

Chairman's Report – Oakworth Cricket Club AGM 2018

On the field the 2017 season once again proved to be a challenging one. Not only for ourselves but also for the game of cricket itself.

With playing numbers reduced throughout the sport, OCC were not alone in struggling to put 11 players out per team, every week. In all 38 matches were conceded in the Craven League, 2 of those by OCC, with Riddlesden withdrawing their 1st team from division 1 altogether mid-season.

It's fair to say that Division 1 was the most competitive division it has been for many years with several teams all vying for top spot. Unfortunately, it became apparent after a narrow 1 wicket loss at Embsay at that start of the second half, we would not be in the mix. The league table shows we finished 1 place above relegation, albeit only 12 points separating us from the eventual champions Ingrow St Johns. Positives to be taken from the season, Joel Gallagher, our leading run scorer with his personal best season in the 1st team, with leading wicket taker being Richard Cavender. The emergence of Under 15 Bilaal Khan, a regular for 2/3rds of the season and Lucas Keslinke behind the stumps when deputising for our regular Jack Cawood, valuable experience to take into 2018.

Joel takes over the reigns once again for 2018 and with the support of his vice-captain Richard, I'm sure if they show the same determination to succeed individually, the team will collectively follow.

The 3rd Team moved home in 2017, taking up residence at Haworth West End with Neil Bishop in charge of his merry men and kids. Tuesday night selection became a starting point for the 3rds, usually finishing on Friday night, or even Saturday lunchtime, however, bar those 2 conceded games, fixtures were fulfilled with great enthusiasm and endeavour. On the 8th July, as a result of Riddlesden withdrawing their 1st team, it left our 1st team with a free week. Our 3rds were away at Cononley and I have the great pleasure of going to watch and witness 1st hand the support provided by the merry men to the kids, the talent on show from 12/13 & 14 year olds and more importantly a 10 wicket win by OCC, celebrated like they had won the league, absolutely brilliant, and I was so proud to be there to witness it.

The willingness and support that surrounded Neil and his young troops, and the effort put in by him to give kids a game of cricket cannot go without my personal thanks. It is with regret that Neil has decided, with Oliver, to move away from OCC and I wish him all the best. I hope that this will not deter those who assisted Neil in 2017 from continuing the work with the juniors as our next wave enter senior cricket.

The 2nd team found themselves without a captain, as Drew Duffy was required to open the batting in the 1st team, so Alan Fothergill assumed the role of on field captain, latterly to be done by Steve Powell. A tough season was instore for the 2nds with juniors playing Division 5 cricket in 2016 now having to step up and play against 1st teams in Division 2. 17 defeats from the 17 games played does not tell the full story. A couple of games went against them whereby a slice of luck, or a favourable decision would have made all the difference.

I was pleased to receive an email from our league fixture secretary, Trevor Coe, following a game he umpired at Ingrow St Johns, it read:-

I would just like to place on record what a pleasure it was to umpire the 2nds game at Ingrow St John's. 4 adults and 6 under 14's looked as though they were going to suffer another bruising defeat when ISJ II won the toss. Not a bit of it, the bowlers stuck to their task despite one or two taking a bit of punishment. I think ISJ were surprised to be restricted to 224. Alan Fothergill marshalled his troops superbly, giving them all chance to get involved. The other three gents also gave tremendous amounts of encouragement.

When Lucas and Bilaal were together the Saints were getting worried and as usual they starting to have three or four captains getting involved. Ken Moore my fellow umpire soon put a stop to that!!. Both batted really well and it was a shame when both were out close together. One more batter or even one more player may have made a lot of difference,

If you can keep these lads together, the experience of Saturday will keep them in good stead, I believe in two years' time you will have a really good side.

So, the season finished with us bottom of the league and relegated to Division 3, which we have to take as a positive for the young kids who will now be a year older, more experienced and competing in a division they can compete.

My thanks go to Alan, Steve and the 33 other players who pulled their whites on throughout the season to fulfil the fixtures to ensure the 3rd team could play their games also.

Our junior section continues to produce kids to fill up the senior teams and a big thankyou to all the junior coaches who give their time to this cause. If anybody wishes to support and help with the juniors in 2018, they will be more than gladly received.

OCC had a new groundsman in 2017, Steve Powell, who worked extremely hard to prepare the ground for the many games played by the various teams and I think I speak for all when I say thank you Steve.

Off the field the training nets were repaired, with thanks to David and Andrew Keslinke for this, let's hope we can put them to good use on a Tuesday night this year! The new LED Scoreboard was installed, which I think you will all agree looks fantastic, and the club took the decision to name this in memory of Simon Howell.

As always, my thanks go to the members of the committee for their support and commitment to the club, spending long summer evenings and cold winter nights looking for ways to make our club more successful and enjoyable for all. The Tuesday club for their odd jobs around the place. The volunteers who give up their time to help around the club, cleaning, working the bar, ensuring the club is "staffed" for events being held at our club and Paul carter for his work in ensuring the bar is stocked for all to enjoy.

A final note of thanks. Some of you may not be aware, but our treasurer of 28 years, Tom Shields, has decided to call it a day. I would like to express my gratitude on behalf of the club for the time and effort he has put in over the years.

So, what for 2018, more of the same, probably isn't enough. We need to move forward, improve, look after the kids. After all it's their futures and in turn Oakworths future.

Michael Scarborough
Chairman