

## ISLIP CRICKET CLUB



The sunny days of a foreshortened season seem long gone as mists and mellow fruitfulness take their turn at the crease. The wicket has been put to bed for the winter and worm casts in the new coating of loam and seed have taken the place of those hastily scratched marks left by each newly arriving batsman when taking guard. The last of these scratchings was made in the 25<sup>th</sup> over on September 27<sup>th</sup> when Oxford University Hospitals Cricket Club lost their second wicket on their way to overtaking Islip's total of 191. Any thoughts of the season ending with an October victory were quickly washed away by Storm Alex the following week, leaving us with a ten game season in which we won more games (5) than we lost.

That success owes a lot to an exciting 35 over game against Holton on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Holton chose to bat first and set off at a modest pace. The first wicket fell to Shreya Anand with the score on 26 in the tenth over and after 20 overs the run rate had increased only slightly; Holton were on 69-3. Any thoughts of an easy win then evaporated. In the next ten overs, Holton took their score to 131-5 with Faizaan Abbas' leg spin going for 56 runs in seven overs. Had it not been for four late wickets from Harry Brock (three overs, four wickets for six runs in his second spell), Holton would have been out of reach. As it was, 154 was a challenging target.

When Islip batted, things started well. For a while Brian Deeley looked like the 500 runs a season batsman that he was back in the days when he asked his team mates to address him as Viv, and Faizaan Abbas matched Brian's power with his left-handed elegance. Faizaan fell in the 14<sup>th</sup> over for 27 with the score on 62 and when Brian departed two overs later for 31, things began to look less rosy. With 10 overs left, Islip stood at 105-7 and a long way from winning the game. By that time Jack Launchbury had accumulated three runs and seen two team-mates depart and now he cut loose, hitting two sixes and a four before falling for 20 in the 30<sup>th</sup> over.

That left fourteen year old Shreya Anand in the middle. He was joined at the crease by Club President Stan Nelson, an age gap of not much short of 60 years. Oblivious to any age considerations, Shreya set about running quick singles towards the end of each over, and turning every single into a two, farming the strike very successfully. Stan kept up with him remarkably well, but by the time he was out in the 32<sup>nd</sup> over his complexion was several shades brighter than when he went in. Twenty runs needed, three overs to go. Eight off the first, two off the second, ten runs needed from the final over, Kevin Crawford on strike and now he needs 5 from two balls. The first goes to the fence through the leg side. The last ball of the match flies past Kevin's bat to the wicketkeeper, a frantic dash from Shreya is to no avail and the bails come off; the match is tied with the score on 154.

The final game against Oxford University Hospitals Cricket Club was a more one sided affair. It is not that we didn't bat well. The Islip total of 191 was the highest of the season, with Faizaan contributing 79 and Tejas Anand 52, so surely we could be optimistic. Now while we did not have our strongest bowling attack, when Shreya Anand had one of the openers caught in the eighth over with 49 on the board we did feel that we had a chance. We were wrong, very wrong. Kevin Crawford's bowling was affected by a hamstring tweaked in

his first over and the Islip attack lost what little edge it had. The next wicket fell at 126 in the 25<sup>th</sup> over and OUHCC passed our highest score of the season for the loss of just two wickets.

The season may be over but Ludo Bennett Jones, with the ankle he sprained in July now healed, has captured its final moments using an impressive looking telephoto lens and a steady hand, immortalising the moment that Nigel Mason's last innings of the season came to an end. The pictures are on the club website (<https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/islipcricketclub>.) in the Gallery. These two bookend Nigel's season - from solitary tea in April to one final solitary walk back to the pavilion in September.



April 19<sup>th</sup> – home alone



September 27<sup>th</sup> – in action

As in so many areas of life, it is time to start planning for 2021. By the time cricket restarts, we hope that things have moved a little closer to some kind of new normal, hopefully a world in which the bar will be open in the Village Hall, and the use of a shared teapot is no longer proscribed.

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