

ETON RAMBLERS

NOTICE 2015

2015 Season

From the ridiculous to the sublime. Last year I reported in a rather negative manner about the results and the high number of cancellations. 2015 was very different and with 14 wins and 14 losses and only 4 draws, there is an indication of positive and, therefore, enjoyable cricket being played. There were 4 games lost to rain, 1 cancelled by the opposition and 2 cancelled by ourselves. The Hon Secretary reports that he had many fewer "panic" calls during the week before a match and, indeed, they were a rarity. Great credit must go to our hard working Match Managers for ensuring this was the case and long may it continue.

Will Vanderspar was easily our highest run scorer with 412, including 2 hundreds. Eds Farley and Oram followed with 283 and 264 respectively with Farley also scoring 2 hundreds. There were more bowlers in the 25 over + category than in recent years with Freddie Fox hitting the 100 over mark.

All in all 2015 was a most encouraging season on which we must build and I certainly detect a very strong nucleus of young players who are really keen to play and are not just persuaded to turn out to make up numbers. Success will breed success in this respect, as it does in so many cases.

It is very fitting for me to be able to report in such a positive manner at a point when it is "all change" in the secretariat. Fergus Boyd (as Hon Secretary) and Andrew Carrol (as Hon Asst Secretary) took over in 2009 and have worked together for 6 years. They have done a splendid job and the Club owes them a huge debt of gratitude. I am sure they will be on the boundary line to offer assistance to the new team, if and when required. I also hope we will continue to see them on the field of play.

The new team brings in yet another Bruce. Ed takes over as Hon Secretary and he will be most ably assisted by Freddie Fox. They already have their feet under the table and will show tremendous enthusiasm. All they need is the full support of the membership.

The Cricketer Cup

From the ridiculous to the sublime! Last year was a disaster and I commented that it would take Will Vanderspar a year or two to rebuild the side. He did it well within the year. I circulated individual match reports as the season progressed and I won't repeat myself too much in this report.

We were drawn to play the Old Eastbournians in the 1st round and after the mauling in last year's 1st round, it was, perhaps, a kind draw and proved to be such. We were much too good and chased their 130 losing only 1 wicket.

The second round was a very different proposition as we came up against the holders in the form of a formidable Old Cranleigh side. Chasing a modest 219 we were moving like a well oiled machine until, in true Rambler fashion, the wheels fell off. We suddenly lost 6 quick wickets while still needing over 60 to win. Why did we need to worry when 9 and 10 made batting look extremely easy and we cruised home without any further alarms.

In nearly 60 years of the competition, we had only previously had to be involved in one replay due to rain. We now had two in a row. We got started against the Old Bedfordians at Eton and, it is probably fair to admit that they had the better of the play that took place. Nonetheless, rain intervened and we had to go to Bedford the following week. It is never easy to collect 11 Ramblers together at short notice, but even more difficult with all the other distractions that go on during the summer months (not the least of which, on this occasion, was the Lord's Test). However the Captain managed it, albeit with the assistance of the previous year's VIII who provided Ian Briggs (surely unique in the competition). The match was played on the small 2nd XI ground, but even so 377/8 was a huge score to chase. Will Vanderspar was well supported by several batsmen, most notably Jim Fulton (40) and Felix Hartley-Russell (60), but his innings of 169 not out was an extraordinary effort and enabled us to reach the target with nearly 2 overs to spare.

Our semi final opponents were The Old Wellintonians, a side against whom we have an excellent record. Rain washed out the first game and the replay provided few of the excitements of the previous round with us winning by 57 runs.

And so to the final against our nemesis, The Old Malvernians. The game was played at Wimbledon CC and sadly a rather sub-standard pitch was provided. Whilst the end result was a loss by 108 runs, I felt we did ourselves more justice than that score suggests. We bowled and fielded decently and looked competitive at the start of our innings. However, they had more fire power with two pretty hasty bowlers and on the poor pitch and with deteriorating light, batting became a difficult and rather unpleasant prospect.

One aspect of the final which was a delight was the turn out of our support, not least by a succession on Masters in Charge. Messrs Thackeray, Claughton, Oliphant-Callum and Montgomery were all there, as, indeed, was John Rice, who had, of course, coached all those playing for us.

The campaign, as a whole, was a triumph and no praise is too high for Will Vanderspar and his troops. At the start, I am sure they would have settled for a couple of wins on the way to gaining experience for the future. They grew up quickly.

Lord's

Harrow batted first and set off in a sensible fashion against steady, but not terribly penetrating, Eton bowling. They lost an early wicket, but Rath and Wijeratne batted very intelligently knowing that they had 55 overs to bat, which is now longer than in most Limited Overs games. Eton switched the bowling around regularly and fielded with great enthusiasm. Wijeratne was eventually dismissed for 40 and the Harrow innings lost impetus and this became even more obvious as Rath took rather too long to reach his 100. I felt this was entirely understandable, as

how often in his life is he going to be in a position to get a hundred at Lord's. Harrow's total of 273 in their 55 overs would have, I suspect, pleased them, but it was certainly not unobtainable.

Eton set off in pursuit in a positive frame of mind and Treon immediately looked to be a very good player, who knew his limitations and played to them rather well. Games that ultimately come down to Duckworth/Lewis can cause all sorts of discussions as to the outcome had there been no rain. My view at the time was that Eton may have struggled to get to 273, but, who knows. I am rather shame faced about what happened next! Certain in the knowledge that the downpour that hit Lord's had brought an end to proceedings, I headed home and congratulated myself on the decision as I fought my way down the M4 with my windscreen wipers working overtime. Imagine my surprise when I heard of the Eton victory under the D/L system.

I contacted the Master in Charge who filled me in on events in a most simple manner:- "We restarted needing 38 off 8 overs. Russell was out quickly and Treon inched to his 100. Gordon Lennox whacked 4, 6, 4 before getting out with 1 required. Macdonagh finished it off."

A splendid victory and we should congratulate both centurions as well as the victorious Eton XI.

Finances

I am delighted to report that we have continuity, for now, in the Treasurer's department with Rob Bruce continuing his splendid work for us.

The finances are strong and no alterations are proposed to joining fees or match fees.

The Trustees have received advice from solicitors and investment advisers that we would be well advised to amalgamate the Club Funds and the Cartwright Legacy and this is in the process of being carried out.

I would strongly draw Members' attention (particularly new Members) to our stock of ties and sweaters held by the Treasurer. Please check with other suppliers, but I can guarantee that you will be most pleasantly surprised by how much you will save by purchasing through the Club.

The Eton Rambler Fund

I reported last year that we were considering contributing to the refurbishment of the Upper Club All Weather nets and the work, with our help, has been completed.

There are other ongoing projects being considered, which will be reported on as and when decisions are made.

Club Dinner

Time marches on and our last dinner was at Lord's in 2012. It is the Committee's intention to organise the next dinner in the autumn of 2017.

