

## Captain's Report 2015 Season

A quick look at the statistics for the season shows that we won 21 games out of 35 completed games. Not as high a percentage as last time but not a bad season either. However the more interesting thing for me is the fact that nobody really stands out in the individual statistics. Just over 400 runs for the leading scorer is a good season but not an outstanding one. Equally with the bowling, one person taking 46 wickets is a good season but not outstanding. I think the more striking part of the statistics is the fact that the runs and wickets are spread around a number of players. 11 different players scored 50's (10 of them members), 9 different bowlers got into double figures in the wickets column – a sign of strength in depth?

In some ways it begs the question of how we manage to win so many games. One batsman scores a fifty every other game on average. How do we ever score enough runs to win a game with a statistic like that? Our leading wicket-taker took 46 wickets in 31 games. That's about one and a half wickets per game. Only twice did bowlers get five-fors in the season. How do we ever take enough wickets to win a game? It's certainly not down to our fielding where we regularly drop half a dozen catches in a game as well as giving away countless runs.

Teamwork must be part of the answer and I feel is our great strength and we should remember this. We are not a team that exists so that a couple of individuals can dominate the game for their own individual ends and win games on their own as is the case with some of our opponents. Of course there are times when an individual performance will win us a game which can mean that some of us don't get much of a game but as long as this does not become the norm or expected it is fine.

When I sat down to write this report I was unsure what it was I wanted to say. There were things I wanted to say but thought it best not to. There were also things I didn't want to say but thought should be said. I decided to read last year's captain's report and use that as a starting point for this year's.

I spent the first part of that report discussing the annual problem of membership and keeping everybody happy. How many members is the right number for a club like ours? How do you balance giving everybody a game whilst remaining competitive? How do we cope when only two members are available one week and then the next there are 20? I tried to explain the position that captains and vice captains are in and that they just have to be trusted to be 'fair'. This season there were a number of times when selection and participation of players in games were questioned.

Last year I concluded - "I don't think there is an answer to the questions of the ideal number of members and selection procedures. We just have to trust the captain and vice captains to share the games out as fairly as possible and accept they have a responsibility to get a competitive team out as well. I guess, just like our politicians, if you don't like the decisions taken we vote for someone new at the next election."

This season we played 38 games. There were 30 members. Assuming we only had to select members and the games were distributed equally that would be on average 14 games each per season. I would be interested to know the thoughts of Keith W (32 games), Ravi (31), Peter G (30), Joe (27), Nick (27) to playing 14 games per season? Roughly half of the games they did play. For what it is worth, my thoughts are that Keith, Joe and Nick (along with KP, Wib, Olly and a few others) are and have been the life blood of the club for years. They put in all the hard work that means the club exists and as such deserve to play the majority of games. Ravi and Peter were always available, even at the last minute when other members were dropping out two hours before a game and as such they deserve to play as much as they did.

This statistic of 14 games is of course rather erroneous in that, quite understandably, not everybody is available every game (apart from Keith, Peter and Ravi!). For various reasons most members pick and choose when they are available. This is of course the way it should be but equally if you only make yourself available for half the games you cannot realistically expect to be selected to play in all of them.

I first played for Isis 27 years ago in the summer of 1988. Before the days of coloured strips and white cricket balls! We played proper cricket then, timed

games – not limited over 20/20 rubbish! Everybody around the bat for the last 10 overs trying to get the last wicket – far more exciting than trying to slog every ball out of the park. Anyway, for the first 4 seasons I batted at eleven, bowled occasionally and seemed to be picked because I was the only player who could run never mind catch. I got involved with the running of the club, became a vice captain, then captain, raised the profile of the club by getting new players, producing the first ever Isis magazine, collated the first 20 years scorebooks, organised social events. I do not want to make myself out as some sort of martyr as this is far less than KW, Joe, Olly, Nick, KP and Wib (and a few others) have done over the years. My point is that we all earned our stripes and contribute to the club. Ironically, it seems to be these same people who on match days sort out the kit bag, take the kit bag home, collect the tea money, volunteer to umpire, do the scoreboard, etc. Maybe any criticism of the selection policy or how much you have got to bat or bowl should be tempered by your contribution to the club?

This time last year we failed to get the necessary quorum for the AGM despite having a record number of members. A look at the make up of the committee in the past ten years shows that the same people have held the various positions in that time, I don't think this is necessarily a bad thing as is shown by the fantastic jobs that KW, Joe and Nick have done in their roles and Olly as captain previously. However, perhaps we should be encouraging some of the newer members to take some form of responsibility. This could take the form of shadowing the current fixture secretary, treasurer and secretary. Maybe creating new positions – a social committee has I think been tried in the past and I felt desperately sorry for Nick after just half a dozen turned up to the recent social. Maybe a different player each week should be invited to write the match report for the website?

I believe that Isis is the most welcoming club I have ever played for. Everybody, no matter what their ability, is welcomed. This season we have added Peter Davenport, Brad Harden, Ali Albasri, Robin Tolson and Tom Harper to our members list from last year – a judge, an Oxford University student doing a doctorate, an antipodean refugee, another bloody schoolteacher and a reject from another club!

Back to the season itself. We won the Friendly cup again with three convincing victories over Moreton, Ipsden and Aldworth. We lost to Far From the MCC 4 times. We lost to Blackwells twice having not lost to them in living memory although they did have a number of players who were not wearing the Blackwells badge on their shirts. (A note to next years captain that it might be worth putting out the A team as they were rather too pleased with their victories).

Bizarrely enough I think my favourite week of the season saw two defeats in three games. It started off on the back lawn of the palace at Blenheim with a fairly comfortable victory over a team whose captain cheesed his teammates off so much that they all started arguing with each other in the middle of the pitch. We lost the midweek game to Wolvercote at Cutteslowe Park by one run in what was a great game. The highlight for me being the look on Joe's face after his catch of an absolute piledriver which he was trying to get out of the way of. The following weekend game we managed to lose to a scrambled single off the last ball of the game by one wicket at Astons. Everyone was pretty cheesed off for quite a while after the game but we fought really well as a team to get back into a game that we had 'lost' at various stages.

I would like to confirm that I will not be standing for the captaincy next season. I have done the job for three seasons now and feel it is time somebody else has a go. Whoever it is I hope that we all get behind them and support them 100% both on and off the field as it can be a thankless task at times. The future for Isis Cricket club is looking rosy. Dave Lawrence is making a bowling comeback next season if he can get one of shoulders to work again. We have a new dependable opening bat in Nick Wyatt to hold the batting together.

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