

Cricket Season 2001 - Close of Play Summary

1st XI

v. Rendcomb

In cold and damp conditions the School were made to work hard for their runs by some tight Rendcomb bowling after having been put into bat. School 115 for 9 dec. Moseling 25, Sherwood 17, Martin 14 no. In reply the School bowled well and had Rendcomb in difficulties but could not quite finish them off. Rendcomb 51 for 9. Bhaiyat 5 for 15, Moseling 3 for 10.

v. Crypt

Batting first the School got off to a good start and built a substantial total of 179 for 6 dec. McLellan 86, Green 51. Crypt also started their innings well and looked comfortable at 80 for 1. However the School plugged away and kept the pressure on but again were unable to finish off the Crypt innings. Crypt 143 for 8. Whitmore 3 for 31.

v. Worcester VIth Form

The School batted first in a 35 over match. Against some good early bowling they found it difficult to score and lost two early wickets. However Tom Moseling (74 no) carried his bat through the innings and created a low but defendable target of 135 for 6. In reply Worcester looked comfortable and scored freely despite some good bowling and fielding from the School. The School kept working and wickets began to fall after Worcester's key batsman was superbly run out by James White. This was the turning point and the School went on to win by 9 runs in a close finish. Worcester 126. Sherwood 3 for 20.

Following a long layoff for examinations the 1st XI then had two fixtures left to finish their season.

v. Marling

On a good batting wicket the School won the toss and elected to bat, scoring 212 for 4 dec. Green 61, McLellan 57, Whitmore 34. In reply Marling scored steadily and held out for a draw on 187 for 6. Sherwood 3 for 46 was pick of the bowling.

v. Newington College Development XI (Australia)

Unfortunately, persistent rain caused the game to be cancelled without a ball being bowled to leaving us 1-up in the "series" (started six years ago). I am sure Newington will allow this little dig as they hope to return next year with a younger team to put the record straight!

2nd XI

The 2nd XI played two fixtures both drawn. In the first fixture against Rendcomb highlights were a breezy 74 scored by James Williams and the tidy, effective bowling of Ilyas Pandor. The second fixture against Crypt saw the batsmen dominate with Peter Woolley dominating the scoring.

U15 - P6, W4, D1, L1

The 2001 season was highly satisfactory for the U15s. Apart from losing in the first round of the County Cup and a high scoring draw at Pates, the team won all their matches and beat all their major rivals.

The season opened at Crypt in a typically low scoring affair for the time of year. The

rustiness of the Crypt batting enabled swift progress through their innings. As was to be the pattern in games ahead, captain James Kenny led from the front with tight bowling, which yielded 4 wickets, and Ed Quigley provided the stability for the Tommies innings with 20. A modest target of 56 was overhauled with only 3 wickets to spare.

Against Bournside in the 30 overs County Cup Competition, we were batted out of the game at home by a century from the county captain, which provided the lion's share of the improbable total of 188-1. Despite exciting front foot batting from Tim Dodwell in an unbeaten 52 and another well-constructed innings by Quigley of 42, we were never in the chase and finished on 145-6.

Travelling to Marling without the injured Quigley, whose broken hand threatened to keep him out for the rest of the-season, technical deficiencies in the - batting were exposed by an uneven pitch. Only James Martin played straight enough to reach double figures, and 52 all out seemed indefensibly low. Nevertheless, Kenny was supported well by the hostility of Dodwell and the accuracy of Salim Veshmia, and Marling were fired out for 43.

There were no problems with the pitch at Archdeacon Meadow as we took on King's on the county wicket. As expected King's were able to exploit the fast and even surface and accumulated 119-5, though intelligent spin bowling from Jonathan Dickie helped to peg them back at the end. Kenny finally found his form with the bat and his unbeaten 49 was the major contribution to an exciting last over victory.

At Pates only Veshmia took wickets as the home side declared on 194-2. This total was too large to get but did not allow enough time to bowl Tommies out. The game petered out with us on 107-4, again Kenny and Martin contributing most heavily.

The last game of the season was in the ever-pleasant setting of Rendcomb, and proved an easy victory with a good team performance in the field. Each of the six bowlers took at least one wicket to dismiss Rendcomb for 72. With Quigley back in the team, victory was easily achieved for the loss of only one wicket.

There were good performances from the whole team throughout the season. Dexter Bradley deputised for Quigley behind the stumps ably enough to retain that position for the final game. The fielding, particularly the close catching, was - excellent. The competitive and authoritative captaincy of James Kenny created a strong team spirit that helped in large measure towards the U15's success.

U14 - P8, W0, D1, L7

A difficult and disappointing season for the U14 team. There is plenty of ability but consistency is needed in performance. If the side batted well, bowling and fielding were poor, and vice versa. However the large squad worked hard and trained well throughout the season and remain upbeat. There's always next year!

U13 - P9, W3, D3, L3

The squad has demonstrated its strengths to good effect, developing individual skills and furthering an excellent team spirit which all augers well for the future. Two weak areas remain - a certain naiveté in the field (eg ptimistically keeping a slip and leg slip with only ten fielders on the field during the closing overs of a 20 over game against Beaufort) and the large number of wides conceded by all bowlers as they strived to make something happen every ball (they need to learn that patience is a critical weapon in the bowler's art).

This year the team again won through to the City Challenge Cup final against St Peters. Put into bat on a damp track, runs were hard to come by and with St Peter's coach setting his team's fields (!), Rich's only managed to post a total of 99-3 (Roberts 37 no, Erskine 30). Some early tight bowling began to make the Rich's total look as though it would be enough but too many wides and a crucial dropped catch let St Peters off the hook and they won by a 7-wicket margin.

Some outstanding performances include:

Laurie Roberts 50 no v Pates, 55 no v Oxstalls (and a batting average of 73)

Andrew Erskine 60 no v Oxstalls

Peter Blencowe 5 wickets for 10 runs v Beaufort

Lewis Barnard 5 wickets for 4 runs v Rendcomb

Cieran Conway who took on successfully new roles of wicket-keeper and opening bat.

U12 - P6, W4, L2

A lack of continuity in the fixture list, plus examinations and unpredictable weather caused disruption for the team. However they reached the Gloucester City Rotary Cup Final, beating Churchdown, plus Oxstalls on the way. In the final they played Crypt and won a close match on the last ball. A 'B' team played Pates, losing, but displaying lots of potential. Overall the team, appears very promising with key players Alex Winter and Andrew Downes displaying excellent quality. Congratulations to Alex Winter who has consistently represented Wales at U12 level.

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Nostalgia ain't what it used to be – neither is school cricket at Tommies! Or at any state funded school for that matter. Back in the 'good old days' (twenty five years ago if you really want to know!) the summer term's sporting activities were dominated by the extensive cricket fixtures – all games played to time, the art of grafting out a solid knock honed to perfection, long stints in the field requiring concentration and stamina with ample opportunity for slower bowlers to develop their beguiling craft of flight and spin. We had a groundsman who lovingly tended two – I say again – two full squares, one for Junior and one for Senior fixtures. Three or four rolled and cut strips he also provided on Games afternoons for those hopeful Bradmans and Lakers whose skill levels kept them out of serious contention for the year team places. Extensive fixture lists took us all over the county - to represent STRS at cricket was something extra special.

Apart from rare fixtures away to those green oases in the desert of school cricket – the private schools – we now ask our budding test stars to play the lottery version of our once noble game, the '20 over bash', on a single strip of plastic carpet, tacked out between the ruts, divots and often ankle-high grass of the football pitches. Our senior school cricket relies heavily on players whose development is substantially afforded by local clubs, and for that we must be thankful. The senior fixture list is heavily curtailed by the ever-lengthening exam season and demands on individuals to get out and earn money to support their further studies make consistency of team selection a nightmare. Sadly I feel there is little we can do to alleviate this. The junior sides however are a different story. We need to pamper them more with improved playing and practice facilities, provide dedicated and specialist coaching support focused on the selected teams and individuals within the teams, establish close links and working partnerships with local clubs. It wouldn't take much to set the ball rolling – what we have and what we do now given the paucity of time and lack of proper resources for the game is a miracle in itself. How much more could we achieve with the right framework and financial support?

