



MIDLANDS CLUB CRICKET CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 33

December 2003

Cricket 2003

Cricket had one of its most successful seasons for many years, a slight hitch at the start of the season with the weather and then it was sunshine all the way. The first class game had a lot to shout about with the success of the England Team in the NatWest tri-angular series against South Africa and Zimbabwe. The comprehensive victories in the test series against Zimbabwe and the pulsating games against South Africa where the series was tied.

On the domestic front Sussex very much deserved their success in being champions of Division 1 of the Frizzell County Championship as did Worcestershire in Division 2. Worcestershire also reached the final of the C&G Trophy as did Warwickshire in the new Twenty20 competition. As a new innovation the Twenty20 competition certainly gripped the imagination of the public with over 250,000 attending the matches. What was really pleasing was the number of youngsters that watched the cricket, hopefully they will continue to support and play the game.

Finally our congratulations to Astwood Bank on reaching the final of the Village Cricket Championship.

The best season for cricket in a while and yet we have expressions of dissatisfaction by the media and by other groups. Cricket must move on there is no standing still but to suggest that we have fixture saturation point is debatable. To talk about reducing the number of county matches played with less counties participating makes one wonder what will be offered to the patient County member. At times the present fixture schedule leaves large gaps when there is no cricket to watch or if there is cricket the fourth day is the Saturday when the game is either finished or but a couple hours of play is left. To maximise attendances one would have thought that there should be cricket available to watch on every Saturday and Sunday. As it is one has to ask the question, under the present playing conditions does the member receive value for his membership fee. If there is less cricket on offer the membership lists will quickly decline.

On the outside edge in more ways than one is club cricket. The recreational game has changed dramatically in the last 25 years. The majority of clubs play in leagues. The areas of travel to away fixtures almost makes it a day game. The length of the game itself has extended considerably, consequently one of the main areas where funds were raised, the bar, is under used as the away team leaves straight after the match. A large number of clubs run youth cricket, while hopefully some of those youngsters will eventually play first team cricket, there is an enormous amount of time, work and cost involved in providing a safe playing environment.

Whilst clubs are classed as amateur operations they are being asked to develop systems and procedures that industry have to fulfil with a professional staff. The club that does not have an Administrator that can spend hours at a computer churning out codes of conduct etc. is really struggling if it is looking for external funding. The requirements to qualify for the Community Club Development Fund and the ECB Club

Mark Accreditation Scheme will only be met by clubs that are large enough to absorb all the work that is involved. A Child Protection Policy on the web site runs to 89 pages, who is going to have the time or inclination to read a document of this length. On the one hand the ECB are urging clubs to become more proactive in supporting the development of youth cricket but on the other hand are making it very difficult for the small clubs who will not qualify for funding as they are not accredited. On the subject of money, clubs and leagues are once again heavily penalised, as the amount of funding coming in to grass roots cricket has been considerably reduced in comparison to other levels of cricket. This is at a time when clubs are being asked to do more for cricket, to develop Premier and Pyramid leagues, to develop the youth programmes, to cultivate girls and womens cricket, to try and provide facilities for disabled cricketers, to name just a few. It all costs money but the Powers that be seem to think that club cricket can absorb these cuts where as the first class game cannot. The lines of communication to the top are very limited, club cricket has no representative at the top table to fight its cause, so it is very difficult to get the message across that the recreational game is desperately in need of additional funding. Without the extra money there will not be a growth in the numbers playing but a reduction as the number of clubs merge or go out of existence.

Annual General Meeting

Enclosed is the notice of the Annual General Meeting to be held at the County Ground, Warwickshire C.C.C., Edgbaston, on Wednesday 14th January, 2004.

At this meeting our President, Alan Oakman, will have completed his year of office and will introduce to the meeting our President Elect, Malcolm Willcox.

Alan has been much in attendance at all of our functions. The highlight of the social year was the Dinner where we were entertained by Mike Watkinson and Ian 'Sludge' Lees. Alan attended the final rounds of the Under 11 Youth Competition where the performance of the youngsters was of a high standard and one that left Alan enthusing over the quality of the stroke play and the high fives by the batsmen when they scored a boundary. The next official duty was the finals of the U16 competition, again the performance of the lads was very good. Alan has also attended some of the meetings and Conference are very appreciative of the time, energy and commitment that he has given to his year of office.

As President Elect, Malcolm Willcox needs no introduction to the functions that are undertaken by Conference. Treasurer from 1982-1991 and Chairman 1992-1994. In 1994 Malcolm witnessed the culmination of two years extremely hard work when the very highly successful Golden Oldies Competition came to fruition in August of that year. Malcolm is a member of the Warwickshire C.C.C. committee and it is with great pleasure that we welcome his return to the Conference as our President Elect.

Computer Print Out

In an effort to make the Data Base as accurate as possible we have been sending out the **Secretarial Directory Form** with each of the recent Newsletters. I am sorry to say that there are still some clubs that have not returned the form. These clubs have been targeted this time with a specific request. Please can we have the forms returned by the **19th December, 2003**, in order that the secretarial information listed in the Year Book is correct.

Year Book 2004

Very few clubs have so far sent in a report on their year's activities. This is the type of information that makes the Year Book unique from other publications and one that we actively encourage.

The report can be e-mailed to Andrew Jackson, kingswinford@leeshaw.com or hard copy to **Andrew Jackson, 19 Harvine Walk, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 3BQ**. For those with access to a fax machine you can send the report to **David R. Thomas 01384 835687**. Three simple ways of transmitting a report of some 150 plus words, if you would like to send a report please do so before the **19th December, 2003**.

Annual Dinner

You may be aware that earlier this year The National Motor Cycle Museum had a major fire which destroyed most of the infrastructure. Unfortunately the rebuilding will not have been completed in time for the Dinner, we have though an alternative venue, part of the same group, which comes highly recommended.

Friday 5th March 2004

at the

Windmill Village Hotel, Allesley

(off junc. 6 M42 towards Coventry on the A45, Birmingham Road)

As stated this is a hotel and it will be possible for reservations to be made for those wishing to celebrate in style. The complex also has a golf course which is available.

The proforma for this year's Dinner is enclosed. The Dinner is the highlight of our social programme and we look forward with pleasure to socialising, renewing past acquaintances and meeting new friends. This year our President Elect Malcolm Willcox will preside over the evening's events.

At the Dinner all of the Award presentations take place, this is a tremendous evening for these very worthy recipients but made all the more so when there is a good attendance to support their achievement. The Award winners come from a wide range of Clubs across the Midlands, this in itself is special, in that recognition is given to Members of Clubs of all sizes and standard, for their service to a community. You could be pleasantly surprised at the quality of the Dinner but you have to attend to find out.

If you do not have access to the proforma the Dinner Organiser is **Greg Shakeshaft 0121 705 2568**, e-mail, dinner@mccc.co.uk Contact direct to reserve your place.

Fixture Bureau

The Bureau provides first class support to a large number of clubs. For this service we must thank Miss Wheeldon for her dedicated commitment of six days per week for six months of the year. This year there were 314 requests for fixtures on a Saturday of which a minimum of 188 were confirmed. On Sundays 820 vacancies were registered of which 543 resulted in fixtures.

We are indebted to Miss Wheeldon for her assiduousness and record a sincere thank you.

Spring Quiz

The Spring Quiz will take place on **Thursday 25th March, 2004**, at West Bromwich Dartmouth C.C. at 8.00pm.

Enclosed is the entrance form which must be returned to **Gordon Baker**. We are very grateful to West Bromwich Dartmouth C.C. for hosting this event which provides us with a venue that is central and just off the motorway link. A number of clubs attend on a regular basis but we would like new entrants. If your club had a quiz team please pass on the entry form so that they at least know about the competition. The prizes are excellent and the evening's entertainment is conducted in a most relaxed atmosphere, send your team along.

Subscriptions

There are still some clubs that have yet to pay their membership fees, they are being targeted. For those that are in arrears of more than one year, at the time of the A.G.M., we will have to assume that Club no longer wishes to be a Member of Conference. Every effort will be made to contact the club as we are aware that some of the contact addresses are not current. If you are one of those clubs with outstanding debts we would appreciate prompt payment, after all you have had the benefit of Conference services without honouring your obligations.

Vacant Dates

Now that most clubs play league cricket, particularly on a Saturday, the list of vacant dates is comparatively small. Nevertheless we still have some clubs that rely upon friendly fixtures to complete their programme, if you have any open dates contact Miss Wheeldon with the dates. In January a list will be issued to all the clubs that have made contact, Fixture Secretaries to then communicate with the club of their choice.

Representative Cricket

A comprehensive report of all this year's matches will be available in the 2004 Year Book. There were 10 Representative games of which 3 were abandoned.

Conference were very pleased to be able to support Aldridge and Great Houghton Cricket Clubs and the Coventry and District League who were celebrating anniversaries.

The fixture list for 2004 has been completed. Matches have been arranged with Solihull, Loughborough University, Oxford University U.C.C.E., Duke of Norfolk XI, Royal Air Force, Royal Navy, M.C.C., Club Cricket Conference and the touring Australian Old Collegians. There is a squad of players that the teams are selected from but new players can always be accommodated. Interested players who have not yet made their debut for Conference should contact **David Hollyhead 01789 293826**. You will note that the fixtures are of a reasonable standard and nominated players must have the ability to play at a high level.

A number of commemorative matches have been requested by member clubs to support their specific anniversary. Coleshill and Evesham C.Cs. are celebrating 150 years, Dorridge and Weoley Hill 75 years and Fossils C.C. 10 years. These fixtures do allow us the opportunity to offer all players the chance to play for Conference. Please submit your names to **Howard Clay 0121 477 3686**.

A review of the League Winners and Runners-up 2003

	<i>Winners</i>	<i>Runners-up</i>
Birmingham & District Premier League		
Premier	Wellington	Barnt Green
Division 1	W.Brom. Dartmouth	Water Orton
Division 2 West	Smethwick	Fordhouses
Division 2 East	Dorridge	Attock

Burton & District Cricket League		
Premier	Draycott & Hanbury	Tutbury
Division 1	Barton	Elford
Protective Personnel Shropshire Premier Cricket League		
Premier	St. Georges	Whitchurch
Shropshire Cricket League Sponsored by Banks		
Division 1	Quatt	
Beechdale Saab Derbyshire Premier League		
Premier	Clifton	Sandiacre
Derbyshire County League		
Division 1	Shiple Hall	Staveley Welfare
Nottinghamshire Lexus Premier League		
Premier	West Indian Cavaliers	Kimberley Institute
Wilkinsons Basset Law League		
Division 1	Retford Cricket & Sports Club	
South Nottinghamshire League		
Division 1	Calverton	
Everards Leicestershire County Cricket League		
Premier	Loughborough Town	Kibworth
Marches League		
Division 1	Monmouth	Talgarth
Leicestershire Cricket League		
Division 1	Leuva Patidar	Maher Stars
Northamptonshire Cricket Championship		
Premier	Finedon Dolben	Northampton Acad.
Division 1	Desborough Town	Irthlingborough
Division 2	Stewart & Lloyd Corby	O.Northampton. 2
North Staffordshire Cricket League		
Division 1	Hem Heath	
Pipemaster North Staffs and South Cheshire League		
Premier	Longton	Audley
Division 1	Little Stoke	Meir Heath
Staffordshire Club Cricket Championship		
Division 1	Lichfield	Cannock & Rugeley
Rugby Cricket League		
Division 1	Rowland United	
Rutland & District Cricket League		
Division 1	Market Deeping	Market Overton
Warwickshire Cricket League		
Division 1	Olton	Nuneaton
Worcestershire County League		
Division 1	Evesham	Ombersley
Warwickshire Sunday League		
Division 1	Solihull	
Division 2	Sutton Coldfield	
V-Sports Sunday League		
Premier	Walsall Crescent	
Division 1	Highcroft Great Barr	
Single Premier East	Streetly	
Single Premier West	Boundary	
Play off	Boundary	
Worcestershire Sunday League		
	Evesham	
South Staffordshire Sunday League		
	Bloxwich	
Sunday Border League		
	Coseley	

Umpires Courses

As we all know there is a shortage of Umpires throughout the Leagues. The majority of the present Umpires have seen active service over a number of years and new blood is desperately needed to bolster the ranks. Most new Umpires will only come through club cricket, if you have not played the game then it can be difficult to learn, so it is to the clubs that we look for new recruits. Unfortunately this is where the system falters as so few ex-players show any interest in putting something back into the game that hopefully will have given them so much pleasure.

The various Umpires and Scorers Associations do a tremendous job throughout the Winter months providing courses to train new candidates. What they require are the recruits to take up their offer to spend 10 weeks with them learning the laws of the game and qualifying as an Umpire

Please "Secretary" will you make a point of bringing the courses to the attention of your members and if there is anybody in your Club that is interested in Umpiring or Scoring ask them to contact the centre of their choice.

Courses 2003

Burton on Trent
Part 2
Venue Rolleston CC
Commence Wednesday 6th January at 7.30pm
Contact John Brown 01283 813976

Part 1
Venue Burton Hospital Social Club
Commence mid January
Contact John Hardwick 01283 565115

Northamptonshire
Part 2
Venue Northamptonshire County Cricket Club
Commence Monday 12th January for 8 weeks
Contact Terry Owen 01604 847478

Worcestershire CU&SA
Venue Evesham Working Men's Club
Part 1
Commence Monday 12th January for 10 weeks
Contact Tim Grainger 01386 552613

Venue Worcester Cricket Club
Part 1
Commence Tuesday 13th January for 10 weeks
Contact Tim Grainger 01386 552613

Venue Bromsgrove Cricket Club
Part 1
Commence Wednesday 14th January for 10 weeks
Contact Tim Grainger 01386 552613

Venue Kidderminster Chain Wire Social Club
Part 1
Commence Monday 19th. January for 10 weeks
Contact John Collins 01384 270197

Wolverhampton
Venue Wednesbury Cricket Club
Part 2
Commence Tuesday 6th January at 7.00pm for 10 weeks
Contact John Rushton 01902 847535

MCCCUA
Part 1 Two courses
Venue Warwickshire County Cricket Club Edgbaston
1) Commence Saturday 31st Jan. for 10 weeks 9.30am-12 noon
2) Commence Monday 2nd Feb. for 10 weeks 7.00pm -9.30pm

Part 1
Venue Highway Cricket Club
Commence Thursday 5th Feb. for 10 weeks 7.30pm-10.00pm
Contact Ed. McCabe Warwickshire Cricket Board 0121 4463615

Shropshire
Venue Whittington Cricket Club
Part 1/2
Commence Wednesday 7th January at 7.30pm for 10 weeks
Contact Mike Sheehy 01743 361651

Venue Wellington Cricket Club
Part 1/2
Commence Wednesday 14th January at 7.30pm for 10 weeks
Contact Mike Sheehy 01743 361651

Scorers Courses

All too often a team turns up on a Saturday afternoon without a scorer. When the team is batting players can be coerced in to scoring but problems can arise when the batting side has also to find an umpire. When fielding the score book lies on the table and a brief entry is made after the game. Not a very satisfactory situation.

Scorers courses are provided and it is one way of encouraging younger members to get to know more about the game. It is also an opportunity for a regular visitor to become more involved in the game and make a contribution to the club. Again nothing will happen if approaches are not made to find out if there is somebody interested in carrying out a non-playing duty. It is up to you "Secretary" you are the only line of communication.

Courses 2003

Burton on Trent

Venue Repton School
Commence mid January for 6 weeks
Contact John Brown 01283 813976

Northamptonshire

Contact Lynn Allen 01908 262574

Wolverhampton

Venue Wednesbury Cricket Club
Commence Saturday 31st January at 10.00am
Contact John Rushton 01902 847535

Worcestershire

Venue Chain Wire Social Club
Saturday 14th February 10.30am-3.30pm
followed by 4 weeks
Thursdays 26th February-18th March 7.30pm-9.30pm
Venue Ashton Under Hill Cricket Club nr. Pershore
Saturday 21st February 10.30am-3.30pm followed by 4 weeks
Wednesday 25th February-17th March 7.30pm-9.30pm

Saturdays to include instruction and practical work. The evenings are for those scorers that would like to progress further and maybe take the exam. You do not have to take the exam even if you attend the night sessions.

Membership of the Association is free for 2004 for all those attending the scorers course For further details contact Wally Clark 01905 354586.

Warwickshire Cricket Board

Richard Cox, Director of Cricket for the Warwickshire Cricket Board, has requested a right of reply to the following statement, that was made in the U11 competition report, in the August Newsletter. "The lack of entrants from North Warwick was due to another layer being inserted in the ladder of county cricket diverting funding from the real grass roots and denying the clubs of their players". Richard states: -
"Firstly, District cricket in Whit week has been ongoing for 6 years in Warwickshire, is an established part of our programme and is integral to the development and player pathway of young players aspiring to play at the highest level as set out in the ECB National Development Plan and Warwickshire's accredited Development Plan. Secondly, the programme is funded by Listers VW/Audi and Sportsmatch a government funded £ for £ scheme and is not money removed nor diverted from ECB funding via the Cricket Foundation etc. Thirdly, the process of district festivals is to act as a trial in readiness for the County age group programme rather than the much criticised net-type trial and is a prerequisite in the ECB minimum quality standards booklets adhered to by all County Boards.

Whilst I have every empathy for club cricket, I am aware of all the 13 players in our Under 11 District Programme (North Warwick) and am rather surprised this so unduly affects your competition when surely it opens opportunity for others to take part in an excellent Under 11 tournament which requires 8 per side rather than the traditional 11. The Warwickshire Cricket Board supports all aspects of cricket in Warwickshire as set out in the National and County Development Plan."

La Manga Festival

The La Manga Cricket Festival was organised in Spain earlier this month with the purpose of promoting the combined Conferences association which is to be known as the 'National Association of Clubs and Leagues Cricket Conferences'. Seven teams participated: Club Cricket Conference, League Cricket Conference, M.C.C.C. Spain, 2 Celebrity Teams and Guildford C.C. who were successful in winning a pre-tour draw.

Originally the teams were in two groups so everyone was guaranteed three matches. The games were played on two grounds with an artificial surface, involving a twenty-twenty format, maximum 4 overs each bowler and both sets of

fielding circles in operation. M.C.C.C. did not start too well losing by thirty odd runs to Guildford although it was fair to say that the dew at 9.00 a.m was very heavy and we were forced to bowl first with a very wet new ball. The side fared better in the second fixture recording a comfortable victory over the League Cricket Conference.

Wednesday morning fixtures had to be abandoned due to rain with the result that the arrangements for the rest of the week were altered and so the finalists were decided on an average basis. Thursday morning brought our final group game against the C.C.C. If a side was bowled out then you were rewarded with a bonus point; similarly if the runs were knocked off inside 13 overs you received another bonus point. M.C.C.C. duly bowled out C.C.C. for 95. Christie Willetts (Old Hill) and Duncan Lampitt (Wolverhampton) duly knocked off the runs inside 13 overs. These vital bonus points put us in the afternoon's final against C.C.C. who had already qualified. Club Cricket Conference again batted first. The first eight overs from Tim Heap (Himley) and Russell Spiers (Kibworth) were particularly tight but the Middlesex 2nd XI opening bat scored ninety odd to give C.C.C. a formidable total of 166. In the quest for extra quick runs, Conference lost early wickets but skipper David Banks and Tim Heap staged a reasonable rally. When they were dismissed in the 15th and 16th overs victory seemed to evaporate. However Alan Gough (Dunstall) had other ideas and at least two big sixes gave us a presentable reply losing by only 8 runs.

The main purpose of the new scheme was not winning but taking part in what should be an annual event. It was encouraging that the new scheme got off to a fine start. It is hoped that Conference clubs will avail themselves of the La Manga facilities.

The conditions and accommodation were first class whilst food and choice of restaurants were of the highest quality. Our thanks must be extended to Barry Stuart King, Chief Executive of C.C.C. for his co-ordination of the whole project; to Tony and Liz Murphy for their splendid day to day organisation and especially to Captain David Banks for getting together a more than capable M.C.C.C. side at such short notice. Everyone commented on the excellent attitude of our team both on and off the field. They were a credit to Conference!

S. A. Neal, Chairman M.C.C.C. Tour Manager.

Mandatory Rate Relief

In conjunction with other sporting bodies the MCCC lobbied the Government to try and obtain 80% Mandatory Relief for all Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs). This campaign started some 3 years ago and at one stage it appeared that the only way clubs would obtain the 80% relief was if they registered as a charity.

It has recently been announced that in future all clubs that register as CASCs with the Inland Revenue will be able to receive Mandatory Relief of 80% on the payment of their rates, this could be increased to 100% at the discretion of the local authorities. For those clubs that have not been in receipt of Mandatory Relief this move could be of considerable benefit.

To register as a CASC and be eligible for 80% Mandatory Rate Relief and other tax benefits clubs need to contact the Inland Revenue on 0131 777 4147.

MCCC Website

Now fully developed www.mccc.co.uk

Midlands Club Cricket Conference
Hon. Secretary: D. R. Thomas, 4 Silverdale Gardens,
Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 5NU
Telephone: 01384 278107 Fax: 01384 835687

*A Happy Christmas and a Very Prosperous and
Successful New Year to all.*