

Henfield Cricket Club Annual Report 2024

253rd Season



Index

	Page
Message from the Chairman	3
Chairman of Cricket	4
First XI	5 & 6
Second XI	7 & 8
Third XI	9, 10 & 11
Under 14's	12, 13, 14 & 15
Under 10's	16
Allstars and Dynamos	17
Secretary's Report	18 & 19

Message from the Chairman

The ensuing pages will cover the reports from the various sections. Overall, I think it is fair to say that the 2024 season was an improvement on the preceding few years in terms of results whilst I believe that we continue to achieve our primary objective of providing cricket which is both enjoyable and affordable. We are no different from any other club in the challenges that we face

One of the highlights of the year was undoubtedly the Presidents Day and particular thanks must go to Sian who organised the event in such a magnificent manner. It reminded us of the club spirit we have and this is something that must be nurtured. As I have said on numerous occasions a club is only what each and every member is prepared to put into it. This involves organising and attending social events which also has the welcome side effect of generating income for the club.

Last year the new nets were installed representing a considerable improvement on the previous ones. In addition, there is a plan to improve the car park which for many years has been an issue. This will be in partnership with the Parish Council but we will need to make a contribution. Furthermore the committee has authorised the replacement of the floor coverings in the pavilion. All of these initiatives are to improve the facilities we provide which are the envy of many clubs. We also now have a new lease meaning that we can extend the pavilion in the future and also expand the outfield.

As I explained in last years report I now feel that ,after some 12 years in the role ,it is the right time for me to step aside at the forthcoming AGM and invite someone else to take the club forward There have certainly been problems in that time but there are also some opportunities for the future. It is my hope that the impetus that we are trying to create here will yield positive results. This will quite possibly not happen overnight but it is certainly worthwhile trying to ensure the club has a bright future.

With Nicholas Blake at the helm, the club's finances remain in a strong position as we have accumulated funds in the past from various sources. These are being used to improve the facilities and I have mentioned above the main areas that we plan to improve. Nevertheless it is important to remember that the ground equipment will need replacing in due course so we must not become complacent. Allowances have already been made for the increased costs of maintaining the ground and repaying the ECB loan.

As ever, I extend my thanks for everyone who has made the club what it is today.

I look forward to a successful 2025 season.

David Jemmett
Chairman

Chairman of Cricket

Cricket Committee Annual Report.

It is hard to draw a line under the year without paying tribute to our President. Our friend, mentor, and occasional critic!

Conway was instrumental in making me feel a part of this club when I rocked up here some 20 years ago. I quickly found myself volunteering my time in all kinds of spaces. He showed me what a place like ours can give to you if you put your time into it. I will miss him enormously, but I know that his legacy will loom large on the common. Go well, big man.

The season itself has been another mixed bag. Many things to be pleased with and proud of. I am made up for Jed. His energy and enthusiasm are infectious. We need to look after talented young players like him and make sure they get to reach their potential. We would be a much worse side without him. Tom Paine showed a willingness to adapt his game by moving to the middle order. The results were obvious to anyone who got to see it. These two are real match winners. Props also to Brett for his consistency and to George for tying it all together. Next summer, Geo will need more players pushing for 1st team places so that he can keep building the team that he wants to take onto the field.

I also want to highlight Ben, Mark and Alex for allowing our young players and particularly the crop of six regular U14 players to flourish in league cricket this summer. These are some talented boys who will keep on displacing senior players as they climb up the XIs. Except for Dexy and a couple of other parttimers, it was rare to see a bowler older than 19 years old in the 3rd XI this summer. There is power to add here as the rest of the U15 squad grows in quality.

I also look back and wonder if we could have found another gear as a club here and there. After a few seasons trying to motivate the playing membership to improve their cricket I've come to realise that with a few exceptions, it's not something we have an appetite for as a club. At a time when it has never been easier to get access to free coaching material. When I made it very clear that I would help anyone action any ideas that they wanted to bring to training. Not one person came to me to see if they could help themselves or anyone else. I'll reiterate here that we have a seriously talented group of young players coming through. The U15 squad train TWICE A WEEK in the summer as well as attending senior nets. It is not acceptable to me to let these young players think you can just doss about at training and expect to see improvements. I only want an hour and a half a week of quality training from the senior players. We must create an environment that continues to challenge us and these kids. Don't be embarrassed to try. I see you all caring on match days, let's see some of that on a Wednesday as well in 2025. Enjoy taking it seriously.

Paul Pheasant

Chairman of Cricket

First XI

Overview of the Season:

The 2024 cricket season has been one of contrasts, marked by both promising performances and frustrating inconsistencies. Over the course of 16 matches, the team managed 6 victories but endured 10 defeats. While the final tally of wins may not reflect the full potential of the squad, the season has provided valuable insights, helping us identify areas for growth and laying the groundwork for future success. There were moments of individual brilliance and flashes of what this team is capable of, but a lack of consistency at key times prevented us from turning good performances into a more solid run of results.

Key Individual Performances:

Jed Bandy (Outstanding Player of the Season):

Jed Bandy was unquestionably the standout performer of the season, both with the ball and in terms of his overall impact on the team. As the top wicket-taker, Jed claimed 26 wickets throughout the season, a remarkable achievement that underlined his vital role in the side. His best bowling performance of 5/13 was one of the highlights of the campaign and showed his ability to rise to the occasion in critical moments. Jed's accuracy, discipline, and ability to make key breakthroughs were central to the team's competitiveness this season. His contribution with the ball, coupled with his leadership in the field, earned him the Outstanding Player of the Season award.

Brett Moore (Top Run-Scorer):

Brett Moore's consistency with the bat was another silver lining in a season of mixed results. With a total of 496 runs, he was the team's top scorer by a considerable margin. Brett's ability to anchor innings and score in all conditions made him an invaluable asset at the crease. His calm and methodical approach, especially in high-pressure situations, provided the team with stability. Brett was often tasked with playing the role of a senior batsman, and he responded with maturity and runs, consistently putting the team in strong positions. His contributions were a testament to his dedication and skill.

Tom Paine's (Match-Winning Hundred):

One of the most memorable individual performances of the season came from Tom Paine, who played a match-winning knock of 100 runs against Haywards Heath. In what was a high-pressure situation, Tom's composed and aggressive innings helped the team secure a crucial victory. His ability to play under pressure and take control of a match was a defining feature of his performance. This century was not just a testament to his technical ability but also his mental fortitude, showing he has the capability to deliver when the team needs it most.

Team Performance and Key Challenges:

While we saw moments of individual brilliance, a recurring theme throughout the season was inconsistency. There were times when we failed to build partnerships, both with the bat and in the field, and on other occasions, we were unable to maintain the pressure with the ball. The inability to convert good individual

performances into collective team success was a key factor in the overall results.. Our bowling attack, led by Jed Bandy, showed flashes of brilliance, but at times we struggled to maintain discipline in the field, allowing the opposition to capitalise on loose deliveries. Similarly, while our top order looked strong at various points, we often lacked the necessary partnerships to build substantial totals throughout the order.

Looking Ahead to the 2025 Season:

As we turn our attention to the 2025 season, there is a palpable sense of optimism and determination within the squad. The primary focus for the coming year will be on developing greater consistency across all facets of the game. We need to ensure that we are competitive in every match, maintaining the level of intensity and focus required to convert potential into results.

The lessons learned this season will be vital in shaping our approach to the new campaign. We must build on the strong individual performances and learn how to collectively put pressure on the opposition, particularly in the crucial middle phases of matches. Consistency, both mentally and technically, will be the cornerstone of our development. We also recognise the need to cultivate a stronger "fight" in the team—matching talent with resilience to close out games more effectively.

The squad is excited about the challenge that lies ahead. We are committed to addressing the areas that have held us back and working tirelessly to ensure that the 2025 season will be one of progression. With a focus on building partnerships, maintaining pressure, and finding more collective performances, we are confident that this team has the potential to make significant strides in the coming year.

Conclusion:

In summary, while the 2024 season presented its challenges, it also highlighted the potential within the squad. With key players like Jed Bandy, Brett Moore, and Tom Paine leading the way, we have the foundation for success. By focusing on consistency, mental toughness, and teamwork, we are confident that the 2025 season will be an exciting and successful one. We look forward to the challenge and the opportunity to build on the progress made this year.

George Stewart

1st XI Captain

Second XI

The 2nd XI finished the 2024 league season in 4th place, recording nine wins and seven losses, and at one stage challenging for a promotion spot. This was a very pleasing result, and – more importantly – promises more for the coming 2025 season.

We were blessed – compared to recent seasons – with a relatively stable side. This allowed us to draw regularly on a core group of players who knew their role in the side and complemented each other well. As a result, we built up some real momentum in the middle of the summer, stringing together five consecutive wins at one point.

Being able to call on a group of talented young players either establishing themselves or making their way into the senior sides was a huge contributor to this stability and balance, and there is no doubt that our young seam bowling attack was central to our successes on the pitch. Several opposition captains commented on the excellent control that they were able to exert, and all of it at a very good pace.

After a slow start in the first couple of fixtures, the team really gelled in early June at Roffey, where we dug ourselves out of a deep hole (1 for 3 after the first over) to win a tight contest. Beyond the win itself, the game showed us what we were capable of when we put our minds to it, and from then on we started to perform in the moments that mattered, enabling us to close out most of the games we should have won and challenge hard for games that were in the balance. Other tight wins against Birdham and Middleton demonstrated that the Roffey game wasn't a one off.

Craig Scott and Dimi Mendis combined beautifully at Roffey to take seven wickets, and they offered a vital alternative to the young seamers throughout most of the season, finishing with 29 wickets between them, many of them taken at crucial points in a game, helping to turn the tide in our favour. They were ably supported by both Tom Lewis's leg spin (particularly in the return fixture against Roffey, where he bowled beautifully) and Richie Dale's...erm...spin (whatever it is, it works).

But the real strength of the side was the consistency of the seam attack, led by Ed Helps, Angelo Twinkle, and Gus Crawley, who took 42 wickets between them, all at a combined strike rate well below one wicket in every twenty balls. And there was no let up when this group began to tire – the opposition were then asked to deal with the same probing lines and lengths from the likes of Huey Pitcher, Dananjaya Weerawansa, Joe Crawley, Hugo Brinsmead-Maclean and Will Clark.

Looking forward to the 2025 season, it is clearly the batting that needs work – although there were good scores here and there, we relied far too much on some old hands, especially Craig, Richie, Kevin Thorns and occasionally the skipper to dig in and put a score on the board. In 2024, the common characteristic of the Henfield batsman was a good start: although sprinkled with good looking shots, most of these good starts were ultimately thrown away, undone as a result of chasing one that didn't need chasing. In 2025, I expect the common characteristic

to be runs on the board: we need to convert good starts into big innings. The batting talent is there.

My thanks to Dimi for standing in as skipper in mid-summer, and in particular to Tim Furber and Phil Tremewan who both generously gave their time, fair mindedness and patience to umpire for us, sometimes in very trying circumstances.

Floreat HCC.

Ben Helps

2nd XI Captain

Third XI

The results:

Played 15, Won 6, Lost 8, tied 1, abandoned 1, cancelled 2. Total points 286, League position 7th.

It is worth noting that these stats represent a solid improvement on the prior season, with 2 more victories and an additional 56 league points and 1 league place achieved.

Season overview:

The first point to make about the 2024 season is that availability for the 3rd XI showed significant improvement from 2023. We were able to field decent sides for all our fixtures, if sometimes a little short on batting. I was thoroughly pleased that there were no repeats of the 2 fixture concessions we were forced to make in 2023. Thank you to all who made themselves available to support the side throughout the season.

The mantra of the 3's remains two-fold. Firstly, to support the development of the colts contingent as they transition into playing senior cricket, whilst secondly, providing an opportunity for senior players to continue playing competitive cricket. The senior players facilitating the development of the colts and benefiting from their youthful energy and contributions on the field!

I believe that the 2024 season was a shining example of the 3's side delivering against this mantra, and this can be no better illustrated than by looking at examples from both our first and final games of the year.....

Our first fixture saw us travel away to play St Peters, having been put into bat we left ourselves somewhat short by only managing to post 155-8, and were unfortunately unable to defend this total. However, upon taking the field, the colts' development and contributions were clearly displayed. The new ball being given to Joe Crawley and Seb Thorns. Joe took the first over, and following on from his success in 2023 sent the stumps flying with his 4th delivery. Up stepped Seb, the slightly younger of the 2 colts, 3rd delivery, stumps everywhere... Anything you can do, I can do better! While our 2 young opening bowlers went on the take 2 wickets each, the St Peters middle order steadied the ship and were able to pick off our total in relatively risk-free fashion by milking ones and two's and securing the victory for only 4 wickets down.

Our final game was also away, this time at Keymer & Hassocks. A damp pitch played host to a wonderful bowling display from the other end of the age spectrum (I won't give away his actual age but I do believe he was 54 years older than an opening bowler that day!). Our beloved Sri Lankan senior Naleen Sumanasekara (Dexy) walked onto the pitch 2 wickets below the top wicket taker in our division for

the season. While the opening wicket was taken again by Seb Thorns (another set of stumps everywhere from an inswinger no doubt), Dexy proved that the old boys can still do the business by taking enough wickets to secure the League award for the most wickets in our division. At the end of the game, the divisions' bowling contest was comfortably secured as Dexy walked off the field with all his teammates thoroughly celebrating his 8 overs, 3 maidens, 6 wickets for 9 runs!!

Those 2 situations provide a delightful illustration of our season, and the purpose of our side. What should also be noted was the support that the whole team provided to each and every player in all situations throughout the season. Everyone celebrated Joe and Seb's wickets in the first game, just as everyone celebrated Dexys "6 for" in the last game. Not only do all the team celebrate the successes, but they also share in the disappointments and support people through their challenges. This environment is exactly what is required to deliver the 3's mantra and most importantly to support the colts development. It's something I try to encourage in the side, but the responsibility to deliver it sits with every single player, not just the captain. I am thoroughly proud to see such relentless support for our team members. Long may we be able to deliver this kind of cricketing environment.

Creating such an environment, creates the cricketers of the future. Our colts have delivered beyond expectations over the last few seasons to the extent that both the 2023 and 2024 "players player of the season" awards have been rightly issued to 13 year old colts. It would be amiss to conclude this season's review without mentioning the 2024 winner Toby Boyce. It's tricky for colts to transition into senior cricket in any role, but to do so as a Wicketkeeper and future opening batsmen is probably one of the toughest. Toby had some challenging games behind the sticks at the start of the season, but developed superbly as the season progressed and was fully supported by his teammates as illustrated by his award. Toby played with passion, commitment and emotion, and reminded me while why we all play this game. He had a great season behind the stumps, growing in confidence, stature and performance. Put this alongside with some very resilient batting displays and he has already shown he is one to watch for many years to come.

2024 has again been a season I have thoroughly enjoyed with a team I am proud to captain. I'll conclude this review with a look to the future and use of a phrase coined by our 2ns XI captain during the year – Floreat HCC!!!

Thanks goes to:

A massive thank you to all who supported our efforts this season, the club supports the side well and continues to provide an environment to allow us to provide competitive cricket for a true mix of old and young players.

A huge thank you to John Tudhope, our groundsman at our home away from home, Partridge Green. We received several comments on how nice a ground it is and

how well the track behaves. Your efforts are always appreciated.

Big thanks also go to Alan for umpiring and Steve for scoring. It makes my job on match days so much easier when these roles are covered.

Of course, a big thank you to all the 3's players who made the season so enjoyable for me to be involved in. I know I have not been able to mention everyone in this review but you all know who you are, and you know what you did. Everyone contributed to a great team environment, and our improving youngsters will hold us in good stead for next year! A final thanks has to go to Peter Boyce, Kevin Thorns and Paul Pheasant for covering the captains' duties in the second half of the season following my injury, and of course for their efforts past, present and future in developing the colts within the club. It's their hard work over the years that is now delivering such vital youth availability and talent to the 3rd XI.

Mark Elliot

3rd XI Captain

Under 14's

The 2024 season started rather earlier than normal cricket seasons for the Under 14. We actually started our season on 29th October 2023 in the indoor league at BACA.

After a tough start with losses on gameday 1 against Burgess Hill and Brighton & Hove, we got the campaign going on game day 2 with a win against Lewes Priory and our momentum built over the remaining match days.

At the end of the regular season we had actually finished 4th in the table and had qualified for the play offs. We secured our progress with a thumping victory over St Peters, the highlights being Seb taking 4 wickets for 13 runs in an exemplary display of swing bowling, and Toby captaining the team expertly with a perfectly timed powerplay, which included him scoring 14 off one ball and leading to his retirement for 26*.

In the semi-final we were drawn against Preston Nomads who had gone through the regular season unbeaten, had beaten us already and were the red hot favourites for the title.

Bowling 1st, the team bowled and fielded brilliantly. Nomads were dismissed for 51 in 6 overs. Game on! However, in true Henfield CC tradition we were soon in all sorts of trouble. We slumped to 8-3. A rather big challenge ahead! Seb and Angelo then managed to build a little partnership and took the score 33 before Angelo was dismissed.

So last man standing and still needing 19 to win. Seb then stood firm. Batting sensibly and protecting his wicket for all he was worth, he managed to see us to victory. Finishing on 9 not out, off no less than 25 balls, the team won a truly memorable game.

We played our nemesis Brighton & Hove in the final. In a good game Brighton & Hove won again, but to finish runners up in tough competition was a great start to the season.

After a really good winter of nets at Steyning, the outdoor season saw would see us compete in Division 1, after winning promotion in 2023. We were set for a challenging year ahead. The early season weather was truly terrible and games and practices were cancelled left, right and centre. Before we even managed to play any league games, we participated in a Development Team cup competition at Preston Nomads.

A day long tournament of 9 a-side cricket, held on 5th May with teams made up of 6 juniors and 3 senior players. Angelo, Will, Joe, Toby, Seb and Andrew were joined by Dimi Mendis, Mike White and Kevin Thorns. Playing 3 games in the day we won all 3 against B Hill, Lewes Priory and Preston Nomads.

A fantastic achievement for the team to win another trophy.

After 2 cancellations due to weather our league season finally started on 7th May at Brighton & Hove. Having thought the season ahead would be tough, this game

really showed that we were in for challenging summer with matches against some really strong sides. Losing by 62 runs, having bowled and fielded really well, we unfortunately never really got going with the bat. It was a lesson in putting a higher value on your wicket and batting sensibly.

A change in fortune was just around the corner. After the Brighton & Hove game the rest of the season saw us beat: Rottingdean, Preston Nomads, Haywards Heath, Ditchling, Preston Nomads (away by no less than 9 wickets), Ditchling (via concession) and a final win against Haywards Heath. We also lost 3 games; a really tight game against St Peters which went to the last ball, Brighton & Hove (in a much closer game) and Felbridge & Sunnyside. All 3 of those defeats were in close games which could easily have swung either way.

There were multiple highlights over the course of the season and I'm sure we will miss some. Ben Smith continued to produce very valuable contributions in our middle order and he top scored with 20 in our successful (just) run chase against Rottingdean. Against Preston Nomads we started the game with just 8 players. Seb stood up and opened the batting, hanging in for 5 overs to allow others to arrive at the ground. Then, with just 4 runs needed off the last over, newcomer Frank Evans stood up against his old team and took the wicket we needed to secure a memorable victory. Frank has been an excellent addition to our team, settling in seamlessly and also showing great development in all aspects of his game over the season.

Away to Haywards Heath we put in one of our most complete performances. Will Clark and Angelo Twinkle both retired for scores in the 30's. Then Will capped off an incredible all-round performance by taking a hat trick! Beating Ditchling at home we put in one of our best batting performances with both Will and Joe getting over 30 and Ben Smith bashing a quickfire 27 off 16 balls at the end.

The victory away to Preston Nomads was our most complete performance of the season. We outplayed them in every facet of the game – a true cricketing lesson. We restricted them to 113-5 from 20 overs. We then easily chased this down with 4 overs to spare with Will, Angelo and Gus leading the way. At this stage of the season we sat second in the league behind Brighton & Hove and with a chance of overtaking them if we could beat them on the common.

The losses to St Peters, Brighton and Felbridge were all exceptionally close affairs. We had opportunities in all of the games to swing things in our favour but sometimes fine margins make the difference, and there were perhaps times during these games where our usually high standards in fielding and catching slipped a little and perhaps cost us. However, we bounced back in our final game against Haywards Heath with a thumping 10 wicket victory – Joe Crawley retiring for 40 from just 32 balls.

So at the end of the season we finished 3rd in a very tough league. Brighton & Hove and Felbridge & Sunnyside finished above us. A fantastic season with the highlights being the last over win at Rottingdean in near total darkness and the 9 wicket win away to Nomads, which is the best cricket this team has played since they were formed. It was a real team effort, with contributions from everyone over the course of the year and we demonstrated that on our day we are a match for anyone in the county.

To round off the season we then entered the Cricket Festival in August. 4 long, hard games of cricket were ahead of us.

We started the festival away at Crawley Down. On a great day for playing cricket we were blessed with fantastic weather, lovely hosts and saw some outstanding batting. The highlights of this game; Will Clark scoring the 1st ever 100 for the team and Angelo taking 4-0 bowling his leg breaks. The game turned out be a little one sided in our favour but the team played it in the right spirit despite the mismatch in abilities between the 2 sides.

Wednesday saw us host a hugely determined Felbridge & Sunnyside at home. Batting 1st we scored 252 – 4. Jimmy Thomas scored his highest ever score of 32, Angelo scored 50* but the real highlight was our reluctant opener that Gus Crawley scoring 101*. The teams 2nd individual hundred in the space of 3 days.

In response Felbridge & Sunnyside set out to make sure they didn't lose this game. In a hugely gutsy effort they batted for no less than 45 overs losing only 8 wickets. The game finished as a draw. Lots of learnings for us to take from the game; the value of ones wicket in win, lose or draw cricket, having to sometimes look to employ less conventional strategies to get wickets and how real focus and determination can get you a long way.

Thursday, we travelled to St James Montefiore. With plenty of bad weather around, the aim here was to try and get a quick win if possible, before the scheduled rain came. St James had a couple of last minute no shows for their team and went into the game with 9 players. Thankfully we dismissed them quickly for 68.

In chasing this down we did lose 5 wickets but great batting by Jacob and Frank rebuilt the innings, though Jacob was out with 19 still needed. Toby joined Frank (14 not out) and calmly saw us home with 7 off 7 balls, getting us over the line just as it started to rain, caressing a cover drive for 4. With lots of rain around Sussex and with plenty of games unlikely to finish we still had a chance to finish high enough to qualify for the final with 1 home game left to play.

Friday was the last game of the festival against Ifield at home.

After a decent bowling effort we were chasing 170 for victory. Ifield had shown great application and after a slow and very watchful start they managed to accelerate the run rate later in the innings when they had wickets left in hand. However, 170 looked a very chaseable total on a glorious day on the Common.

Playing the game as though it was a t20 game rather than a long form festival match, we lost cheap wicket and had quickly slumped to 54-5. A long way from victory. Further wickets continued to fall and before too long were staring at a hefty defeat with the score at 102-9. Seb and Jacob then batted together for no less than 12 overs. Seb being solid and Jacob playing his shots. Calling on his full repertoire of cuts, nudges and pulls Jacob puts in truly memorable batting display. A great partnership had put us in a position where we had a chance to win the game and also a great chance for Jacob to score 50 and take him past a significant personal milestone. Having decided that now was the time to attack, Ifield bowled a half tracker, Jacob absolutely smashed the ball and looked like it was going to go for 6 up the hill. Alas a brilliant catch brought the innings to an

end. Jacob had battled brilliantly for 59 balls, scoring 48 runs whilst all round him wickets were falling. So close and yet so far.

That final game was a good reflection of how the season had been for us. We played some brilliant cricket in all the competitions we entered but along with great highs, we were also capable of not quite doing enough to win in certain games. However the effort levels on and off the pitch have been incredible. The commitment to train, improve, play games and take on new challenges has been amazing. No less than 8 of the squad played adult cricket in some form this summer. All held there own and some have even won significant club awards, which will be mentioned elsewhere in the report.

Overall we played 16 games, we won 9, drew 1 and lost 5.

Thanks to all the players and their commitment to training, matches, helping to get the facilities ready before games and cleared away after games. It has been another very enjoyable season and for us it is a privilege to look after such a great group. The challenge now is to maintain our position. We have a small squad in comparison to many clubs and it is always is a team effort to compete against these big clubs. We've already started our winter practice and the boys enthusiasm is as great as ever. We must ensure that they adopt a mindset to practice with purpose, establish the areas they need to improve, and work out how to do so.

Thanks to all the parents, grandparents, friends and family who have come to watch and support. Your help with the bar (both sides of it), preparing drinks, making teas, driving your kids across the county to get to games on time, is so very much appreciated. It makes Henfield a great venue to come and play cricket. The opposition love coming here nearly us much as we love to play here.

Peter Boyce and Kevin Thorns

Coaches Under 14's

Under 10's

Another successful season that has seen many improvements across the board. I am very happy to see a competitive streak in the squad, improved game awareness and an appetite for fielding that puts most of the rest of the club to shame! Despite not winning as many games as the kids would hope, we continue to see them trying to win at all times, which is all Mike and I really want from them for the foreseeable. Many thanks to our grown-ups as well for their support in scoring and generally being useful people while we corral the mob!

We are always trying to grow the squad, which is a mix of two age groups. If you know anyone whose child wants to try cricket, send them our way.

Fez and Mike.

Coaches Under 9's

Allstars & Dynamos

This year, we had 23 kids for All Stars (up on the 14 from 2023), and we ran the Dynamos program for the first time since 2022, which had 8 kids. So, overall, it was a much better year than 2023 in terms of numbers. We also had two new Activators (Rob Bryant and Phil Tremewan) who helped greatly with the sessions and overall organisation. A number of the parents/guardians were also a great help in keeping the kids focused during the sessions.

There were some delays with the registration process due to issues with the equipment previously provided by the ECB (this was a national issue). Hopefully, this will be fully resolved by 2025, and we can get kids signed up earlier. This year, we had posts on the local Facebook pages and posters in the leisure centre, which helped with numbers, and we would do something similar next year.

I see the All Stars sessions continuing next year, running for eight weeks between May and June (although one or two will likely move due to the school disco and football awards night).

I think a discussion around the Dynamos group is probably needed, as some could move to more structured training. However, only a couple from the All Stars sessions would be ready to take their place, potentially leaving a smaller group, which makes the sessions less practical.

Mike Cherriman

Allstars

Secretary's Report

Another enjoyable season spent on the common and throughout Sussex scoring for the First XI. We were on the wrong side of too many close results and with a little luck and team commitment, the league position could have been dramatically improved. We have a young side and perhaps the experience of this season may enable us to turn some of these results around next season.

Season highlights for me were several:

Tom Paine and Craig Scott taking us to a very enjoyable victory at Haywards Heath. I was scoring, surrounded by the Haywards Heath 1st XI who had had an early finish elsewhere. The mood was extremely buoyant, if not a little patronising, as it was clear to all that Haywards Heath had scored sufficient runs to comfortably win the match. "Isn't Henfield a place near Preston Nomads" enquired a poorly travelled first teamer. "I'll think you'll find that Preston Nomads is a cricket club near to Henfield" corrected I. The mood slowly changed as we approached their total, only to become somewhat muted when their wicket keeper dropped an easy catch offered up by Tom Paine as he neared his century. I, somewhat gleefully (and perhaps a little patronisingly) thanked them for the match after Tom hit a 4 off the last ball of the innings. It seemed a turning point in our season.

Highlight two, the emergence of a number of younger players who really added to the team, with special mention to Jed Bandy bowling, Tate Hector batting and keeping and Kiran Mahapatra batting. I am aware that there are a number of younger players that will be looking for First XI cricket next season. With this young enthusiasm and older experience, I am confident that we can have a successful 2025.

One last highlight to mention was the somewhat feisty game at St James where it would be fair to say that the two sides did not end the day as best of friends - maybe Brett's "controversial calling", Tate calling out the fielder who trod on the rope when taking a catch or maybe Jed being given out Mankad. Special mention for Will Culver on that day.

Conway Thorns

I must mention our President Conway. I was extremely sad at his death. He had seemed so much more healthy this summer and consequently his death felt so unexpected. I telephoned him in hospital and he told me quite frankly, of his health and heart. I expressed how sad I was to hear this news and he promptly told me "not as sad as I am", which I had to concede as a fair point. Conway was a friend to my uncle, aunt and parents having grown up together in the village and I am very proud to say that he was my good friend also. Conway will be sorely missed by me and everybody at the club. My thoughts to Olga, Kevin and the rest of the family.

Committee

As I announced at the last AGM, 2024 is my last year as Secretary as I am stepping down. It is time to hand over the reins to somebody else. I will still be around the club, will score on a Saturday but I just want to relinquish my commitment. At the same time Sam is stepping down from running the bar and Safe Guarding Officer. I thank everybody for their support

Once again, I enjoyed the season, all of your company and friendship and perhaps, one too many beers on the balcony.

Roll on season 254 when we can do it all again.

Michael Cleary
Club Secretary

