

# **GREAT MELTON C.C. SENIOR CRICKET REPORT**

## **First Team – Richard Waddell**

Following a winter of some focused practice and a couple of new additions and some returning bodies the first team headed into the season with some optimism of consolidating a position in Division 2 after promotion in the 2019 season.

The seasons that unfolded for all of us was very much different thanks to the effects of COVID 19. The revised league structure didn't prove too kind to the first team in terms of distance to travel with away games at North Runcton, Bradenham and Sandringham and the teams we found ourselves seemed a bit strange given that our A team were playing teams from our division and the first team were playing a couple of sides from the A teams division – never mind, a couple of new grounds and some no pressure cricket was on the cards which was really good to have given it looked like there could be no cricket in 2020.

The first team played 5 games in group 5 of the revised structure, finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> having won 2 games, lost 1 game against group winners Bradenham and having lost 2 games to the rain in which I can say with confidence the first team would have won having been in strong positions in both games.

Statistically across the 5 games the returning Joey Greenslade made the most runs (121 @ 24.2 in 5 innings) closely followed by Sam Mann (107 Runs @ 26.75 in 4 innings) and with ball I topped the wicket chart with 6 Wickets (@ 11 in 16.4 overs) followed by new addition Joe Barker with 5 Wickets (@ 10.6 in 16 overs) notable mentions also to Jim Rice who returned to Saturday cricket in 2020 and he chipped in with 4 wickets and Michael Farmer who played one game returning 3-27.

Overall the season proved enjoyable and the games were played in good spirit, the bring your own teas seemed to work well and could be how teas are managed going forward but hopefully some of the other COVID restrictions will not be in place if we get back to 'normal' in 2021.

I would like to thank those who put in a lot of hard work to ensure we played some cricket in 2020 – Matt, Maxine and Steve for all the COVID organisational works, Mike and Grenville for keeping the pitch and surroundings at Melton park in beautiful condition

Preparations for the 2021 season are underway with winter practice booked and I look forward to hopefully consolidating the first teams position in Division 2 of the NCA.

## **A Team – Simon Woods**

In spite of everything, I found it to be a really enjoyable season. I guess that might have a lot to do with the context in which it was played & the background of being grateful for any cricket at all, but it felt from the captaincy perspective that a lot of the

usual difficulties weren't really there. Arguably more by accident than design we created a new dynamic in the A Team, featuring generally younger, more upwardly mobile cricketers in the side, with greater potential to ultimately push for First Team places in future, which has to be a good thing for the club.

Some other observations about the season:

1. Play Cricket team selection has worked quite well. Most weeks there have been minor issues whereby people have marked themselves as available but then weren't, but as it becomes more embedded players should become more proficient at staying on top of their own availability. One of the main advantages is that it affords a broad view across the teams, allowing more options to be considered to balance the sides. I think we should continue to use it in future.
2. NCB leagues worked well if you ignore the respective opposition both our teams found themselves up against. Most teams in our division were from a higher level whereas in some cases the opposite was true for the First Team. Also, the geographic considerations seemed to fall by the wayside for the Firsts. I liked all aspects that made it a shorter, quicker game: fewer overs (40), arriving ready to play, no teas, no faffing about after the game with fines etc. I even didn't find the lack of showering a problem - perhaps that shows I don't put as much effort in as I always thought I did! The only thing I really missed was a post-match beer or two which I can assure you I fully rectified once I got home. I would be happy for most of these initiatives to continue in future – particularly regarding teas.
3. Running 2 Saturday & 2 Sunday sides seemed to work well & everybody who wanted to play generally got a game. I feel that 3 Saturday teams would be enough in a 'normal' season, if we can offer Sunday cricket to those who miss out on Saturdays. I think we all feel that we might struggle to fill 4 Saturday sides regularly, certainly without diluting the standard of the B Team.
4. Match fees. Bank transfer works best for me & many others now. Slate never really took off although I didn't have a problem with it. I'd like to see us do away with cash entirely for match fees.

I'd like to conclude by stating I'm happy to stand for re-election as A Team Captain for 2021.

### **Sunday Teams (B & C) – Eusha Fawad & Duncan Greenslade**

#### **General Summary**

The unavailability of Town Close meant that B and C Team players enjoyed the rare opportunity to play at Melton Park and a series of Sunday friendly matches was arranged (thanks Chris McKay) to complement the NCB-run mini-league that provided Saturday cricket for 1<sup>st</sup> & A Team players. In total 12 matches were played, resulting in 8 wins and 4 defeats. Some weekends we managed to field 2 Sunday teams and, on other weekends when we were aware availability was poorer, we restricted it to just one fixture with priority given to senior players and older juniors.

Eusha captained for the majority of the matches & his reflections on the season are outlined below as answers to a series of questions:

1. How the 'new' Play-Cricket-centred 'team selection' procedures have gone - **Good** - I think it has been a really efficient way to see who is available and pick who you need based on requirements.
2. How many Saturday/Sunday teams should we run next season (bearing in mind we don't currently have a 2nd pitch, may have 'lost' a few players post Covid & next year many of the youngsters will be tied to school commitments)? - **Four** - I think this is a tough one as you never know with availability until the time. But this season we were able to hold 2 games on Saturdays (Firsts and A's) and on Sunday (B's and C's). If we get another pitch we can probably field 3 teams Saturday and then a team on Sunday. If we don't have a replacement for town close you would have to limit to 2 on a Saturday to alternate home and away plus the Sunday team.
3. If we run more than 2 Saturday sides, any ideas about a 2nd ground? - **Eaton** - If we are talking about location near town close that ground seems ideal and similar technicalities being its owned by a school. Perhaps we could do something here?
4. Do we return to traditional cricket teas? - **No** - Personal opinion that it's an extra load of activity which can be avoided if we all bring personal food. I think if we were playing first class cricket you would do this but as a lower league I think we should skip this to save time.
5. Match fees - what's the easiest way of collecting them going forward? - Multiple ways of collecting cash this season using slate and card machines which are all acceptable in my opinion. Just need a better way of monitoring who has paid and who hasn't as during the end of a game it's hard to follow up with people. Maybe you pay once selected in the team to save hassle or somehow link with play cricket?

I would like to be captain again for next year if no one else is applying as it was enjoyable and I think the B's put a good effort in!

### **Ladies Team -Trish Ellse**

WOW! Where to start? 2020 has seen the face of cricket in a very different light. From Social Distancing cricket practices, with a 'one ball, one skin' policy, to numbers not exceeding 6 players with a coach, to playing cricket games that saw us sanitising after every 6 overs. What a season! We have done it all! But even through this all, we have got to play 7 Ladies games of cricket – that's even more than last year! We have seen more players attending cricket coaching sessions this year – always want more of course! We have seen an increase in the number of players we have been able to field in a specific game, and whilst we at times still do struggle to get a full side, more often than before, we have been encouraged by the number of players being available.

So, what have we taken from this year? Well, we have seen an exceptional overall improvement within our entire ladies' team. The quality of performances throughout

the players has been second to none. The levels of confidence within the team has increased so, and no better place for it to reveal itself than the area of batting. From our batting performances we have seen our senior players really stepping up, taking what they have learnt at their practice sessions, and through focus and attention, have utilised these skills within the game situations. We have seen batting performances improve within individuals as well as some personal bests achieved. Junior players have been seen working on specific skills which have been proved to be vital to their own specific growth within their own game. Our bowling, whilst ever improving, is an area which continues to require attention. Needless to say, we have worked through individual challenges, reviewed players rhythms, trialled and tested various actions, and have continued to encourage players to develop their own styles. An area which we are very aware will improve next season. Fielding has been another highlight, which is so encouraging to see how the team have grown and improved. Our fielding performances have been game saving and game enhancing to say the least and is an area which the team can be very proud of.

The season saw us finish on having played 7 games of which 5 were friendly league games against other clubs, and 2 internal friendly games. The Team lost 4 of those 5 friendly league games but that does not tell the story of the ladies' cricket this season. We entered this season to gain a better understanding of who our players really were within the game of cricket, and where they really fitted into the squad, and this was very much achieved. The actual games have been close with one team having to be on the losing side, and this year that responsibility fell on our ladies team. But, as ever with determination and character, the ladies have played with their hearts, had loads of fun, and enjoyed learning and understanding, and started to think more about the game of cricket. Finishing with a girls & ladies mixed friendly was a great way to end the season and one we hope to do every year.

2021 will be a year for us to bring all these attributes together, allowing for individuals to grow, the team to develop together, and for the overall experience of cricket within the ladies team to excel to the next level.