

Cricket Report

First I wanted to thank all the senior captains for their efforts this year, including players who stepped in as sub captains where required. Getting a capable and competitive 11 on the field for each side gets harder every year and managing the Saturday / Sunday afternoons are often the easy bit compared to the work that goes in during the week to keep the show on the road.

After initially not intending to have an oversea player for 2017, Ben Ward became available shortly before the season started for a second summer in Keynsham. Given our familiarity with Ben we felt this was a good move for the club to re-sign him for another season. Thanks to the committee for their support in making this happen and to Pete Gibson for his offer of accommodation for Ben.

Without wishing to go through the ins and outs of every team, it is fair to say that it was a mixed at best season for the club. At various times each Saturday side felt they had a chance of promotion with the closeness of the 1sts and 2nds leagues in particular making relegation a threat at times as well.

At full strength both our 1s and 2s are one of the better teams in their respective leagues but our depth of options, coupled with bouts of really poor availability, is not where it needs to be to be sure of the success we are aiming for. Attracting new players is a challenge for the club in the current environment making it a hard problem to correct. To give an idea of this challenge, the 1st team was one of only two clubs in the league not to either be paying players in 2017 or have 'pros' of some description to call on. While we finished 6th, the side most comparable to us in this respect were comfortably relegated long before the season ended. The support the committee has offered to try and redress this balance is appreciated and very welcome but the reality at the moment is that many clubs we play against are bank rolled in ways we can't compete with and ensure our own sustainability.

An issue to address for the club is the situation regarding Sunday cricket. While the Sunday 2s were more competitive this summer than in recent years while giving a decent mix of junior and senior players a game, the Sunday 1s were unable to raise sides more often than not despite Russ Wakefield's best efforts. The club will not be entering a side in the same league next year, however a local t20 league has been started and we have been offered a place. This league will be small scale (likely Bath, Brislington, Lansdown, Frome and potentially one other plus us) and involve home and away t20 fixtures with coloured kit, pink balls etc. There is scope for a split between Sunday and midweek fixtures which at least appears more manageable availability wise. I have no issue with entering a side if the view is that it is feasible and someone is willing to take the captaincy on.

Thanks as always should also go to Tony and Lee Snook for their teas and all round hospitality for away teams that was reflecting in Keynsham being the highest rated club for hospitality for the third year running. The club is now recognised as somewhere visiting players and umpires actively look forward to visiting which is something to be proud of. I would include in this the hard work put in by Jamie Mitchell and his team to ensure the steady improvement of the playing area. Thanks also to everyone who has helped score and umpire games throughout the season and to those who stepped up to play, even against their own better judgement, when our availability was particularly challenging.

Joe Tarring – Cricket Chair

Ground Report

Starting with a new outlook in the 2017 season the aim was to begin the improvement of the Saturday pitches which will take several years to come to fruition but the early signs were positive with improved ground markings throughout. This was challenging as we tried to provide both Saturday teams with a new pitch that involved more ground preparation and repairs throughout the season which was a new regime to the club which I think went down favourably. The season was challenging given the weather conditions, no rain was seen in the first couple of months of the season which meant that we were struggling to provide the square with sufficient water and then the latter end of the season we were struggling to keep water off the square due to rainfall. In addition the club plays more games than anywhere else I can think of which takes its toll on the square. Nevertheless I do think progress has been made which bodes well for the following seasons and for the planned improvements.

Preparation in winter and through to spring went as planned with an increased amount of rolling at the start to consolidate the square in a crucial period; help with rolling was appreciated as Alan is away at this time of year. Weed Control and fertilisation was also undertaken as well as the commencement of the grass cutting.

Through the season we have encountered problems with fairy rings encroaching increasingly for which we have sought advice and hope to be able to manage next season and have increased the end repairs to fit with the new regime. Grass cutting of the square and outfield has become more planned and to be undertaken twice a week so we don't have issues with wet days meaning the outfield doesn't get cut for a Saturday. Repairs to wicket ends started to occur but tailed off towards the back end of the season and we are aware we can do better with this so this is something to work on.

Post season scarification and spiking of the wickets was achieved by Alan and Greensward respectively and although the loaming and reseeding was completed we were affected by the weather and we were heavily reliant on Dave Knight, Alan Webster and Ian Payter to complete this which is much appreciated.

Moving forward I do think we need a number of things:

- Carry out hollow tining on the Saturday pitches which will be a target for next autumn.
- Purchase a coconut mat for wicket protection and help retention of moisture.
- Ensure monies are available for new static nets. Failing this we will need to renovate as these were sorely missed by juniors and seniors equally.

Finally I would like to thank all those people who attended the start of season works and end of season works, you know who you are; more attendance would always be welcomed however. And the continued services of the committee and the work of Alan Webster and Dave Knight as well as the help Ian Payter has given us through the year. Also the invaluable efforts through the season of those members who help with rolling and ground prep as and when we need it.

Jamie Mitchell – Ground Chair