

The 2005 Season – Scorer's Review

The 2005 season - well where do I start? This year we had a good and warm, at times very hot summer, and out of just three cancelled games, only one (Kingsclere at home), was to do with the weather. That didn't stop myself, My dad, Jeremy and my brother in law traveling up to Lord's that day, being cramped into a totally full train and still stopping at all stations between Reading and Paddington on a miserable wet Sunday. Then when we did see some play (and it wasn't much!) we saw the two old Aussie fogies, Warne and McGrath, rip through England the batting like nothing had changed. But we all know what happened next don't we?

Result wise it was a fairly good season, as we lost only three of our eighteen matches all of which were fairly heavy defeats. Of the seven matches we drew we were on top in three of them.

We started the season fairly early for us with a match Vs Whitchurch at home on 1st May. Myself and my dad played for Whitchurch as they only had eight players at the time. In the game itself, Whitchurch ended up holding on to a draw at 109 for 7 with my dad batting at number 5 (in his first match since the 2003 season), but he didn't trouble the scorer (me!) while batting for 6 minutes. I didn't bat but was due next in at the low position of number 10 chasing 122 to win. Gary and Les put on 64 for the fourth wicket for Aldermaston, which remained the best for the fourth wicket throughout out the season. Jeremy scored his highest ever score of 3 not out!! His scoring shots were a 2 and a 1. Neither could have been near me as he would have been stranded in the middle of the pitch, amazed that my throw was 2 miles out and would have totally lost his bearings looking to see where the ball went and then to be run out by a mile! (Sorry Jez).

We won our next two matches at Pangbourne College and Wargrave, with a spare weekend in between the matches, quite easily, both matches were limited overs, 35 overs a-side.

The first match against Pangbourne at Pangbourne College we won by five wickets with three overs left. I was struggling a bit changing the score board (had to pull a rope to change the numbers) and sitting so high up didn't help. We chased down a target of 128, thanks mainly to Gary (35) and Les (30). If I remember right, even though Jeremy wasn't playing he did a spot of umpiring before he had to leave (*the opposition had gone to buy the tea and were a little short on numbers, having batted first on the understanding that otherwise we wouldn't have had anything for tea – Jeremy*) and picked me up later on that evening.

Wargrave away. The match was over at 6.28pm a time which on a 'normal' day would have been before the start of the last 20 overs, but again this was 35 over a side and we won with 16 overs left, our total being 144 for 2 in only 19 overs, thanks to Sayeed's quick-fire 55 in only 36 minutes (9 fours and 1 six) and a steady but quick batting from Gary (46 not out, 6 fours) and Ed (32 not out, 6 fours) who put on the unbeaten 70 for us to win by 8 wickets.

Our last match of the month brought a draw against Purley at home. We scored 160 all out, thanks to a last wicket stand of 37 between Gavin and Phil in 29 Minutes, which ended just before the scheduled tea break of 5pm, Phil scored the amazing figure of 0 not out! Purley finished on 105 for 7, and extras top-scored in both innings.

The month of June wasn't a good month for us in terms of matches and results. Firstly our match at Englefield was called off. We must have hoped our second match was called off also, after what happened at Bradfield. Our hosts set a reasonable target of 161, in which I dived and fielded the first ball of the match and *just* stopped it from going for four (didn't matter if it did in the end). Naveed took 5 wickets.

After the whirlwind start from Sayeed and Naveed (it gets stronger later in the season!) we ended up on 74 all out with Jeremy's "we lost the ashes" Aussie friend Chris doing some scoring for us, as me and Jeremy were batting together at one stage.

Our next scheduled match was away match against Purley, but this was cancelled, although I'm sure if they'd seen our batting the previous week, they'd have been queuing up to play against us!

Our final match of June was against Woolhampton at home, and yet again do we wish this game was cancelled! Woolhampton batted first and scored a healthy 226 for 5 in only 40 overs thanks mainly to their number three left-handed batsmen Nicholls who scored 80. We were close to saving the match and getting a well earned draw at 100 for 8 with only 4 overs left, but six balls later we had lost by a the huge margin of 126 runs! Thank god it was the end of June, otherwise what else would have happened?

After our last month, July couldn't be much worse and luckily for us it wasn't as we went on our 2nd unbeaten run of 4 matches.

Our first match this month was the visit of Yattendon to Wasing Park. We scored 206 for 8, mainly thanks to extras and especially wides (34 out of 40 extras, and I had run out of space in the 'Wides' column in the scorebook!) The batting performances were down to Dave Jolliffe (45) and Mark (33) who put on 87 for the 7th Wicket, Sayeed did his usual turn as opener, with a quick-fire 34. When Yattendon batted, they got off to a slow but steady start and were 50 without loss at the start of the last 20 overs. Time to bring back Sayeed!! Yattendon collapsed from 151 for 2, when their opener and top scorer Cooper (73) was out, to 173 for 9 in no time at all – the last 8 overs in fact. Sayeed bowled a hostile second spell, in which he returned the amazing figures of 5-0-24-7 and in total 12-2-36-7. Unfortunately for us, Yattendon skipper Maskell played out the last over of the match from Les out to gain a draw for our visitors and to deny us what would have been an incredible victory.

Our first visit to Ashford Hill was on a boiling hot day. We batted first and Craig was out scoring Sayeed - amazing! In fact he did in the end, 25 to Sayeed 19. We ended up 150 all out just before tea time with Mark Scoring a patient unbeaten 39. At tea time I got a shock

of my life, as one of the ladies doing the tea was an old work colleague who I hadn't seen for years, Jenny from my first work place, before there had to lay me off due to my ill health.

For the rest of that afternoon I didn't care if we won or lost, just ask Jeremy, seeing Jenny made my day/weekend. For the record, and for the second match in a row we couldn't quite finish off our opposition as Ashford Hill made 110 for 7 with Sayeed taking another 4 wickets in a similar finish to the previous week – his second spell bringing a flurry of late wickets.

The next match at home versus Mortimer, was a bit complicated. We won the toss and batted against ten men, which included 7 year old Harry Bobby, and scored a highly impressive 265 for 8 in 41 overs, thanks mainly to Mark (66 not out) and David Bardwell (39), who put on 114 for the seventh wicket. Naveed scored 33, Craig chipped in with a steady 31 as opener and Barry made mince meat of Bobby (Senior)'s last over, scoring 16 of his 18 unbeaten runs off the over, in an unbroken ninth wicket partnership of 25 with Mark in only 8 minutes.

Mortimer only managed 118 for 8, when the official match ended, but it was decided to continue for a few more minutes to let Harry, due in last at number 10, have a bat and to score a run. Bobby (Senior) was the main stay of Mortimer innings with 69, which included 15 fours.

Our next scheduled match was Vs Kingsclere, but was the one which was cancelled due to an "Australia" rain dance, but it cleared up enough at Lord's if not Aldermaston, for the Aussies to win the First Test match, and their only Test match of the summer. It was my brother in law's first visit to a cricket match, and he as many others saw the losing part of the Ashes. Are we still allowed to say we were part of the winning Ashes summer? Absolutely we are – we were just leading Australia into a false sense of security. Roll on Winter 2006, when England prove that 2005 was no fluke - Australia 0 England 5 in 2006/7!

Sunday 31st July was the date of our next match, and the day hadn't started well for me as Bobby our 14-year old border collie died during the night. That wasn't a good start to the day, and then I was without our score book, as I left it at the clubhouse at the end of the Mortimer game, knowing I'd be elsewhere the following week (still got soaked with the same weather though) and ended up scoring from our opponent's book, Bucklebury.

Bucklebury's ground and tiny pavilion seemed miles from the car park and the actual ground was part of the school. The actual ground was small, even I could have scored a four (with a few over-throws).

The match itself was 35 overs aside, with Mike winning the toss and putting Bucklebury in. They were going quite well 75 for 2, when Mike and one of Sayeed's mates, Mohamed Ahtsham, ran out Bucklebury opener and top scorer Ball for 38, triggering a collapse even the England Cricket team would struggle to match, going from 75for-2 to 89 for 4 and 94 for-6 to 94 all out with more than 11 overs left. Gary was the main destroyer with 4 for 15

off of his 4.3 overs. The other wicket takers were Sayeed and Mark, both taking 2 wickets a piece, and Les, the only over he bowled being a wicket maiden.

Tea was taken at the early time of 4.05pm, with the food being laid out on the tables beside the pavilion before the start of the match.

We won the match by 6 wickets, as we only had ten players, in 48 minutes and just 15 overs, mainly thanks to Gary who scored a steady 30 not out, and Sayeed, whose quick-fire 30 not out batting at number five, included 5 fours and 1 six, in just ten minutes. Sayeed scored all the runs in the unbeaten partnership he had with Gary for the fourth wicket. The match was over by 5.19pm, but luckily I didn't have to wait long for Jeremy to pick me up. So after a bad start to the day it turned out not too bad considering what happened over night..

On to another month, August and another warm Sunday. Our first match of the month was against Kingsclere. With our home match against Kingsclere cancelled due to the weather in Aldermaston (Not London though), two weeks before this was our first and only meeting of the season. I arrived a few minutes late and missed the first over bowled by Sayeed, two wides from the first two balls. The Kingsclere Captain Stuart Liddett was doing the doing the scoring,. The match was a 40 overs aside with 4 bowlers and a maximum of 10 overs per bowler. I made a mistake when we were bowling. I did mention it during the innings but maybe should have been said something before the event happen. At the start of the 34over, Gary started his 11th over, which didn't please Stuart a lot especially as Gary took a wicket with his 3 ball of an over that shouldn't have happen! In the end didn't really matter as we got thrashed, and besides, everyone seemed to still be in a cheerful mood after England's thrilling series-leveling 2-run win at Edgbaston earlier in the day.

Kingsclere scored 202 for 4 in their innings and we never got out of the starting block and suffered our third and final loss of the season, ending on 106 all out with over 11 overs left. Enough said, next match.

Our next match was on Sunday 14th August, against Wargrave at home, a old fogie's 30th birthday (Me!). Firstly I got to say thanks to Jeremy for my card/badge, big enough just in case I forget my age as I am getting old! Secondly thanks to Jackie and Mike for the cake, went down a treat. As soon as it was put down on the table it was going and I had to get in fast or lose out on my own cake.

Match details. Wargrave only had 9 players, but some of our players took it in turns to field for them. Mike won the toss and put them in, and they ended up with a creditable total of 146 in 37 overs, ending just before the scheduled tea break. The Sharma brothers were the main stay of the innings, putting on 71 for the second wicket, with T.Sharma scoring 21 and A.Sharma scoring 84 including 11 fours and 4 sixes. Sayeed with 5 wickets and Les with 3 were our only wicket takers.

In our innings, Sayeed scored 32, before Gary (32 not) and Mark (41 not) took us home with a unbroken partnership of 83 to make it the double over Wargave, again by 8 wickets

as we did at Wargrave in May. Extras also contributed 36, with wides and no-balls making up 28 of the 36 runs.

On to our next match, our first Visit to Ramsdell which turned out to be yet another hot day - I might be waiting to score my first run for the club but I don't mind waiting if weather going to be hot as it was at times in 2005.

Aldermaston batted first on a flat wicket and Me and Jeremy were struggling doing the scoring and keeping up with scoring rate, as Sayeed and Naveed took Ramsdell bowlers to the cleaners. Cricket balls were racing to and over the boundary more times than me and Jeremy wished to remember, but unfortunately didn't come towards Aldermaston crowd version of the Barmy army. A few (actually, five) of Jeremy's Genesis Sci-fi club members decided to pop over for an afternoon's entertainment, mainly because one of them used to live in Ramsdell, and could probably consider himself a local. They've still got a lot to learn though, not one of them arrived dressed as the pink panther and they certainly have to be trained not to cheer when the opposition scores a boundary.

Back to the match, Our first wicket fell at 110 after only 13.2 overs, Sayeed out for 64 which included 13 fours and a six, and we were certainly well set. We ended up on 250 for 4 after only 35 overs with Naveed scoring 75 (7 fours and 6 sixes). Gary continued the run feast with 54 not out at number three.

Ramsdell started well, but not as fast as we did, but did put on a century partnership for the first wicket, the hundred coming up in the 24th over. Ramsdell's first wicket also fell on 110, Andrews for 74. Mike ended up using part time bowlers while changing the bowlers around Ramsdell finishing up on 181 for 4 after 35 overs, with Chambers (49) and Bradley (41) being the main run scorers.

Our last match in August was against Pangbourne this time at home. After last week's events and a blistering opening stand from Sayeed and Naveed, we didn't know what to expect especially after Mike won the toss and decided to bat. This time the opening partnership between Sayeed and Naveed wasn't as big but just as quick-88 in 50 minutes. This week the top three, Sayeed (49), Naveed (41) and Gary (49) were again the main stays of the batting after all scoring half centuries last week. Aldermaston ended up 6 runs fewer than last week from the same number of overs scoring 244 for 6 in 35 overs when Mike decided to declare seven minutes early and probably a couple of overs as well.

As in the previous game the match ended up in a dull draw, with Pangbourne closing on 149 for 5 in 40 overs, thanks mainly to opener Houldey with 65 and Hayes-Jones, 48 not out. Charlie Sinton took 3 for 45 off 14 overs with his leg spin in what turned out to be his only outing of the season for us.

Our first match of September and what turned out to be extended last month, started with revenge in the mind with our first match of the month being against Bradfield. At Wasing Park. We lost the toss and Bradfield decided to bat, and ended up on 162 for 8 thanks mainly to a late flurry of runs in the last 6 overs.

When we batted we had our usual quick start from Sayeed and Naveed, and in the end Gary (37) and Ed (50) took us over the winning line with a unbroken partnership of 92, and won by 8 wickets with 9 overs left. Revenge was sweet!!!

Our last scheduled match was the return against Ashford Hill, this time at home. Ashford Hill batted first and scored 163 for 9, and we bowled 47 overs, no wonder I felt tired after all that walking down to fine leg 24 times! Bayliss was the many scorer with 69 and Mark finally got some deserved success, taking 4 for 51 in 15 overs. When we batted we were going along nicely with 78 needed off the last 20 overs, and with 7 wickets left. We then lost 4 wickets for 20 runs and when Jeremy went into bat for the last 2 overs we needed 12 to win. But our skipper decided to shut up shop and secure a draw instead. We ended up 8 runs short of a win on 156 for 8 with myself padded up ready to be a hero as last man.

Now, this part of the report that shouldn't be here, in fact the whole report shouldn't be here as I only thought about it during our Livingston matches.

Livingston, our Scottish visitors, come down for a weekend two-match tour, in which our ex-player Graham Whitehouse was captain for the visitors on both days. Both matches were 40 overs a side games and started at 12.30pm (by the time you got up it was time to go out!)

On the Saturday, Livingston won the toss and put Aldermaston in probably not a good move. The first wicket fell at 37, with Sayeed out for 28 in the eighth over, and next in was our vice captain Gary. What we saw next was class batting. After an hour and 25 minutes, 140 runs and 24.2 overs later, Mr Whitehouse himself bowled Craig, who scored a well earned 42, to leave us on 177 for 2 after 32 overs. In the last 8 overs we lost our way a bit after such a big partnership but still ended up on 212 for 7 after 40 overs, with Gary making 99, before walking to an appeal for a catch behind down the leg side off Paul "Sledge" Hammersley.

Livingston reply got off to slow and stuttering start, and were struggling on only 18 for 2 after 10 overs. After our two opening bowlers had finished their spells and with it being a 40 over match, Mike decided to bring on some part-time bowlers (including himself) and in the end Livingston finished on 192 for 9 with "Sledge" making a quick fire 24 not out to reduce our winning margin to 20 runs.

On the Sunday, we won the toss and put Livingston in. Did it effect their batting – going in first? In fact if anything it made them go slower (maybe the climate change affected them), and were this time a mighty 14 for 2 after 10 overs. Livingston rallied to finally make 158 for 4 in their 40 overs with their opener Hopkins batting all the way through the innings to finish on 79 not out.

When we batted Sayeed was employing his "I am not running threes" rule, and we lost Craig early on to a run out. But we recovered, and when the score was 115 for 2 and we

only needed 44 to win, Mike told me to put some pads on as I was going in ahead of the skipper to try to score my first run for the club. Then with about 15 runs needed I was promoted from number 11 at the start of the innings to number 7 (when we needed 44 to win), to next in at number 6!! Kevin Peitersen eat your heart out, another South African on his way!! OK, the fact that I was born in Basingstoke Hampshire, England (even though my parents are South African as everyone knows at the club) and that I didn't actually bat and still waiting to score my first ever runs for Aldermaston are all minor details! I am still suffering from vertigo, to this very day from being so high in the batting order. Les ruined my day by hitting the last two balls for a four then a single as we won by 7 wickets with 13 overs left. That was it, match and season over, next stop – the pub.

Finally I'd like to say thanks to a few people as without their help, we wouldn't have a club. Firstly, to Jeremy and my dad for lifts to and from the matches this season - if I didn't have them, I'd hate to see what scorebook and averages would be like!. Secondly to all the tea ladies: Jackie, Katie, Christine, Helen and anyone else who was involved in making the teas. The food is always an incentive for wanting to do the scoring!

Next, to Mike for picking me during the season (I will score a run soon, Skip), and finally to Les for scoring those 5 runs in our last match of the season and making me wait yet another season to score my first run for the club.

Keith Hogg
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