

Wanstead & Snaresbrook CC 2012 Season Review

2012 will be remembered as one of the most successful in the club's history. The 1st XI won the Essex 1st XI Premier League title, reached the final of the Kingfisher Beer National Cup, were Dukes League Cup runners-up and reached the quarter finals of the of the CCC Cup and the Dukes Essex T20 Competition. The 4th XI won the 3rd XI Division Two while the 2nd XI and 3rd XI finished runners-ups in their divisions. The Ladies XI won their league again.

In the wettest season for the years the 1st XI eventually played 38 competitive matches winning 31 and only losing 7. Arfan Akram, the captain, led from the front scoring nearly 1,300 runs in all competitions and was the 1st XI Premier League's leading runscorer with 750 runs at an average of 53.6. His opening partner, the evergreen John Chamber also scored over 700 league runs and averaged an astonishing 105.3. The bowling attack was impressive all season especially the two left arm spinners, the experienced Mohammed Fayyaz Khan with 33 league wickets and the younger Joe Ellis-Grewal with 28 league wickets. Zain Shazhad also impressed with 22 league wickets.

A highlight of the season was reaching the final of the Kingfisher Beer National Cup. Having won through from the regional group quite easily, the 1st XI then recorded tremendous victories against Bridgwater CC from Somerset in the quarter-finals and then Havant CC from Hampshire in the semi-finals. In both games the younger players excelled with teenager Rehan Hassan scoring two fifties and Joe Ellis-Grewal taking 6-18 in the semi-final. The club took two coaches of spectators to the final in Derby against York CC. But despite a stylish fifty from 18 year-old Kishen Velani, a total of 162 was not enough to trouble York CC, who were worthy winners. However the club can be proud of the fact that eight of the team that played in the final have come through the junior section. Special mention must be made of Kishen Velani, who during the season represented England U19s at the 2012 World Cup in Australia. Massive thanks to Henry Chambers not only for all the scoring he does, but also for all the other support he gives the 1st XI. Also, considering the awful weather, our groundsman, Ian Jordan, did an amazing job ably supported by Nigel Baldwin.

The 2nd XI got their 2012 campaign off to a blistering start with 3 wins in the first 4 games, which took them clear at the top of the league by some distance. This was largely thanks to the electrifying early season form of opening batsman Joe Palmer who chalked up 2 centuries in the first 3 matches. Unfortunately they were unable to maintain their early season form and a lack of availability, along with the loss of a couple of key games to the weather, meant that the chasing pack were eventually able to erode their lead. A late rally towards the end of the season kept Jon Cade's men in with a shout of the title but they were unable to catch Chelmsford 2nd XI who were worthy winners of the division. Notable performers with the bat were Joe Palmer, whose 481 runs (average 37.0) included 2 centuries, and Ismael Dar who also managed 2 centuries in his 373 runs (average 31.1). With the ball it was Aron Nijjar who once again took the plaudits, bagging 34 victims (average 12.3) with his wily left arm, and seamer Haseeb Chaudhri, who had a breakthrough season claiming 26 wickets (average 18.2).

Nigel Baldwin successfully led the 3rd XI to promotion back to the 3rd XI Premier Division. Halfway through the season the team did not look like candidates for promotion but they then won the last four games they played to finish runners-up in their division beyond a very strong Ilford 3rd XI. The batting was led by Mahesh Velani with 328 runs (average 41), who was well supported by David Gibbs, who had his best season for club, and Karan Singh. In the bowling department the majority of the wickets were taken by the spinners Jahansher Akbar (20 wickets), Saurav Prabhakar (13 wickets) and Alan Lord (13 wickets).

The 4th XI topped the table after week one and stayed there for the entire season to win their league. However, Buckhurst Hill 3rd XI and Harlow 3rd XI pushed them all the way, so that they required a win in the last game of the season to secure the title. Tahir Iqbal had a great year with the bat scoring 438 runs (average 43.8) and Barney Mead, Danny Mead, Duncan Southcott, Sanjay Prabhakar, Waseem Qureshi and Inquiyad Chowdhury all made significant batting contributions. Bowling was very solid this season with captain Ron Fitzgerald taking 27 wickets, Dev Patel 23 wickets and Ibtesham Chowdhury 21 wickets.

The 5th XI will look back on the 2012 season as a year of transition. Having consolidated their place in the 4th XI Premier Division with a mid-table finish the year before, hopes of pushing for a fourth promotion in five seasons were high going into the campaign. However, a woeful start, caused by a combination of miserable weather - the Herons didn't bowl a ball until the last weekend in May - and a lack of availability left the side struggling at the wrong end of the table. However, a strong second half of the year - that culminated in them winning four of their last five completed matches - saw the side grab third spot and come within a whisker of gatecrashing the promotion spots. Once again wicket-keeper Andrew Osborn led the way with the bat with 359 runs (average 35.9), while there were also good performances from Jonathan Mudhoo and Abubakar Janjua, who both notched their first centuries during the campaign. The side's player of the year Asif Khan showed tremendous improvement coming back into the team from the 6th XI while as ever a number of young players were given the opportunity to develop. Abdul Gour picked up the bowling award and is developing into a new-ball bowler while Finlay Chesney-Brown, Nicholas Arnold, Afra Malik and Bilal Patel all showed promise at times during the season. If they can build on the form they showed at the end of the season there is plenty to look forward to in 2013. The side's thanks once again go to Pauline Osborn for scoring.

The 6th XI really did have a season of two halves. Having won four and only lost two games in the first half of the season, they then proceeded to lose six and win none of their last nine league games. Poor availability throughout the club in the second half of the season severely impacted the 6th XI. Many players, who would normally have played in the 6th XI, were required to play for higher elevens. For example Danny and Barney Mead, who scored 343 and 352 runs respectively for the 6th XI in the first seven games of the season, then played the rest of the season very successfully in the 4th XI.

Once the soggy season got going, the club's juniors had another good year, but smaller numbers than normal played considerably fewer matches. Our Under 16's reached the semi-final of the Matchplay Trophy with the amazing record of played one - tied one in their Group, which apparently was sufficient to qualify for the knock-out stages! They then won a bowl-out and finally actually won a game to reach the semi-finals, where their season ended.

The Under 13's were unbeaten in the David Bradford Cup to reach the final against our old friends Woodford Wells but the final, unsurprisingly, was rained off (twice). However, they were drawn from the hat to represent Essex in the National competition in which they won through to the national finals at Oakham, where they acquitted themselves well. Our under 11's had an amazing year. They retained their Haydn Davies Cup and the MECB mid-week League titles as well as winning the Met-Essex T20.

Wanstead ladies team had yet another successful year, winning both the Essex indoor winter league and the North London Women's Cricket league. Winning the latter two years in a row without losing a game is a fantastic achievement. Special mention must go to Hannah Newman and Mel Leach, who batted superbly throughout the year. Congratulations must also go to Saba Nasim and Nancy Malik for outstanding performances both with the bat and ball and representing the CCC this year, a first for Wanstead ladies. Special thanks must go to Pauline Osborn for all of her hard work behind the scenes.