his dismissal of Josh Bent was crucial to the home win against Alveley.

**Ryan Scullion** appeared at times between holidays and 2<sup>nd</sup> XI jaunts, taking 5 wickets at 25 and showing good form with the bat (122 runs at 30.5). **Brad Adams** was still wayward, taking only 9 wickets at 37 and leaking runs, but gave signs of better control. His batting average of 39 may surprise some readers. Other keen but occasional contributions were noted from **Cyril Dean, Julian Hall, Chris Horne** and **Steve Metcalfe**.

Summary comments: the lower Green XIs have lower priority than the upper; senior and occasional players tend to be concentrated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI for no particularly nefarious reason; rates of injury and absence are understandably high, and levels of skill and fitness nothing to gloat about. Still...the Green were slack in the field, especially in the later overs, and collapsed too often when batting. A disappointment – from a view as neutral as possible – was the shortage of keen contests and close results. A great deal repeatedly hinged on the toss; desperate collapses were common, but rarely followed by fightbacks or any sign of intelligent cricket. Many innings, and many games, petered out with overs to spare.

A cheerful note to end: youngsters are regularly passing through the 4<sup>th</sup> XI and 3<sup>rd</sup> XI on their way to higher standards and better sightscreens; grumpy seniors can still enjoy the Malvern Hills backdrop; and the whole team should applaud the efforts by all the captains, the groundstaff, and the tealadies.