FCC 3rd XI 2014

Played 16, won 7, lost 7, drawn 1, cancelled 1.

For the second successive season we went into the final game with a chance of promotion – we were in third place and were playing 2nd place Horsham 3s. We were comfortably beaten, but finishing 3rd was a fair reflection of our efforts in 2014. The middle of WSICL division 4 remained tight all season, and as it finished, only 42 points separated us from the first of the relegation spots.

We started the season away against newly promoted West Wittering. We had a strong side out, and I fully expected to carry on the 3rd XI tradition of the last 5 years of starting the season with a 30-point win. We got stuffed. Bowled out on wet track for 123, they strolled to victory by 9 wickets in 24.3 overs. Oh well, things can only get better.

Home against Southwater was next and a brilliant win, set up by an unbeaten 108 from Bradley Beale and 64 from James Henman (they put on 114 for the sixth wicket), and completed by a remarkable spell of 8-0-58-6 from James Harrison. Southwater gamely played their shots when the game could have drifted towards a draw, and we won by 33 runs with 8 balls remaining.

After being rained off against St Matthias, we won again, against Arundel, with Beale scoring another unbeaten ton – this time 154\*. Lambert, Young, Henman and Matt Flower shared the wickets. We then drew away at Partridge Green with Jon Flower playing a match-saving 59\*, after good bowling from Sam Dunkley, Tom Lawson and George Solomon had restricted them to 230-7.

Home to Felbridge was another defeat, despite a good spell from Tom Lawson (13.4-2-44-6) which meant we still picked up maximum bowling points. We then won a tight game against West Chiltington – after Nigel Lambert had taken 4-41, Carrig Connelly (29\*) and James Henman (41), and Harrison Grayston all played crucial innings to see us home by 3 wickets. The final game of the first ‘round’ of the season was against Horsham 3s, and we were well beaten by 78 runs, which hardly set us up for our second attempt at the unbeaten top-the-league-by-a-mile side, West Wittering...

...And just to prove you can’t predict anything in WSIL cricket, we won it by 85 runs, after a great team performance. James Henman played a blinder, making 84 of 58 balls and then taking 9-2-36-3, and there were important contributions from Higgins, Hawke, Flower, Young and Grayston. Skip also took a highly unlikely catch. It was one of those days.

We then won another entertaining game against a strong Southwater 2s – we made 187-9 with Jon Flower (59) and Cam Young (30) top-scoring in different styles (test match and T20 respectively, if you were wondering). We then bowled them out for 140 in 38 overs, with the wickets being shared amongst 6 bowlers (again, quite a mixture of styles!). A third win on the bounce followed against St Matthias with Tom Lawson having a great game (9-0-39-4, and making 55).

We then got brought down to earth by Arundel 2s – we made 197 all out, and they got them 7 wickets down with 5 overs left. A definite case of not making quite enough runs, when perhaps we should have. We then went on a poor run that cost us promotion...

We lost 3 of the last 4 games – against Partridge Green (very easily, despite Carrig Conelly’s 59!), Felbridge and Sunnyside (by only 11 runs) and the final game against Horsham (by 104 runs). We did beat West Chiltington for the second time in the season but it was not quite enough to get us into the top two.

Thanks as ever to umpires and scorers - Alan Higgins, Debbie Demitriou, Iain Swallwell, Dave Young, Sheila Chapman, Elaine Judges, Paul Judges, and Neal Grayston – and to Nigel Lambert for skippering in my absence.