

ISLIP CRICKET CLUB



Quite a lot has happened in the world of cricket since November's article. On the international stage, England were blown away by New Zealand in the T20 semi-final and domestically Yorkshire, the ECB, and latterly Essex, have hit a spot of turbulence that makes JM Barrie's unfortunate naming of his cricket club (Allahakbarries CC) seem a little less out of tune with our times. In Islip, more mundanely, the autumn winds rearranged the wicket covers into an attractive two storey zig-zag pattern and put the railway end sightscreen on its back. Happily, all has now been restored to its proper place, not without effort but probably with rather less than it will take to restore the reputations of professional cricketers in England, both those who play the game and those who run it.

With no more cricket until next April, this is the time when we look back on the past season. Islip's 2021 performances can be split neatly into two. We started the season with 4 straight defeats and by June 30th, had won just 3 of our first 11 matches; a lot of fun but more disaster than triumph. The second half of the season was rather better – 6 wins, 6 defeats and that late-season draw against Ascott-u-Wychwood in which we lost 4 wickets in the last over while failing to score the winning run. Hardly a triumph but certainly not a disaster. Overall, we played 24, won 9 times and drew once.

Throughout the season we have seen some outstanding individual performances. Islip's batsmen contributed a total of 2859 runs during the season and Skipper Ollie Black led from the front, scoring 686 runs (including 2 centuries) in 22 appearances at an average of 32.7. Not so far behind him was our second centurion, Ben Crawford, who made 483 runs in 17 appearances and, thanks to 3 not out innings, finished with an average of 34.5. Honourable mentions go to Jack Launchbury (334 in 19 innings, average 19.6 and the third of this year's centurions) and Tejas Anand (177 in 6 innings, average 29.5). There can be no doubt that our best line up has the firepower to score a lot of runs. Now all we have to do is be more consistent. Perhaps, leaving triumph and disaster behind, we will become men in 2022.

The season's only ever present was vice-captain Kevin Crawford, closely followed by Ollie Black who played 22 games, Jack Launchbury with 21 and Nigel Mason on 20. Kevin, in his 24 games, contributed 163 runs in 21 innings and averaged 12.5 with the bat. But it was in the bowling stats that Kevin really stood out. He bowled 165.5 overs – 60% more than anyone else – and went for 519 runs, an economy rate of just 3.1 runs per over, taking 25 wickets at an average of 20.8. The two other workhorses in the Islip attack were Jack Launchbury and Ben Crawford who both bowled 101 overs, with Jack taking 22 wickets at an average of 22.5, but going for 4.9 runs per over.

Just as older brother Tejas made an impact in a small number of appearances, Shreyas Anand took 12 wickets in 7 games, bowling 44 overs at 3 runs per over with an average of 10.9 runs per wicket. Not far behind him was Ethan Bird with 10 wickets at 18.7 in his 7 appearances. Let's hope we see more of them next year.

By the time Shreyas and Ethan next play at Islip, one or two things will have changed. In the past couple of weeks a man with a lorry, a battery powered angle grinder and two very large axes which he wielded with immense power, has managed to disassemble and remove the

rusting sightscreen at the Mill Street end of the ground. Its more attractive and infinitely more modern successor should be with us early in the New Year in good time for the season's opening game at Islip on April 10th.

Next year's fixtures will be put on the club website at <https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/islipcricketclub> and the club can be contacted via islipcricketclub@gmail.com. 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.