

FCC report 1st team report 2015

Firstly I would like to start by saying a big thank you to everyone who has helped me this year, especially with it being my first year as club captain. Thank you to Paul for his hard work ensuring I had 11 players every Saturday and also the club having 33 players every weekend. Also thank you to the scorers, Elaine for doing the majority of the season, to Simon, Karen and Dave for helping out, and Alan for umpiring in the Village Knock-Out (VKO) and in the pre-season friendlies. All your help has been greatly appreciated.

The cliché 'a game/season of 2 halves' is used a lot these days, but there is no other way to sum up the First XI 2015 season. A season which started with such promise ended up as a disaster - with us subsequently getting relegated. I have been reminded by a few players that I am possibly the first 1st team skipper to do so.... a great stat to have in my first year as captain!

The natural disappointment of this season still made way though for some great moments and performances on the pitch. There were highs this season that were some of the best I have had as a Findon player. The win over local rivals Worthing sticks long in the mind due to the manner of how we won the game. To watch Glen and Graham knock the runs off with an over to spare after being 82-5 was sensational. Both players were superb - to carry their bats in such a pressurised situation was a great testament of their character's with them ending up on 65* and 30* respectively.

Again, our back to back wins over Ifield in a weekend were very pleasing, first in the league, then followed up by the VKO which allowed us to witness surely one of the best bowling spells at Findon with Curtis taking 7-9 including a hat-trick as they were bowled out for 50. (If that can't win club performance of the year, I don't what you have to do!!) But the rollercoaster season we entailed did mean there were a couple of real lows. Away to Ifield for example - it's bad enough going to play at that lovely Village, but then to get rolled for 73 was extremely disappointing.

As I said the season started incredible well, we were 4th after 9 games and only around 30 points off the top, with 5 wins, 3 defeats and 1 draw. In this early bright start we also progressed well in both the VKO progressing to the first round of the national stage and also progressing in the Sussex T20 cup with a fine win over Bognor, but to loose to East Grinstead in the next round, who are one of the best clubs in Sussex, and to push them for 75% of the game is a testament to some of the ability and young prospects we have at the club with James Henman, Sam Dunkley and Jabe Rogers particularly impressing on the day.

Some notable performances in the early rounds of the season were from Jimbo, single handedly winning the first game of the season away to Crowhurst on a wet May's afternoon, smashing a superb 70 at the top, and then taking a 5 wicket haul in the second innings to win by 15 runs was a superb effort. Other notable wins other than the Worthing Game were away to Lindfield, again Jimbo leading the way picking up another 5fer and Harry steering us home with 58 not out. Other wins in the first half of the season were against Ifield as mentioned and also Ansty where the enigmatic Felix also got 5 wickets and smashed a quick fire 37 as the team chased down 110.

As mentioned earlier we also progressed well in the early rounds of the village knock out, starting off away at Balcombe, on possibly the smallest ground I've ever played on, we posted 315-7 from our 40, with a century from myself and a half century from Felix, and very aggressive 40 from young Cameron. In reply we bowled out Balcombe for 239, with a special mention to young Matt Wrating, a 14 year old making his first team debut picking up incredible figures of 6-39, a fantastic performance from Matt. Soon after, comfortable wins were followed against Ifield and then Ansty in the Area final.

When we hosted Rottingdean in the first round of the national stage we had just played Hastings away, although we had lost, we put on a good display with a very young side, and managed to post 250, falling short of the 310 required. We were relatively confident going into the game, even after losing Jimbo to an eye problem. After a decent start in the field and a solid first 20 overs they got away and posted 240 from there 40 overs, and after a few promising early partnerships, we fell short by around 50 runs, and the Lords dream was over for another year. In hindsight this was perhaps the real turning point to our season as we failed to win again in the league despite some good displays - notably away to Worthing, posting 220 on a difficult wicket at the Manor, thanks to Sam Mannings' attacking 59, his maiden first team fifty. However it wasn't enough as we were to lose in the last over having them 8 down. We also drew at home to Hastings after they posted 180, courtesy of one of their batsmen scoring 110 not out even though he hit the cover of it 3 times and didn't walk - incredibly frustrating! After a poor start we had our senior pro's to thank, Toby and Jimbo, who decided the best form of defence was attack, putting on a quick fire 70 after being 61-7. Toby was to end up 58 not out and us 20 short.

With a bit more luck in the first innings we could have been walking away from the game with 30 points and possibly a different outcome to the season.

Another admirable display came away to Three Bridges, posting 230 in our 53 overs picking up full bonus points, thanks largely to Harry and Glen's partnership in the middle order, with both scoring fine half centuries. A valiant performance came from Jamie Lewis, who was making his long awaited and possibly overdue return to the first team scoring a very well earned 35 after myself and Curtis both leaving the crease early without troubling the scorers. However Three Bridges' class did shine through as they were to chase down the score only to lose 2 wickets thanks to a very good century by their young opener.

After this poor run we found ourselves right in the relegation scrap, as we hosted Ansty at home, the team below us. This game summed up our season, a terrific start having them 39-5, but again, we were to rue missed chances which happened time and time again this season allowing Ansty to post 197-8. Our chase had starts, with Glen and Toby putting on a solid partnership in the middle but we were to fall short with a draw as the outcome. This left us going into the last 3 games level on points with Ansty but with us to play Worthing, Hastings and Pagham they had a far easier run in.

While we earned a draw in difficult conditions to Hastings at home, Ansty had picked up a win. This meant that we were all but down going into the last game being 29 points behind, therefore needing the full quote of 30 points and Ansty to pick up 0! We posted a very respectable 250 from our allotted overs, thanks again to Glen scoring a very good 70, and Curtis smashing a run a ball 50. However Pagham were to chase these down, despite a spirited bowling and fielding display, with a debut from young Harrison picking up 2 wickets, but we were to fall short as their overseas played a super knock getting 98, arguably the best batter in the league, reaching the required total 6 down with an over to spare.

With the ability at the club it is mightily disappointing that we won't be plying our trade in Division 2 next season. To beat Worthing, run Hastings close in 2 games and to beat Lindfield (the top 3 sides) we shouldn't have been near the relegation zone. However the difficulty of getting the best eleven players on the field every weekend proved hugely difficult and, our lack of consistency ultimately resulted in our demise. However I am confident for next season, if we can get our core players available most weeks, pick up some new signings over the winter and keep developing the promising youngsters at the club then there is no reason we cannot make a return to Division 2 on our first attempt whilst also having a good run in the VKO which shall hopefully result in a successful second season in charge.

Bradley