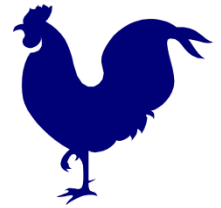


# Review of the 2011 Season

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## 1<sup>st</sup> XI

2011 brought rich rewards for Shenfield CC 1st XI, a well earned and welcome promotion back to the Premier League following an 8 year absence, was complemented with picking up the league cup silverware in a thrilling win over Upminster in the final.

A settled squad welcomed the addition of ex Essex staffer Jon Powell in April to bolster the middle order and ambitions began to rise with 4 wins in the first 5 50/50 games. The teams ability to play consistently attacking and aggressive cricket meant that no games were drawn and several there were several tight finishes.

Significant tight victories included the game at Upminster, where we chased 300 to win 7 wickets down in the last over, with an excellent 105 from Elliot Richtor the highlight. A well built innings from Tom Austin (62\*) supported by the player of the season, Matt Salisbury (71\*) against Chingford saw us home chasing 288 and the last over bowling out of Fives with only 3 runs to spare showed real mettle. However, the moment of the league season arrived in the penultimate game of the season at Hadleigh as Arshad Ali's monstrous clout over long on secured promotion, much to the delight of players and travelling supporters alike.

The league cup run gathered momentum with a bowl out victory over Woodford Wells, leading to a semi final date with Chelmsford. The trip to Chelmer Park bought one of the best and most complete bowling and fielding performances of the year to dismiss the opposition for just 79. Austin 2/7 and Salisbury 2/24 started the rot and we comfortably defended a below par score of 184 (the only sizeable contribution from Kliver, with 54).

The final versus Upminster couldn't have gone better, with the skippers season long plea for batters to go on after getting a start, (fairly rich considering his numbers) finally answered. Openers Richtor (128) and Powell (107) played superbly to set a club record 262 stand for the 1st wicket on our way to 269/1 off 40 overs. Scoreboard pressure meant regular Upminster wickets falling to some tight bowling and athletic fielding (D Wright was also on the field) and despite some late resistance the silverware was in the bag.

Contributions from lots of individuals at different times were the features of the season. Powell and Richtor led the way with the bat scoring over 700 runs each in both competitions. The club wish both well as they head to Sydney this autumn, to cut timber and grass respectively, compare hairstyles and generally ponce about. Five bowlers topped 20 wickets, the evergreen Ali with 44 including 7/56 at Gidea Park heading the bowling lists again, followed by the efforts of Mike Hindley who enjoyed his most successful season of medium pace half volleys / full bangers to bag 27 wickets. The side's mix of experience and exciting youth looks forward to the challenges of premier league cricket in 2012.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> XI

2011 was always going to be a tough season for the second XI. As the great football managers have always said, it's not winning the league that's tough, it's improving the following year to win it again, and so it proved. After the record points haul to win the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI Premier League in 2010 under the leadership of Pete "Guru" Rider, expectations were extremely high when Martin Allen took over the reins at the start of the year.

We welcomed back Australian overseas Daniel Langford for his second, and probably last, season at Shenfield, but unfortunately lost a number of players before the cricket even began. The aforementioned Rider was still recovering from ankle surgery and Robert Wickes and James Kliber had moved, making travelling difficult.

The most notable absentee was James Salisbury, who had taken 50 wickets the previous season. He had developed a number of injuries and although he turned out in the first game away at Fives and Heronians as a favour to the captain he was clearly not fit, and unfortunately his condition worsened so much that he would take no part in the season, cutting a frustrated figure on the sidelines.

We made a good start to the year against Fives, bowling the hosts out for 121 thanks to 3-26 from Nathan Joyner and two each for Tom Austin and Lee Deller. Austin also contributed with the bat, a well-made 74 guiding the side home after a little wobble. A home game against Ilford the following week brought us back down to earth. Chasing 143 to win, thanks mainly to Ollie Bailey's 4-60, we were dismissed for just 96 thanks to some ill-judged shots and dubious umpiring decisions. Not only was this a demoralising defeat, it also proved to be the catalyst for Lee Deller's decision to retire from league cricket. A combination of health issues, work commitments and poor LBWs brought an end to a brilliant career and left Allen with a deficit to fill with both bat and ball, something of an impossible task.

Wanstead away was a better performance all round, but also served as an indicator of things to come. Chasing 228 for victory, Allen and Langford shared a second-wicket stand of over 130 to put victory in sight, leaving Austin, Chris Chapman and Phil Everitt to finish the game off.

Inconsistency was to prove the side's undoing throughout the season, along with injuries and the lack of stability in availability. A losing draw away at Chelmsford, followed by a last-ball defeat to Upminster did nothing for the side's spirits, and a bad injury to last season's late acquisition Phil Everitt did nothing to raise them. Phil has proved to be a valuable member of the side, combining genuine pace with a good eye and superb commitment in the field, which unfortunately led to his downfall in the loss to Woodford Wells. Chasing the ball down the legendary Shenfield hill, he threw himself towards the boundary but landed awkwardly on his shoulder. A displaced collarbone would spell the end of his afternoon and a curtailment of his season for at least 8 weeks leaving yet another gap to plug.

It had been a tough few weeks, but one positive was the form of Langford. Used more as a batsman he had found some rhythm and began to score valuable runs. A gritty 80 against Chelmsford followed by 107 against Upminster and 77 against Woodford Wells proved his credentials as a top order batter and he made the number 3 spot his for the rest of the year. Moving towards the halfway stage we were

languishing near the foot of the table, but a timely win at Hainault and Clayhall eased relegation concerns. Defending 197 thanks to runs from Austin (67) and Rider (46), Hainault were dismissed for just 134. This time it was the two off-spinners that did the damage, Langford taking 3-42, and 15 year-old Alex Rickenbach, grabbing an excellent 2-15.

The visit of Brentwood marked the halfway point of the season and unfortunately it was the visitors who took the spoils on this occasion. The visitors amassed 247, Langford and Bailey fighting back with four wickets each, but it proved to be too many for the home side, as they were dismissed for 217, Allen (37) and Garry Sapsford (34) the top scorers.

An impressive bowling performance secured a double over Fives and Heronians. Once again it was spin that did the damage, Bailey (4-52) and Langford (5-82) doing the damage on yet another slow turner at the SCG. An abandonment followed by a heavy defeat at Upminster pushed us down the table yet again, adding extra importance to the trip to Ilford. Yet another battling hundred from Langford gave us a defendable 213, and thanks to an inspired spell of 22 over spell of eight for 79 from Mike Naylor, ably supported by some superb catching, we took the points and all but assured Premier League cricket in 2012.

A loss to Wanstead, followed by draws with the Woodfords, and another washout left us in mid-table obscurity going in to the last game at Brentwood. Batting first we piled up a huge 322. Jamie Walton set the tone with a classy 46, followed by Junaid Sarwar (51) and James Burgess (28), but once again Langford was the class act, his 153 not out a fitting way to finish a superb season for the all-rounder and sign off on his time at the club. Taking to the field in high spirits we quickly attacked the hosts and dismissed them for 117, under the guidance of Langford and Sapsford due to an unexpected trip to casualty for skipper Allen. The returning Everitt was the star performer taking four for 53.

At the end of what turned out to be a transitional season there are many positives to take. Even with the absence of so many experienced players the side held its own in a tough league. The emergence of so many young cricketers bodes well for the future of the club, with the likes of Nathan Joyner, George Pratt, Chris Chapman and Alex Rickenbach proving themselves worthy of a place in the side. Garry Sapsford was a revelation behind the stumps and developed into a strong second XI wicketkeeper and important member of the side, his experience and enthusiasm proving invaluable to a rookie captain. Next season will prove to be another testing one for the second XI as they seek to regain their title but can take solace from their solid fifth-place finish in a tight league.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> XI**

Despite our 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish it would be fair to say it ended up being a pretty disappointing season for the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI. On paper at the start of the season we were the team to beat, but we didn't help ourselves on occasions and lost games largely through our own doing. Chelmsford continue to frustrate us, they seem to grind out results by being patient and not needlessly throwing wickets away; a lesson we must take notice of if we are to achieve our goal of becoming league champions.

Saying all that, there were some genuine highlights; we started well with four wins, a losing draw against West Essex and the better of a draw against Chelmsford.

The win against Woodford Wells was one of the best games many of the side said they'd been involved in. Selection was based on who could drive and when that failed, a swap deal with Martin to get Sappo and his minibus was brokered, which turned out to be a blessing.

We batted first and after a solid start, a small collapse brought Sapsford in at no.5. He smashed a brilliant century (103no) to get us to 300 (can be a must on the quick scoring ground at Wells). Wells came out firing and looked like cruising home but Sticks Hedden (6-87) and Nathan Joyner, ably supported by Simmons and Winder steadily worked their way through the Wells batting line up. Nathan took the last wicket with only a couple of overs to go with one of his trade mark off cutters which brought on a celebration reminiscent of the Bertie Joel cup win.

The return of Frank Austin against Fives at home, nearly got us over the line with a brilliant spell of 4-9 after Roachies fantastic knock of 143 set up a strong position, but we were unable to take the last wicket. Two more wins against Wanstead (Sticks 5 for 51) and Brentwood (half century for Roach and superb 111\* from Larry Tredget) followed, and then the wheels came off!

We got rolled by GP&R, a ridiculous game where no one got started, and no one dug in; they chased down 80 to win only 2 down. We never really got going again after that, apart from the chase against West Essex, (who scored over 300 again!). Kavanagh and Borman compiled a brilliant opening partnership of 100+ and Cunnew and Jimmy Lyons saw us home after it looked like we'd given it away.

A loss to Upminster, two washouts and a win against Brentwood ended the season.

For some reason this year our batting line up looked brittle. There were no major changes to the side but we heavily relied on one or two players to score our runs. Our bowling attack looked strong, but bowling inconsistently was probably our downfall. Will Ashby, Frank Austin and James Borman all deserve a mention, they all contributed with bat and ball; we hope to have them available in 2012. Roachie, Sticks and Larry were again the backbone in all our victories.

We'll go for the title again in 2012, third time lucky.....

#### **4<sup>th</sup> XI**

An eager Shenfield 4<sup>th</sup> XI looked to go one better in 2011, having narrowly missed out on promotion last season. Once again youth made up the majority of the side with the likes of veteran Dave Castell and new opening bowler Ali Naqui helping to lift the average age into the late teens. The winter had seen the return of 2010 player of the year Brendan "Jonty" Rhodes to his native Australia and the loss of Jon Grant and James Prior to full time employment. This meant that a number of holes were left to be filled by some of the clubs younger players.

Three fairly routine wins against Stanford-le-Hope, Harlow and Loughton got us going, but late drop outs meant that we travelled to Ilford with only ten. The extra player proved vital as after being bowled out for just 78 on a difficult pitch, Ilford crept home with just one wicket to spare, despite a valiant effort in the field from every player. We knew that if we wanted to secure promotion we would have to perform a lot better than we did on that day and it seemed like we were almost back to our best with wins over Old Parkonians and Southend on Sea in the following two weeks.

There were some stern words from skipper Ollie Ives after we failed to chase just 106, at Harold Wood which inspired a near perfect display against close rivals Orsett. Chris Beazeley starred with bat and ball, taking 4-12 and scoring 45 not out to guide us to our target, assisted by Ollie Ives (48). At the halfway point we were top and looked to be in control of the division with a comfortable cushion.

Young batsman George Ballington continued to grow with confidence and was a rock at the top of the order all season. His ability to frustrate bowlers with an impenetrable defence and a wide array of strokes earned him the batsman of the year award. His 52 against Stanford le Hope saw us do the double over them and retain first place. This was followed up by a comfortable win away to Chingford, before playing our contenders for the title Harlow away from home. Having been put into bat on a very bumpy and grassy wicket we struggled to get going, often throwing our wickets away needlessly. In the end we were rolled for just 77 and this simply wasn't enough for an outfit such as Harlow. Once again, Ives and vice-captain Luke Neal had very few good things to say about the performance and as such demanded a greater effort from the team at training and on the pitch for the rest of the season.

In cricket they say that your season can change in an instant and this proved to be true, none more so than when we played Loughton at home. Going into the game Loughton were bottom of the table with just a solitary win to their name. Despite this they batted first and after being dropped on 0 in the third over their opener went on to score an unbeaten 101 and left us baffled at how they had amassed 280! Nevertheless, openers Henry Austin and George Ballington got us off to a great start before a collapse left us reeling at 114-7. Up stepped Ali Naqvi and wicket keeper Alex Waltham. In a belligerent display of batting they saw us home with an unbeaten stand of 169 and celebrations continued long after the match.

The season however, was far from finished and we followed up this performance with a straightforward victory at Southend on Sea. Defeat to Old Southendians and then to Harold Wood in the next two matches meant we had now been knocked off the top spot and were in danger of finishing outside the promotion places. It came down to a tense match away to Orsett where once again we defied the odds with only ten men and a captain with severe "stomach issues" to win by 5 wickets and seal promotion to Division 2. Despite missing out on the top spot, the 4<sup>th</sup> XI have accomplished a huge amount in just one season, especially considering they used over 40 players this year and now look forward to a tougher test next year.

Despite refusing to give himself an award, captain Ollie Ives was overruled by fellow club members (thank you Gary and the Gnome) and so received bowler of the year. He ended up as top wicket taker in division and club ending the season with 53 wickets at an average of 9.72

Only one player was deserving of the 4<sup>th</sup> XI player of the year. Having only joined the club this season he had a huge impact both on and off the pitch and proved to be an inspiration to all players in the 4<sup>th</sup> XI and at Shenfield CC. He worked hard at training and gave 110% every week with both bat and ball. Ending the season with 27 wickets at an average of 21.19 and an average of 28.75 with the bat he proved to be the missing piece of the jigsaw in helping the 4<sup>th</sup> XI gain promotion to the second division and so 4<sup>th</sup> XI player of the year went to Ali Naqui.