

ISLIP CRICKET CLUB



A tinge of green has returned to the Islip square these past few weeks at the start of a run of home games that bookend the 2022 season. As though to emphasise how hard a job it is to prepare a wicket for village cricket, intruders have replaced the weather as the new challenge for Kevin Crawford.

Rabbit in a cricketing context is something of a derogatory term: "a member of the side who cannot bat and is chosen as a specialist bowler or wicketkeeper, and who almost always bats at number 11". Arguably this year Islip has fielded fewer cricketing rabbits than for many a season. Perhaps by way of revenge, the local population on the playing field has taken an increasing level of interest in our cricket square. While the damage is not quite at the level of the "George Davis is innocent" depredations at Headingley in 1975, midweek wicket repairs are increasingly unlikely to survive until Sunday and the club's WhatsApp group has more and more photos of cratered creases.

Despite all that, and thanks to Kevin's hard work, all our games have gone ahead. The August Bank Holiday weekend saw the annual Brock's All Stars game, Islip's annual festival of cricket in which Neil Brock's friends and family take on an Islip side, with players swapped between the sides to even up team strength and fuel local rivalries.



Islip and Neil Brock's All Stars featuring William Goodfellow, very much in the foreground

Alongside the rabbit in the animal section of the lexicon of cricketing terms sits the duck. There are eight different types (or perhaps species) of cricketing duck, some of which (e.g. the pair and the king pair) are not directly referred to as ducks. A laughing duck is a dismissal

for no runs from the last ball of an innings. Its counterpart, a dismissal for no runs from a batsman's first ball (a golden duck) becomes a Royal duck when it happens from the very first ball of an innings. And that is how it all started to go horribly wrong for Neil Brock's side. Mike Henderson, Islip's top run scorer this year and there to strengthen Neil's side did not trouble the scorers and faced just one ball. To make things worse for Mike, he was out to the bowling of his good friend Ryan Hambridge, the man who introduced him to the club. Harry Brock followed shortly afterwards and at 18-5 the All Stars innings was in tatters. When the 10th wicket fell on 49, the All Stars highest scorer was Jake Richards with 12. The contest was prolonged by the return of Mike and Harry for a second try and they did not disappoint. Mike set about the Islip attack, scoring 90 from 36 balls before he was caught and bowled by Jack Launchbury with Harry, 41 not out from 31 balls, lagging a little way behind, setting Islip 187 to win. Ryan Hambridge returned a remarkable 7 wickets for 9 runs in his 5 overs, with support coming from William Goodfellow (4-49).

Islip's innings did not start well. From the first ball Tejas Anand was well caught at slip low down by Mike Henderson off the bowling of Tony Launchbury and the game now included a pair of Royal ducks. Fortunately Islip recovered quickly with Luke Brennan making a useful 26, Jack Launchbury 38 and Ryan Hambridge a match-settling 56. This time there was no spoof salutation from his teammates when he reached 40, though some were tempted. The innings ended with youth at the wicket in the form of George Roper (10 no) and William Goodfellow (2 no) as Islip reached 187-7. An early start to the match and sticking to just 25 overs each saw both sides and spectators enjoying a most excellent late tea in the Red Lion (thank you Neil Brock) at 5.30 with Ryan Hambridge having to dig deep into his pocket after his successes with both bat and ball.

The rest of the month saw some good cricket but all too often with Islip finding it hard to field a full side. Against Far From The MCC, a weakened Islip side batted first. A fine 113 no from Ollie Black, helped a little by some generous fielding and supported by 33 from Harry Brock, took Islip to 210 for 7 from 35 overs. But it was not enough. Even with George Roper going flat out, arms pumping and bandana fluttering as he ran in looking the spitting image of Stuart Broad, FFTMCC made light of our total, reaching 213-5 in 25 overs.

Our annual pilgrimage into Wiltshire to play Kempsford was more successful. When Islip batted first, William Goodfellow fell for zero in the first over but, thoughts of Royal ducks forgotten, Mike Henderson set about the Kempsford bowling, scoring 161 no and taking Islip to 240-4 from 30 overs (Ben Crawford 48). At 39-0 from 5 overs, Kempsford looked set to make a game of it but Ben Crawford (3-40) and, inevitably, Mike Henderson (4-17) stemmed the flow. Kempsford's innings ended in the 27th over on 141.

Eventually, our home game against Enstone was an equally one-sided affair. At 21-3, the Islip innings hung in the balance when Lee Price came to the crease. 84 runs and 12 boundaries later, the total was 168-5 when Lee returned to the pavilion, leaving Ben Crawford (48 no) and Mike Henderson (26) to take Islip to 208-7 from the allotted 35 overs. Enstone began their innings with a run out in the first over and although their number 3 Chaminda (47) led a fight back, Lee Price (3-38) and Ryan Hambridge (2-20) saw Islip home with Enstone bowled out for 130.

There are two more games in September, which will be covered next month. As our thoughts turn to the '23 season, do consider coming to join us, even if only for the occasional game.

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For more information go to the website (<https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/islipcricketclub>) or email islipcricketclub@gmail.com.