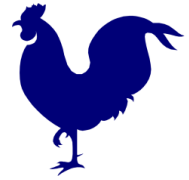


Review of the 2018 Season



1st XI

A simple lack of runs was the key reason the 1st XI were relegated from the Premier League, with far too many games lost by humiliating batting collapses. Bowled out seven times without gaining a single batting point really told the story of a disappointing campaign.

The season started reasonably promisingly at home to eventual treble winners Hornchurch. Skipper Jack Kliber's ton before lunch set the visitors a challenging total in a rain affected game, but the weather eventually won the day.

Despite Australian import Mitch Edwards' 5-40 at Ilford the batting travails raised their head at Ilford as we fell way short of an achievable 198 target and although there was a nail biting low scoring two wicket win at home to Wanstead, this proved a false dawn as we lost seven of the next eight, all too often by thumping margins.

Two wins at home to Ilford and Billericay raised hopes of escaping the relegation mire and when Jack Plom ripped through Hadleigh to take 7-12 we were in with a chance of survival. Jack Potticary's 128 helped set bottom club Southend a challenging 324, but a generous declaration gave them over 70 overs to reach that and despite another 5 wicket haul for Edwards we couldn't prevail.

To have any chance we needed to get something from the trip to local rivals Brentwood, but it was an all too familiar tale as we subsided for 112 in under 30 overs and although we had a mathematical chance going into the last Saturday of the season a tight 6 run loss to Chingford sealed our fate.

There are a couple of positives to take from the season. When available Jack Plom was consistently hostile with the new ball and his talent has been rewarded with his first full time contract with Essex in 2019. Charlie Haddon clearly benefited from bowling alongside Jack and other Essex staffer Aaron Beard, when available, and he can only push on from his 23 League wickets next year. Aussie Mitch Edwards took 39 wickets with his left arm spin but would be disappointed with his run returns. Only skipper Kliber scored over 400 runs in what was his last season as captain for now, after 7 successful years at the helm. Roy Smith is returning to the club he last played for in 2002 and will bring a wealth of experience to the armband as we look to bounce back next season.

2nd XI

A mostly youthful 2nd XI led by the inimitable Matt Simmons shook off a sluggish start and eschewed the draw all season to win half of their programme finishing comfortably in mid table.

The George's (Ballington and Pratt) both scored heavily and recorded centuries whilst the ever reliable James Salisbury was just shy of 500 runs for the year and in 2019 will replace Simmons who has waddled off into the Queensland sunset unsure whether to return. With an excellent nucleus of young players it's hoped a real challenge for honours can be mounted.

3rd XI

The 3rd XI had a remarkable season. After a stuttering start the side put on a fifteen game winning streak. Yet it was only in the last week that the team finally shook off the challenge from Loughton and Billericay to win the league.

Six of the bowlers averaged under sixteen including leading wicket taker Ollie Ives. The batters made the most of the hard decks, including three consecutive weeks amassing over 300 runs. Seven run-makers averaged over 50, led by Lee Newton's 145. All of this was backed up by impressive fielding performances. The strong XIs each week prompted one youngster to suggest this wasn't a third team but rather "The Two Point Fives" - a name that stuck.

A particular mention goes to U14s and U15s: Alfie Griffin who did a fine job behind the stumps and with the bat; Ollie Todd who had the 2nd best economy rate in the league for any bowler with more than 10 wickets - and not least Max Bear who was the league's highest run scorer topping 700 runs with four fifties and a century.

4th XI

The 4th XI battled the usual issues of availability and it's a great thanks to 'Dad's and lads' who on occasion filled in at short notice. Like the 2nd XI the 4's didn't believe in draws winning eight games over the season and providing valuable exposure to adult cricket for numerous members of our hugely successful colts section. Owen Southcott takes over in 2019 to continue the work of Ali Naqvi of getting competitive sides out each week and preparing youngsters to step up the teams.