

Given that we are approaching the Annual General Meeting of Forge Valley Cricket Club, I find myself following in Simon's footsteps by preparing a Secretary's report on the 2011 season. The purpose of issuing such a report in advance is to avoid boring people at the AGM by reading out a lengthy piece, when perhaps more important matters can be discussed.

Following the 2010 AGM the club was left with one of its more important roles vacant. As a result the club was not fully committed in been able to move forward, and set a platform for the 2011 season. Having agreed at the January meeting to take on this role and ease the work load on others one would have thought this would allow the club to steady itself and move forward. Unfortunately the memberships elected 1<sup>st</sup> XI captain Andy Holden was forced to relinquish the role due to a knee injury. A replacement was found in the form of Simon Dobson, however injury struck again. The club was therefore looking for a third captain even before a ball had been bowled. After much discussion former Captain Dave Morris agreed to take up the reins.

Nets this season were held at the rugby Club due to Graham School been unavailable. After two well attended sessions, numbers began to fall and in the end the club failed to cover the cost of holding these sessions. As a result the club will need to consider the number of sessions it holds in the New Year to avoid a repeat of this occurrence. I therefore ask that the membership now start to consider the most appropriate evening to hold net sessions along with the venue to ensure these are well attended and do not cost the club much needed funds.

Club fundraising events during the year have been minimal, with a quiz and the 1986 Lord celebrations. The quiz was organised by Andy Holden prior to the season which for those attending was a good night. However, as was the case with net sessions attendance was poor and thus the club did not raise as much as could have been expected. In order for fundraising events to be a success the club needs the membership to support organised events not only to raise funds but also as a thank you to the event organiser.

On a brighter note, the club held a game against the 1986 Lords winning team which was well supported despite clashing with a 4<sup>th</sup> XI fixture. The day saw good weather, a packed East Ayton ground and a competitive game of cricket in addition to the BBQ. This day no doubt brought back happy memories for those who played and supported the club during that time, and also gave the young generation the chance to see a piece of FVCC history in action. Having now seen these people in action, it is hoped that the younger players will listen to advice when offered by these former players when they are down supporting the current teams.

The 2011 season proved difficult on many fronts and following poor attendance at the above two mentioned events the club found itself constantly searching for players to ensure that full squads were achieved. Looking at the stats it is clear to see the reasons for such a struggle during the season given the fact that both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XI's used in excess of 30 players each.

As a result of using a vast number of players the 1<sup>st</sup> XI found themselves in the unfortunate event of a relegation play-off. The event did not pass without incident

with date suggested by the league not been approved by both teams. Quite clearly the league gave themselves problems by not having set rules for such an occurrence, and the fact that the league seemed to wash their hands of the event. After an initial rained off tie, which brought more controversy Valley did run out victorious in the rearranged tie thanks to the experienced heads and a more than timely typical Mick Glew innings. Thus what was a very trying season, resulted in premier league survival.

A very youthful 2<sup>nd</sup> XI finished the season in mid table, and an appearance in the Cayley Cup final. Whilst perhaps playing at a higher level than planned the experience gained by playing at this level for a full season will hopefully put the club in good shape for future seasons.

Due to the constant changing of teams at the top end of the club this meant constant change for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> XI's. As a result the 4<sup>th</sup> XI were forced into conceding one league fixture, the first since the team was reformed in 2003. The thirds finished the season in 7<sup>th</sup> place and thus secured Derwent Valley top flight status. A wooden spoon finish was the result of the 4ths, but the emergence of the next generation playing in senior cricket will again hopefully help the club move forward.

Evening League cricket followed much the same pattern as Saturdays, with constant changes in teams selected and other commitments meaning the teams were never quiet at full strength. This showed with both teams within the relegation zone for much of the season. While the A team did turn things round and finish mid table, the B team did unfortunately suffer relegation to the bottom tier. It is hoped that more commitment is showed to Evening Cricket in 2012 and that the B team can make an immediate return to Division C.

A season of difficulty was highlighted in the fact that the club failed to turn a team out in the National Village Cup. This was a huge low for the club, especially given it was FVCC 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of winning the competition at Lords. The knock out competitions were in fact a disappointment for the majority of teams with 2 finals and 2 semi finals from 10 competitions entered.

One final note on the playing side is that all players can assist there respective captain especially with the setting up and clearing of grounds at games and collection of funds at tea intervals. My own view is that players should not need asking to assist in these areas. Items do not put themselves out or away and again it should not be left to the same individuals week after week. It is hoped these areas receive more co-operation during 2012.

The AGM takes place on Friday 18 November 2011 in the clubhouse with a start time of 6.45pm. This is were the membership gets the chance to have its say and elect it officers for the 2012 season. I therefore urge you all to attend and have your say as it is no good moaning after the event. It should also be noted that there is no age limit on been able to attend the AGM. You should also not be afraid to volunteer for a role, as there will be support from the management committee. It certainly is a help to the committee with Lewis Wannop having organised the presentation evening venue (which was a success and gained good reviews from the people I have since spoke to)

and Stephen F Smith looking into upgrading and reinventing FVCC kit. These are just two areas which the help of volunteers is and has been much appreciated.

Thanks also need expressing to Pete Wannop, Tim Farrant, Mick Almond, Paul Coole and George Ireland for the works done on the ground and outfield prior to each game at East Ayton and Bob Kimm for the work at West Ayton. East Ayton teas have again been of the quality we have become accustomed too, so thanks in this area are to Ruth Kimm and Helen Dobson. A further thank you to George for organising the fixtures and to Simon for controlling the clubs finances.

Finally it is hoped that 2012 is not such a struggle for playing numbers, and that greater commitment is shown from the players and membership in supporting club functions and events.