

ISLIP CRICKET CLUB



Cricket followers and lawmakers have for many years sought to establish an even balance between bat and ball. Small things can make a difference (sandpaper for example) but sometimes it is hard to find a rationale for the variability of our village team's performances. Last month, Islip scores ranging from 66 all out to 207-3 rather highlighted the difficulty but at least over the month as a whole, bat and ball were broadly in balance. This month, for no obvious reason, the ball has definitely had the better of the four games we have played, sometimes but not always when Islip batted.

That was certainly true of our visit to Brasenose's ground on August 22nd to play Far From the MCC. Batting first, ten-man Islip lost their first wicket in the 4th over and by the 6th had crawled to 5-3 with Harry Brock, Ollie Black and Jack Launchbury barely managing to trouble the scorers. Ben Crawford (14) and Ryan Hambridge (15) led a brief fightback to 42-3 before two more wickets fell. Harvey Scott (32) and Kevin Crawford (16 no) battled on but when Harvey fell, three wickets followed in quick succession. FFTMCC sportingly allowed Ollie Black a second chance, returning to the crease as a makeshift no 11. More successful on his second visit to the middle, Ollie made 26 no as Islip took 28 runs from the last two overs and the Islip innings closed on 113-9, setting FFTMCC a target of just over 3 runs an over.

It took a long time for the first FFTMCC wicket to fall, but run making was not easy. It was only in the 34th over that FFTMCC hit the winning runs for a 7 wicket victory, Jack Launchbury the pick of the Islip bowlers with 22-2.

Neil Brock has spent much of this season with his golf clubs, making only very occasional appearances on the cricket field, but the Bank Holiday weekend saw the return to Islip of his All-Stars side on their annual outing, providing some of the club's former members with a chance to show the current squad that they can still play. When Neil's side batted first, Mark Richards led the way, opening the innings and rolling back the years, seeing off Shreyas Anand and Kevin Crawford before eventually falling to Ethan Bird for 27. His opening partner Harry Brock was first out for 11, lbw to Jack Launchbury. At number 3, Fred Sawyer did not trouble the scorers and it was left to junior scheme coach Joe Thomas to bolster the score, making 26 before being bowled by Ryan Hambridge. Ethan Bird (11-3) did the most damage with his left arm inswing perplexing some All Stars' batsmen (the scorebook records "swung away from batsman" against one dismissal), ably assisted by 12 year old William Goodfellow who took 3 late wickets in his 3 overs leaving Neil last man standing on 7 no. With a little help from extras (16 including a "ball hit helmet" 5 run penalty – a collectors' item), All Stars were all out for 103 in the 34th over.

Islip's innings started briskly, with the first over of the innings from Harry Brock despatched for 10. He was immediately replaced by Mark Richards, not remembered in the annals of the club for his bowling, who went for 20 in his solitary over. With the match slipping away from his side Neil turned to his nephew, Oxfordshire spinner Joe Thomas. From 51-0, Islip slid to 86-4 (Tejas Anand 27, Ollie Black 29) before Shreyas Anand (22) and Kevin Crawford steadied the ship. Shreyas fell on 92, to be succeeded at the crease by Brian Deeley, once an Islip run machine. It was not Brian's day and he departed two balls later, leaving William Goodfellow (4 no) and Kevin Crawford (11 no) to see Islip to victory by 3 wickets in 21

overs. An enjoyable afternoon's cricket made possible by Neil Brock's efforts and unstinting support for the club.

September's first game, at home to Kempsford did not take long, all over in less than 28 overs. The Kempsford innings was destroyed by Shreyas Anand who took 6 wickets for just 10 runs in his 7 overs, supported by Ed Crofts (6-1) and Jack Launchbury (14-2). Kempsford made 59 runs in 21 overs, 30 coming from their number 2 batsman before he was dismissed by Kevin Crawford. Ryan Hambridge opened the Islip innings in swashbuckling style, making 42 no (7 boundaries including 2 sixes) in 6.3 overs, Islip's highest individual score of this report, and taking the home side to a 9 wicket victory.

When Enstone visited Islip, we had high hopes of avenging our defeat in the second game of the season when we lost by the odd run in 409, batting second. This time, Islip batted first and made a steady start before 50-2 (Ben Crawford 22) became 53-4. At 102-4, there was every prospect of a substantial score, but a slide to 110-6 followed (Tejas Anand 30, Jack Launchbury 30) and Islip's innings ended on 124 all out in the 27th over, leaving Rick Green at the crease on 5 no.

When Ed Crofts had one of Enstone's openers stumped to make them 19-1, there was a brief glimmer of hope, extinguished by the other opener who went on to make 54 no. Enstone cruised to an 8 wicket win in the 25th over, making batting look straightforward.

There are two more games to be played in September and by the time the last cricket article of the season appears in this august publication, the pitch will have been reseeded and machinery made ready for winter. The full 2021 results should by then be on the club website at <https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/islipcricketclub> as we start to prepare for 2022. Do get in touch if you'd like to know more – we welcome players of all ages, abilities and experience – or if you'd just like to get involved.

Despite the pandemic, 2021 has been a full season with just one game lost to the weather so far. We have very much appreciated all the support the club has had from the Village Shop, the Village Hall and the Parish Council and from so many individuals, particularly the parents of some of our younger players. Now for 2022...