

#### 4th XI 2020 season

The shortened 4th XI season made for a rather different selection policy than we had become accustomed to in previous years. On some Saturdays I had more than 20 players to pick from. This was a different headache than I had experienced previously. I often had the unenviable task of calling or texting parents of juniors who would be missing out that week. Although on a personal level this was something that I really didn't enjoy doing, it did show the strength of the junior section and just how many players we would continue to gain in the coming years. This can only be credited to the hard work of Joey and Nick and those coaches who have been teaching and encouraging our juniors in the last few years.

The season started with various inter club friendlies which were pretty competitive followed by a friendly at Swanage before the shortened league season began. Swanage fielded a similarly youthful side to Poole and the game came to a thrilling conclusion with Poole winning by 2 wickets. Swanage only needed a handful of runs in the final over before the last wicket fell.

The league season started with an away fixture at Stalbridge. This side were too strong for our team and we finished second by 8 wickets.

We followed this fixture with a comprehensive win over Chesselbourne by 74 runs.

This was followed by one rained off fixture against Swanage and 3 defeats to Marnhull, Lytchett and Parley. These defeats were largely down to dropped catches and too many mistakes with the bat.

The teams bowling remained strong throughout the season, unfortunately the chances created by the bowlers were too often missed.

The last game of the season came in Poole Park against a young Winton 3rd XI. This game proved to be a rather low scoring thriller. Winton batted first and posted 94 all out with a very consistent bowling performance from Lizzie Williams taking 4for. Although Poole made hard work of the run chase we came out on top by 2 wickets.

We had several juniors who made some good contributions this season. James Bice kept wicket well and showed a watchful yet aggressive style with the bat. Joe Dennis was strong with bat and ball and has an impressive arm in the field. Patrick Reynolds showed some very useful skills with the bat. Billy Michael continued to show promise and both Aleksander and Andrey Mouer both showed skilful batting. Aleksander was unlucky to miss a lot of the season due to a broken hand, sustained in an inter club friendly before the league games started. Aleks would have been likely to play in the 3rd or 2nd XI had this not been the case. Will Hovell has the potential to move up through the teams with another season in the 4th XI. Ollie Gibbs has real potential which I am sure we will be able to harness in the coming season. Shea Lucas is talented with ball and bat and has bags of enthusiasm, played all season with a smile on his face which was fantastic to see.

Lizzie Williams continued to show a real talent with the ball restricting scoring and taking wickets throughout the season. Millie Russell made her debut in adult cricket this year and will surely be one to watch in the not too distant future as she develops her skills and confidence within the junior and adult teams.

I see the 4th XI as a team to develop young players to move onwards through the club and hopefully win matches and trophies in the not too distant future. This season has been a real success, we have given more juniors than I have seen in recent years opportunities and we have encouraged them to take responsibility for key parts of the game which will hopefully allow them to develop their knowledge, skills and experience for the future.

From a captains perspective it has been a real pleasure to captain both the youth and the adult players through what has been a real up and down season. There have been far less strained relationships with other captains within the club and I feel that I am able to help players develop and hopefully play a higher standard in the future. I would love to have the opportunity to continue this next season and hopefully for more seasons after that.

Special thanks must go to Roy Pritchard, who umpired home and away in all weathers. This has had a huge impact on my ability to captain and spend quality time with our young players. He has also been very forthcoming helping and talking cricket with our young players.

I would like the last part of this report to focus on one man in particular. Gary Finlayson has been playing for Poole for approximately the same amount of time as me. He is a friend and a fantastic guy to have around on a Saturday afternoon. Sadly, Gary had a stroke playing an end of season friendly in September and has been in hospital and then a care home since. His recovery is going to be slow and painstaking, and he is unlikely to be able to play cricket with us in the future. I want to take this opportunity to thank him for all he has done whilst playing for Poole and also to send our best wishes from everyone at the cricket club to him and his family at what has been a very difficult time for them all. Gary will always remain a member of PTCC and I will certainly raise a drink to him after every game next year.