

Stewart's Melville Cricket Club

Annual General Meeting – Thursday 21st January 2021

Secretary's Report

The lockdown imposed by the Scottish Government in March ultimately led to competitive league and cup competition being abandoned for the season when it became apparent that even 50% of the organised programme would not happen with August 1st being targeted by the cricket authorities for some kind of resumption.

The first difference for the club was lockdown preventing the normal importation of overseas players and coaches to assist the club so that arrangements made with Alex Ranson (school), Shaylen Pillay (mens/junior cricket), Hannah Short (womens/junior cricket) and gap student players including Hayden Sweet had to be cancelled. Unfortunately the club incurred the expense of renting a flat for Shaylen Pillay for the Summer without the opportunity of running the Summer schools which usually helped meet the costs involved although the costs were mitigated when President Lawrance Reilly took over the lease for the last few weeks.

Eventually the playing of matches against other clubs was permitted from 8th August with "Covid safe" rules introduced meaning no pavilions to be open, no seating around grounds and no spectators allowed with numbers at any match restricted to 28 including players, umpires and scorers, matches played within local areas only and no car sharing on the way to matches. Special match conditions were introduced to encourage social distancing on the field of play.



The mens 1st XI (above) defeated RH Corstorphine on Saturday 5th August

For the 1st XI a programme of Saturday 40 overs a side matches and midweek 16 over a side matches were introduced involving Carlton, Grange, Watsonians, Corstorphine, Heriot's and ourselves. That meant no games with Stoneywood-Dyce (Aberdeen), Forfarshire (Dundee), Arbroath and Meigle.

The East of Scotland Cricket Association ("ESCA") split their 70+ participating teams into pods based on location and ranking so that our 2s, 3s and 4s had games arranged centrally for every Saturday once a start was made. In addition the club continued the practice of playing intra club matches both midweek and Sundays open to all seniors and older juniors as well as some midweek external Trojans matches (pretty much involving 3s and 4s players).

A small number of womens cricket matches were arranged again in conjunction with our "partner club" Edinburgh South.

From the beginning of July practice nets were allowed for young cricketers subject to pre booking, restricted numbers and limited access to coaches. While similar practice arrangements were later introduced for senior players the club found it administratively easier and more productive to continue playing intra club matches which ran throughout the abbreviated season.

For the senior teams external games started on Tuesday 11th August when the 1st XI played Watsonians at Inverleith 16 overs a side with a 6pm start. Further "T16" matches followed against Grange (18th August), Heriot's (20th August), Carlton (1st September). The wet weather endured mostly post lockdown prevented the match against Corstorphine being played while a deluge brought an early conclusion to the match with Grange. We were on the wrong side of the result in the matches with stronger Heriot's, Carlton and Watsonian selections.

Each Saturday the club fielded four full teams in senior mens cricket and on Sundays weather permitting intra club cricket took place. In Saturday matches, planned for 40 overs a side for the 1st XI, Carlton, Grange and Heriot's and Watsonians ran out comfortable winners and Corstorphine were defeated.

Following the July resumption of practice 97 juniors (75 boys and 22 girls) took part in junior club activity while 27 boys and 14 girls played in senior mens or womens cricket in the period from 8th August.



Notably the Womens joint team with Edinburgh South (pictured above) defeated Carlton on Sunday 16th August, Carlton a second time and Watsonians in the three matches arranged for them.

The opportunity for noteworthy individual performances was much reduced. In the 1st XI Kris Steel scored most runs, 80 at an average of 13.3 with a top score of 41 v Corstorphine. Adam McHoul scored 74 at an average of 14.8 with a highest score of 40 (his best in the 1st XI) and maybe regrets missing out on a fifty (having been comfortably run out). Steven Parker scored 69 at an average of 17.25 with 21 not out his best. Callum Steel (ave 8.3) and Joe Newman (ave 31.9) each took 7 wickets. Individual high points were Callum Steel achieving his second hat-trick (and 4 wickets in 5 balls) for the club v Grange in the subsequently abandoned "Super Six" 16 over match. In the Saturday match Chris Miller batted through all 40 overs v Watsonians for 23 not out. Adam McHoul (40), Mikey Miller (37) and Vishal Shah (35) helped put a winning score of 164 on the board v Corstorphine after difficult start. Ollie Rees with 80 runs from two innings (HS 50 v Marchmont) was top scorer in the 2nd XI (won 3 lost 2). Leading wicket taker was Ben Jamieson who played all 5 matches taking 9 wickets (ave 4.67) in 19 overs. The 3rd XI played 4 matches (won 1, lost 3), highest run scorer was Victor Coltherd with 71 runs (ave 23.6) and most wickets were taken by Simon Edgar with 5 (ave 6.4). In the 4th XI (won 1, lost 4) Rory Anderson played all 5 matches and finished both equal top run scorer (63) (ave 15.75) and leading wicket taker with 10 (ave 9.6). Aly Wallace also scored 63 runs in his 2 innings with 54 not out v Boroughmuir 2s.

The Trojans played 2 matches - defeating E=MCC twice. Their final three matches were rained off.

The resurgence of Covid over the Winter months has to date prevented any indoor practice and may impact on what kind of season we may have this Summer. Looking forward it is anticipated that some junior practice will be allowed indoors subject to Covid compliance while the form of outdoor cricket in the Summer remains an unknown.

Last year I intimated I would stand down as Secretary at this time and Lawrance Reilly having completed two years as President is also retiring. I am sure everyone wishes the successors a better cricket season than 2020.

Robert Barclay

Secretary