

## **Sunday XI Report – 2015 Season**

Past experience has shown that Thameside Sunday League seasons are never predictable – and that certainly proved to be the case once again in a largely successful league campaign, where again we proved to ourselves that we are not far short of being genuine title contenders.

Following a much drier spring period than the previous year, it soon became clear that we were going to need to quickly remember how it feels to play cricket on harder, drier pitches again – and this became clear when almost 440 runs were scored in the very first fixture, in only the second week of May. An excellent innings of 85 from Matt Hockin setting up a solid foundation for the bowlers to take us to victory.

We followed this with another 250+ total at our nemesis opponent, Indian Gymkhana, with Ty White scoring a superb maiden Sunday League century – only for the home side to promptly knock-off the highly-competitive target with almost ten overs to spare following a poor Byfleet display in the field. This signalled the beginning of a bad patch for the side; not always of our own making, however – as Eversley CC went on to commit the ultimate cricketing sin – failing to fulfil fixtures on two occasions with the gallant Byfleet XI having reported for duty and ready for play.

This frustration perhaps spurred us on to excellent performances at Wycombe House and Whiteley Village, where the quality of our play showed real promise – the ever-dependable bowling attack of Messrs. Kay, Rannie, Mickley, White, Bowman, Pelling and Tyler expertly setting up winning positions; the runs knocked-off by a combination of Hockins, Crabtrees, Tylers and various valuable contributions down the order.

With the league title still up for grabs, we chose the wrong week to suffer a batting collapse of startling proportions. Having skittled table-topping Acton for 125, we somehow contrived to fall to 99 all out, and waved goodbye to our title ambitions.

Our programme of friendly fixtures once again provided an eclectic mix of opposition and standards – and ultimately, only one loss from eleven outings – with many of the clubs' younger players featuring prominently once again. Such on-field experience remains very important to the development of our elder colts and we will continue to provide such opportunities whenever suitable.

Looking ahead to next season – with the troops a year older, wiser and more battle-hardened - can we go one better, win the vital battles, and lift the Thameside League trophy? Watch this space ...

**--- Neal Jones (Captain, Sunday XI)**