



End of Season 1st XI Review - 2014

Captain Fantastic versus the Zombies

A note from the author

This review is dedicated to Sonny Copper who was shamelessly omitted from last year's write up. It is a privilege to be writing this in the light of my near sacking last season for suggesting that a senior member of the squad was a toy throwing cry baby. I'd like to set the record straight and confirm that he has never literally cried on the field of play.

'Who could possibly bet against more success, tons, 5fers, run chases, booze ups and champers on the square next season...' It seems like yesterday that I signed off the 2013 End of Season Review with this prophetic phrase. A year has flown by and what better way to introduce this round up than to hand over to our acclaimed captain, Joseph Charles Riches. He writes:

"What a year it has been and I congratulate myself for making it so enjoyable for the team. My captaincy and individual performance level has rocketed this year and I really admire the way that I have advanced as a cricketer. I managed to hit two centuries and a hat full of fifties this season and thank God I did because you bunch of losers would be floundering in mid table obscurity. I'd like to end with some random pseudo-intellectual words to make myself sound intelligent, here you go: ameliorate, promulgate and cognizant. You can read more about me in the South... (that's enough Ed.) Many thanks to me, Captain Fantastic."



Riches celebrates one of his many achievements this year

The season began with faultless performances against Addiscombe and the Curious Orange, Old Wimbledonians and Streatham and Malborough with the dreaded May weather keeping us from the top spot. There were clear signs at this early stage in the season that both the Squash and Le Petit Pois were going to enjoy bowling together, and love plying their trade they did, very much so. In fact Perry enjoyed bowling with James more than he'd ever bowled with anyone, and this was clear in the way he performed. What's interesting is that Pezza's ability to swing the ball in contrast to Shak hitting the seam complimented... (that's enough of that Ed.).



Weighing up bowling options at Addiscombe

Oi, oi, oi, oi... listen to this...

Perry Colyer. Great performances on the pitch with 265 runs with an average of 24 and two vital knocks against Staines and Laleham and Bank of England leading us to victory. His bowling wasn't bad either, 32 wickets at 12.9 and two 5fers against Staines and Bank proving his all-round credentials. However, forget all that... my God did Pez excel in the bar. I've never met anyone who loves drinking so much but is as bad at it as Perry... he works



hard at it, he drinks regularly, he's committed, he'll drink anything, he drank on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays and every time without fail it ended in varying degrees of narcosis. Whether he was watering the plants through his trousers in O'Neils, watering the scaffolding poles through his shorts in the car park or simply sleeping in the bar, Pez was always back propped up on a Sunday morning nursing a pint of Fosters and some kind of bruise on his face or body. And you'll never guess what... his stories! Perry's tales match his ability to drink - loves telling them, tells them all the time, IS COMMITTED to telling them but they often result in narcosis. What more appropriate way is there to sum up Pez than with this ringing in your ears: '...he popped up in the front seat of the caaarrrrrr, and mum was like 'What are yoouuuuuuu doing heerrreeee?!?'



Gather round, it's time for a Pez classic!

On the pitch side of things, 2014 saw Dan Wood go from strength to strength, and I'm not talking cricket... I'm taking about ludicrous bravado and sledging. Colonel Brum started confidently with a classic 'run you lazy shit' (whilst throwing the ball to Moody just missing the batter's head), to a inspired 'you can't bat with 10 tons of sheep on your back' to the Ashford spinner, to the quite brilliant scene of the Egham batter complaining to the umpire that he was saying 'rude things' to his team mate... who was 'only 15'. Woody's season was topped with these immortal words after being cleaned up by the Ashford seamer: 'enjoy that mate because that's the best ball you're ever going to bowl and the best wicket you're ever going to get.' Woody also received fourteen balls of the century this season resulting in early pressure on Egg's selection policy for 2015. CD is currently requesting special dispensation from the league to field a team of sixteen because Woody is insisting that every bowler that dismissed him has to start for us - and he has their postcodes and contact details so Egg has no excuse!

You can't argue with the batters' contribution to our league win with Woody topping the run getters stats with 639 runs averaging 49 including 127 versus Ashford, Elsdon with 407 at 29, Egg with 523 at 58 including his maiden league ton versus Addiscombe, and Sal with 346 averaging 26.

2014 gifted the 1st XI the opportunity to settle some old scores with Egham CC after they ran away with the Division 4 title last season. Unlike last year we were able to go to their ground and do ourselves justice posting 255-8. Great knocks from Woody (97) and Woody (50) ensured that Egg could declare relatively early giving us 50 odd overs to bowl them out. Although we came up slightly short, they ended on 181 for 8, we out played them from the 1st over and sent a clear signal to the league that we meant business. This game also saw us unleash Russ 'Vaughany' Bryan bouncing their number 7 and 8, making one pretty much cry like a girl and complain that it was too dark. Rusty also did well in the return fixture at Poplar Road clocking up his maiden Ruts league 50. A special mention also needs to go to Russ for a number of reasons: his striking resemblance to ex England skipper Michael Vaughan, for being secretly mad (you don't get under the 'Barnicott-o-meter' that easily), for his psychological battles on the pitch with the oppo, for his personal road safety checks on Shak's mini, for posing on the internet in his ice white underpants and for his quite



brilliant knock of 69 at Wimbledon in the T20, part of a match winning partnership of 85 with Elsdon who smashed a class 62.

Since my return to the Ruts four years ago, our focus and commitment to improving fielding is beginning to yield results. Our catching has benefitted and areas for development are located in these key areas: behind the stumps. Blinders were caught all around the ground during the season and it really helped us dispose of a few teams quickly, especially in bowling five teams out for under 100. Richard Woolland took some absolute cracking catches and is surely the best all round fielder at the club. Fielding also gives everyone the



pleasure of seeing Sonny graze in his natural habitat and of course the unique and delicate quality of his slide, fall and roly-poly. The near perfectly flattened ground he fielded on at mid-on is a definite benefit of this technique and is only second to the spirit level flatness of the sand that I spring from at mid-off.



**Moody has suffered for his art this season
– 18 league catches and 7 stumpings**

Sonny patrolling at mid-on

On the bowling front, things went well with myself (ave 9.15), Le Petit Pois (12.9) and Shak (11.67) all taking over 30 wickets. We were ably support by Sonny and his 23 victims which resulted in our attack being too strong and too varied for most division 3 batting line ups. It is quite incredible that Sal, so fundamental to our success of 2013 bowled only 52 overs, however, this does not reflect the class of his bowling and he will continue to be vital to the team for years to come, if for nothing more than dismissing mad Marlon twice at Egham!

It has been fantastic to watch Richard develop this year – he has grown up before our very eyes and could now easily pass for a 15 year old. Ok, a 14 year old. He came of age in the Addiscombe return fixture at Poplar Road. A quite brilliant spell of off spin bowling was crowned with the prize wicket of their overseas as he attempted to smash him out the ground to bring up his 100 and a cash bonus with Richie taking a smart caught and bowled. Alongside an excellent psychological battle with Egg at first slip, it was a great way to win the match and cement our place at the top of the league. Richard topped off a great season with 26 first team wickets at 12.65 with two 5fers (including his maiden 1st XI 5fer versus Staines and Laleham).

So there we have it, another league season drifts off into the autumnal ether consigned to our memories for ever more. As the winter begins to claim the sunshine and frost nips at our noses on November mornings, this season will seem like a distant but cherished memory - not only because of the cricket played, but also because of our rock solid team spirit, because we go that extra mile for each other, because we celebrate strongly, because of the champagne and the success and because of the ever lasting image of Sonny bouncing on a space hopper through the club house with nothing on. Until next year...

Barney 22/09/14