2nd XI Season Report 2017

Last season saw the 2nd XI go to a last day battle for survival and stay up by the skin of our teeth. It’s fair to say that the 2017 season was something of an improvement finishing mid table and 106 points clear of the drop.

The team finished 164 points off the promotion spots but the two highlights of the season were victories over the two promoted teams, Oulton Park and Grappenhall, proving that improved availability, a bit more strength in depth and the younger players another year older then a promotion challenge is a more than reasonable challenge to set ourselves.

The season started with an absolute flyer against Cheadle with a 10 wicket victory including 86\* for L.Maitra (who was barely seen in the 2nd XI again) before we travelled to Oxton. The game turned out to have the undoubted moment of the season, yet was also the biggest disappointment after having defeat snatched from the jaws of victory. However, we must still remember just how impressive Tom Mitchell’s 4 wickets in 4 balls really was. He even got a trophy!

One of the biggest differences this year was the much improved batting. During the 2016 season the 2nd XI scored a total of 7 50s, a year later and we (very much not me) racked up 21 50s (with George Storrow scoring 5 alone!) This was a significant improvement and often gave the bowlers more of an opportunity to set up and defend scores. This was particularly true in the highest scoring game of the season away at Upton. We posted 245-7 which included a magnificent maiden 2nd XI century from Paul Garnett. At tea there was almost mutiny when the captain decided Millington should open the bowling, a wicket maiden later in the first over of the innings then who was laughing! We eventually took victory, bowling Urmston out for 226 which included 4 wickets for leading wicket taker Sam Higgins (particularly impressive given he missed the first half of the season due to exams!). Similarly Dave Cunliffe scored an impressive 231 runs in just 8 innings.

As mentioned earlier, a huge difference this year was the emergence of the juniors, especially with the ball where the future is very bright, notably George Foreman, Sam Higgins, George Jones, Joe Gill and Cam Buchan (who took a fantastic 6fer in the victory over Stockport away). However, the performance of the season with the ball was saved until the last day of the season with Tom Lett taking 7 wickets and 2 slip catches!

Despite the continued improvement of our juniors there were a few seniors who continued to offer continuity to the team, the pick of the bunch being George Storrow who finished top run scorer on 479 games. Many thanks also to other seniors- Tom Khares, Richard Palmer and Paul Garnett who were also consistently available throughout the year and continued to chip in with vital runs a regular basis, as well as Tom Mitchell and Chris Moore picking up plenty of wickets.

A really enjoyable season, I am already looking forwards to the next!

**Alan Millington
25 September 2017**