

ISLIP CRICKET CLUB



Village cricket and Test cricket are worlds apart and detailed comparison of Islip's array of cricketing talent with England's side is not straightforward; for example, unlike England, Islip has no left handed batsmen. However, there are some similarities. The Ashes Test series is made up of 25 days of potential cricket, exactly the number of days of cricket planned for Islip's 2023 season. What is more, both Islip and England have a tendency to, more often than not, leak more extras than their opponents and, perhaps because of that, have both lost two games. The most striking difference between the records of the two sides comes in the wins column. Islip have won eight games (7 on Sundays and a Friday night T20) while, as I write this, England have just posted their first win of the summer.

Four of Islip's eight wins have come since the last cricket report, together with a thrashing at the hands of Reading University Alumni CC. Friday June 23rd's T20 against Swanmore CC, on tour from Hampshire, was an emphatic win. Our visitors batted first and an opening maiden over from Kevin Crawford set the tone. Despite occasional blasts of encouraging music between overs from Swanmore's karaoke machine, their score had moved rather sedately to 8 when they lost their first wicket to Kevin in the fifth over. He struck again in his final and fourth over to finish with figures of 2-6. The scoring rate picked up a little and at the start of the final over, Swanmore had reached 79-3. Six balls later their innings closed on 80-5 leaving Jacob Adams with two wickets for one run from his solitary over. It took Islip just 12 overs to knock off the runs, finishing on 81-3 (Harry Brock 33 no (retired) and Jacob Adams 27 no), a straightforward win for Islip.

Reading University Alumni CC visited Islip the following Sunday and the boot was very much on the other foot as the visitors raced to 204-7 (Harry Brock 3-57, Kevin Crawford 2-29), taking 95 runs from the last ten overs of their 35. The Islip reply never really got going, finishing at 49 all out in 17.3 overs (Lee Price 19, Harry Brock 19), our worst batting performance of the season by some way.

July started with a visit to Ascott-u-Wychwood where our hosts batted first, making slow but steady progress to reach 55-2 at the start of the 20th over before William Goodfellow (2-14) took wickets in his 6th and 7th overs. With the score on 75-4, club President Stan Nelson came into the attack and rolled back the years. Stan's 4th ball was despatched for 6 by Ascott's opener, bringing up his half century, but the next ball he was gone, clean bowled, perhaps trying to repeat the feat. 82-4 in the 24th over. But Stan had only just started; he took three more wickets to finish with 4-28 in 6.3 overs, a remarkable performance from a very occasional (though very experienced) off spinner, leaving Islip needing 116 to win. A steady start took Islip's reply to 16 from the first five overs before Harry Brock departed lbw for 13. Soon after Mike Henderson was out bowled and at 20-2 in the 7th over things were becoming a little tricky. Ollie Black and Ryan Hambridge steadied the ship until Ollie was out caught for 15. Ryan was out lbw for 35 in the 22nd over but by then the score had reached 104 and Ben Crawford (39 no) and 2022 Young Player of the Year George Roper (5 no) took Islip to 119-4, in the end a straightforward win.

We always look forward to our annual visit to the Baldons, a quirky ground with the road through the village crossing the outfield, adding spice to the lives of any fielders stationed nearby. With Islip batting first in this year's 30 over game, Baldons got first use of the tarmac and our openers moved serenely to 62 before they were both out (Harry Brock 19, Mike Henderson 38). A series of cameos followed (Ollie Black 24, Lee Price 32, Ben Crawford 39) with no one going on to make a big score, but taking Islip to 184-6. In reply, Baldons pushed

hard with two of their batsmen making half centuries, but their innings tailed off and they finished on 140-6, 45 runs short (Mike Henderson 2-11, Ben Crawford 2-23).

If the Baldons pitch is quirky and Middleton Stoney is picturesque, the pitch on the South Lawn at Blenheim Palace is magnificent (well, the setting is magnificent; the pitch itself can be a little eccentric) and when we go there squad members who have not played much suddenly become available. On a windy day with rain in the air, Islip invited Blenheim to bat. Scoring was not easy and Lee Price and Ben Crawford started the innings with three consecutive maidens. The first breakthrough came in Lee's sixth over which he followed with a third maiden, giving him overall figures of 1-16. Meanwhile, Jack Launchbury replaced Ben Crawford and took a fine catch in his first over, leaving Blenheim on 30-2 in the 12th over. In the 20th over, they had reached 52 when a run out was followed by a second wicket for Jack Launchbury (2-19). 58-4 with 13.3 overs left, and with Kevin Crawford (1-22) bowling as economically as ever, Blenheim went after Ryan Hambridge. Ryan conceded 33 runs from just 5 overs, but Islip's bowlers had done enough to contain Blenheim and they finished on 131-7 with extras contributing a creditable 22, including a wide that went to the boundary for 5, a real collector's item. Islip moved to a straightforward 4 wicket win in the 33rd over with contributions from Ollie Black (41), Lee Price (34) and Harry Brock (21). This season's Islip games have been played in a good spirit, none more so than the Blenheim game after which Ollie Black was presented with the newly minted Keith Sproggs Memorial Trophy, given by his family in memory of a man well known and respected in his local community and a BPCC stalwart. Followers of Ashes cricket may remember that the Ashes urn itself was created as a memorial, in this case to English cricket after a satirical obituary was published in the Sporting Times in 1882 following a seven run defeat at the hands of Australia. They may also know that the defeat was catalysed by an unsporting run out by the English. An Australian batsman thought that the ball was dead and left his crease, allegedly after a nod from WG Grace, who threw the stumps down. While reluctantly giving the batsman out, the umpire told Grace that it was "not cricket". (The comment did not seem to bother Grace. He was not a likeable man, to the extent that in 1911 HH Asquith secured the House of Lords assent for the Parliament Bill by threatening to ennoble Grace if the Lords rejected it.)

Australia's leading fast bowler Fred Spofforth, known as the Demon, agreed with the umpire and stormed into the England dressing room. After a virtuoso display of his mastery of the Aussie vernacular, he left with the threat: "This will lose you the match." And he was right; an innings in which he took 7-44 sealed Australia's win. So the MCC members affronted by the manner of Bairstow's dismissal at this year's Lords Test should be reminded that it was England who started it. Let us hope that by the time I write the next article of the 2023 season England will have been similarly inspired by this year's Bairstow incident and have also followed Islip's example in producing winning cricket.

Off the field, better news of the nets, I'm pleased to report. Ollie Black provided an enormous number of cable ties, the netting has been rehung and they are back in working order.

All our games in August are at home and, as ever, all on Sundays.

6 th August	OCCSCC	Home (2:00 PM)
13 th August	FFTMCC	Home (2:00 PM)
20 th August	Holton	Home (2:00 PM)
27 th August	Brock's All Stars	Home (1:30 PM)

Do consider coming to join us as a spectator or, even if only for the occasional game, as a player. For more information go to the website

(<https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/islipcricketclub>) which has the full '23 fixtures or email islipcricketclub@gmail.com.