

Cricket Report 2011

Overall it was a successful season for Chorleywood CC, with a strong performance by the Saturday 1st XI in Division 1, the Saturday 2nd XI holding their ground in Division 5, and the Sunday 1st XI making it to the County Cup Quarter Finals. Saturday 3rd and 4th XIs achieved relatively comfortable mid-table finishes also.

Additionally, it was particularly pleasing to see the way the club improved the way it went about its training in 2011, both at winter nets and throughout the season. It was not surprising that most of the players noted below were some of the hardest workers on the training track – reward for their efforts!

Finally, a massive thank you to the six captains, the vice-captains and those who filled in to skipper the odd match (often at short notice). Also to those who helped track down the additional colt or three in the latter part of the week to ensure we were always able to put out six sides. Without these people the games of cricket we all get to enjoy simply wouldn't be able to take place. I hope that the club can continue to improve both on and off the field in 2012.

Saturday 1st XI – Rich Soulsby

I don't think I was alone in thinking that this would be a long, hard season for the first XI. Losing proven performers such as Michael Dunning, Alex Hodgkinson & Richard Hodgkinson was always going to be hard to replace, so to finish higher up the league in 4th position is a credit to everyone involved. It is a mark of how far we have come as a unit that we can all look back at a number of games throughout the year and think what if... the Radlett games in particular sticking in my mind as we twice squandered winning positions against a team that finished ahead of us.

The reality though is that we should have finished in the top 2. Whilst we can argue that Totteridge have 2 or 3 class players, I cannot honestly say that either Langleybury or Radlett are a better side than us. Talent wise, we have one of the best 2 sides in the division but at the moment, we lack the ruthlessness and desire to finish in the top 2 of division 1.

Batting wise, we played as a unit, Richard Soulsby (410 runs at 34) and Scott Aspinall (245 runs at 41) both had good years and Andrew Dunning & Paul Downing both contributed 2 50's a piece. With the ball, we had the best attack in the division, Ryan Evans (46 wickets at 15) was outstanding and he was ably supported by the emerging Will Pendered who had a fine 1st season in the 1st XI (34 wickets at 16). It was Duncan Watson however who was Mr Dependable throughout the season as he took 51 wickets at an average of 14, whilst also managing to keep his economy rate under 3.

There is a big question that needs to be answered in terms of how the 1st XI want to progress. We can clearly play division 1 cricket and finish mid table with ease, without pushing ourselves too hard. The question is are we happy with this, or do we want to push ourselves and try to achieve a top 2 finish and possible promotion to the home counties. If the players as a collective group want to achieve this enough, I am 100% certain they can achieve it.

Saturday 2nd XI – Jeff O'Dwyer

Prior to season commencement, the skipper (T Smithson) and VC (J O'Dwyer) defined the realistic targets for the season:

1. Enjoy our cricket
2. Establish a platform for younger players to develop
3. Have at least 2 batsmen and 2 bowlers in the Saracens top averages for the year
4. Avoid relegation

It appeared that the 1st eleven boss stole point 2 and as such we lost our talented skipper for the year and as such VC became skip. The 2's proceeded to limp, struggling to find stability, particularly with school & university commitments plaguing selection. Division 5 was never going to be easy with over half of the competition made up of first teams. Historically Chorleywood have struggled to stay in this grade. Early call amongst non believers centred around "the two's are going down". Thankfully this was kicked into touch and once commitment improved, both spirit and points ensued. This assisted in achieving target 1.

Statistically our season comprised 19 Games, 5 wins, 7 losses, 4 draws and 3 washouts for 276 points. We avoided relegation by 10 points (tick target 4) and promotion by 131! We had circa 40 players contribute with some notable performances including Russell Hodgkinson (6-50 v Leverstock Green, 5 for 34 v Datchworth), Sujoy Dey's consistent 2 for's, half century's from Chris Tweedie (x2), Matt Rose (x2), Paul Downing, Jonathan Rice, Rohan Lee, Andrew Dunning, Tom Wilson, Scott Aspinall, Simon Botterill and Michael Shippey.

As for point 2 "the young brigade" performed well and at times showed ability beyond this grade. Jamie Smithson was rewarded with a position in the 1's and the likes of Matt Rose, Tom Wilson, Sujoy Dey, Michael Shippey, Ryan Toms, Lyndon & Josh Ryan and Josh Bungard can, at the very least, cement a 2's position if not press for higher goals. In addition, the 2's offered a good haven for confidence boosting, with many regular first teamers performing well when not in the top grade.

We failed in target 3 in that no batsmen made the Saracens league book (scoring > 300) however it is highly likely that Tweedie / Lee / Rose would have, if they had stayed in the side all year. We did however achieve the two bowler target with Russell (36 wickets at 15 avg) and Sujoy Dey (27 at 17 avg) ticking the box.

We deserved to stay up. We can easily compete in this league, particularly given our performance against some of the top sides (Luton Town & Indians, Old Elizabethans, Cockfosters). With regular availability / commitment coupled with the improving strength and maturity of the youngsters this side will be a formidable opponent in 2012.

A huge thank you to our umpires (John Chadwick & John Watkiss) and our scorer John Jenkins. Also worthwhile mentioning that John Chadwick chauffeured a large contingent to and from games, way beyond his duty – thanks.

Saturday 3rd XI – Andy Elsmore

Overall it was a good season for the third team, building on last year's 15th league position to finish 7th and only 57 points (less than 2 wins) off promotion. We had 7 wins, 5 draws (2 of which we declared and had the opposition 9 down but just couldn't get the last wicket - which frustratingly cost us 22 points), and suffered only 5 losses. Bearing in mind the weekly selection struggles, that's a really great effort!

I missed a few games early in the season, (5 in a row at one point.....) but the senior players did a fantastic job of looking after things while I was away so 'thank you'.

This year, several young players have come through to play for the third team and a few of the Colts had their first senior side experiences doing a great job for the team. I'd like to mention in particular 4 young players who this year made an outstanding contribution to the team:

Firstly, Josh Bungard who, after scoring two 50's for the 4s, was promoted and went on to take a 6 wicket haul and score four 50s in 6 innings, averaging 50 overall. Josh, together with Tom Wilson - after scoring two 50s – both earned promotion to the 2s – congratulations!

Next, Josh Ryan who took 11 wickets at less than 3 per over and finally Dominic Rice who had some good bowling spells without much luck but still took 7 wickets in his first senior season.

Of the senior players I'd like to mention, Simon Moore took 12 wickets and a first 5 wicket haul for the club. Jeremy finished leading wicket taker with 16 and Steve Dunning also bagged an impressive 12 for the season. On the batting front, senior players who, as always did their bit were, Simon Dare with a hundred and a 50, Jon Lyons also with a hundred and 2 50s.

Overall a successful season and with a bit more luck, maybe we'd have had a possible push for promotion. Oh well, maybe next year!

Saturday 4th XI – Charles Hardcastle

This year the 4ths achieved maximum points in 6 games and finished mid table. In total 34 players turned out for the 4s this year, with precisely half that number being aged 13 to 17. Indeed we fielded father son combinations 43 times. As such we have been successful this year in one of our stated aims of introducing colts to the men's game.

The confidence with which some of the colts walk out to the wicket is bewildering – I'm thinking of Louis Drommard at Broxbourne needing 12 to win in the last over scoring five 2's and just failing to make contact on the last ball of the day, Rohan Dua at Watford Town going in after an early order collapse to score a mature 32, Cieran Lad strolling out against Waltham X to smash their opening bowler for 3 consecutive 4's. Other young colts showing real promise were Robert Kennedy as a batsman, Callum Willis as a leg break bowler, Matt Hodson with his unique brand of off-breaks, and the plucky Will Bryant as a true all rounder. I should also mention Harry Hardcastle turning out for 15 games, with a highlight at Broxbourne of 2 for 3, dot balling 35 of 36 balls (his old man miss-fielded the 36th ball). Also not forgetting the energetic bowling and fielding of George Rillstone, and the many overs bowled by Martin Henderson turning in best figures of 7 for 40 at Shenley Village.

The senior citizens of the side proved real stalwarts this year, Neil Hodson as always dedicated and determined with his accurate seam up, Sam Hatfield making 3 half centuries, Robert Wheal providing the stability we needed in the upper order with two 50's, and Rob Dunstone produced a couple of cameos, with a notable 50 at Broxbourne. Not to mention the welcome introduction of Henry Wells and Tom Bindloss to the club – both quality players.

On four occasions we had 3 Dua's playing, indeed with the addition of Sharat Dua against Cockfosters, just to confuse the opposition, our middle order went Dua, Dua, Dua, Dua.

The highlight of the show has got to be the coming of age of Josh Bungard. Coming into the season with a career high score of 7 Josh found himself at the crease at Shenley with Chorleywood in trouble at 15 for 4. He proceeded to accumulate 66 and we won the match. Josh scored 193 runs for the 4s at an average of 38 including a further 50. Mid season he was promoted to the 3s where he has a further four 50s to his name. Oh yes, not forgetting he was the equal top wicket taker for the league 4s side at 17 with Martin Henderson.

Sunday 1st XI – Tom Smithson

The Sunday 1st XI season ended with relative success, surviving relegation in the Chess Valley Division 1, and reaching the quarter finals in the county cup.

The league season featured two contrasting halves of the season. The first half was disappointing, with heavy defeats by Osterley and Chingford, either side of a 4 run defeat by Chesham chasing 66. These defeats were followed by wins at Edmonton, and a last ball victory courtesy of 4 byes against Harrow Town. With 3 games abandoned by rain this left us on 14 points and in 6th place out of 9. Stand out performances in the league include; W. Pendered (76 vs Edmonton, and 8 wickets at 10.63), R. Soulsby (110 vs Harpenden) and F. Dare (back to back 50s, 54 vs Edmonton and 65 vs Harrow Town).

In the County Cup, two comfortable victories against Watford Town and Langleybury, was followed by defeat by Home Counties Prem Side Hertford. Stand out performances came from M. Watson (133 vs Watford Town), P. Dunning (5 for 27 vs Watford Town), R. Lee (85 vs Langleybury) and W. Pendered (4 for 25 vs Langleybury).

Sunday 2nd XI – Nigel Tyler

After the success and promotion of last season, 2011 has been a bit of a disappointment. Out of a possible nine league games we had three no results due to rain and managed to lose four of the remaining six games, one of which was against a team of 15 years olds from Chesham.

Availability was not a huge issue, however loss of form was. Only Simon Dare (316) and Neil Ret (288) managed to reach a run aggregate in triple figures an nobody managed to hit a double figure wicket aggregate. As a result we were relegated back to Division 7 at the end of the season.

Highlights of the season were Retty's 138 at Ley Hill, Freddie's 4 stumpings against Uxbridge (3 of them off Webby!) and Matt Hodson's bowling against West Herts (3-28).

Hopefully 2012 will bring a return to form for some key players (Mike Reeve, Martin Tyler, Nigel Tyler, Dave Brabham to name a few) and we can fight for promotion again.