

ROLLESTON CC.

SEASON 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

It is pleasing to report that 2010 has been a year of positive consolidation on the field, continued development of the ground and playing facilities and a full social and fund-raising calendar.

On the pitch, despite having lost the services of the previous year's most successful bowler and his opening partner and all-rounder, and despite being one of only two Division 1 clubs not to have an overseas or paid player, the first team achieved their aim of retaining their First Division status under the energetic leadership of new skipper Alex Britton.

A final league position of 9th was rather disappointing but due mainly to a poor end of season when the last four games were lost, but this should not mask the many good performances which had preceded it and which had defied the gloomy predictions of some pessimists. The excellent spirit and positive approach of the side were there for all to see.

The new opening attack of Mark Bellm and Andy Cooper, who both represented the DCB at opposite ends of the age range – over 50 and under 17 – rose excellently to the challenge presented to them, with Mark finishing top of the club averages with 43 wickets at just over 19 runs apiece and Andy taking over 20 wickets in cup and league matches in his first season of First XI cricket. Alex Britton's 34 league wickets at an average of 20 showed what a penetrative bowler he is when his knee injury allows, whilst Luke Nelson chipped in with 23 wickets with his off-spin despite having to miss several matches. John Thomson took the same number of wickets with his accurate seamers, proving again the value of the old-fashioned virtues of line and length.

It was not possible to sign a professional or overseas player of the required standard within our budget, but this, coupled with the departure of two other members of first XI squad, allowed opportunities for others to stake a claim for a regular place and they responded well

The most successful batsman was the loyal Gareth Marshall, who played in every game and finished the season with 760 league runs at average of over 44. This included an unbeaten century against Shipley Hall. He was well supported by new recruit Tom Rutter, who was unfortunate not to reach three figures in the same match and also against Swarkestone, scoring over 90 in both games and finishing the season with almost 600 league runs. Tom's outstanding fielding also made him the well-deserved first winner of the newly instituted club fielding award.

Although the middle order was more reliable than in the previous season, consistency could have been better but nevertheless all the batsmen made crucial contributions at some stage.

The season started very well with a 27point win at Marehay in the first match followed by another full haul of points batting first against Clay Cross in the fourth league game.

The side soon settled into a comfortable league position, being well within reach of the promotion places at the half-way stage of the season before the run of disappointing results left the side nearer the bottom than the top of the table. Even so, relegation was never a realistic prospect.

The team was unfortunately unable to retain the Breweries Cup, losing in the semi-final to Ticknall after a comprehensive win over Hammerwich in the previous round. In the league cup competition, the Marston's Smooth Trophy, the team went out in the first round, and it has to be noted that there are not as many players these days who are able to play on two consecutive days, making it difficult to put out full-strength sides on a Sunday.

It was also difficult to put out strong sides in the midweek 20 over competitions, resulting in losses in both the Rotary Trophy and the Dunstall Knock-out, which was particularly disappointing considering that this was the first year that we had been invited to compete in the latter, the district's most prestigious 20-20 tournament.

The biennial MCC fixture was unfortunately washed out again: it seems that the orange and yellow flag has formidable and permanent rain-making powers.

The Second XI, led again by Anton Williams, finished in seventh place in Division 5 South after some anxious moments in August were compensated for by a strong finish of two wins and a winning draw in the last three matches.

One very welcome feature of the seconds' season was that several young players were given the opportunity to play regularly and made commendable progress. Eighteen-year old Tom Yates had the best bowling average (20 wickets at 10.4), whilst Jake Edwards also performed commendably, taking 23 wickets at just under 17 runs apiece. Most wickets were taken by Anton Williams, who trapped 34 batsmen in his spinner's web.

Ian Wakefield just pipped Richard Bryan for the best batting average (28), whilst Nick Goode and Richard Wyatt both comfortably exceeded 200 runs for the season with the younger players gaining valuable experience and chipping in with useful runs.

The Third XI, playing again in Division 7 South, had their most successful season since entering the County League, finishing in the top half of the table under Mick Clay's leadership. The evergreen Keith Widdows (368 runs at an average of 28.3), well supported by Brett Cobley and David Gallagher, was the most successful batsman, whilst David Cooke had the best bowling average (22 wickets at 12.2). Honourable mention must be made of your secretary, whose 19 wickets cost a miserly 12.6 runs each and were clearly excellent preparation for his starring performances for the DCB over 60s XI.

The Fourth XI also had their best season since entering the League, achieving fourth place in Division 10 South. The club is grateful for the efforts of skipper Mick Acton and team secretary Alan Featherstone for their hard work in making such a success of the team, which gives an invaluable opportunity for young players to have a properly managed introduction to senior cricket and as such makes a considerable contribution to their development.

Duncan Boddy and Alex Showell both scored their maiden hundreds, with Darrell Ford topping the averages whilst Mick Acton led the bowling averages. However, many youngsters made good individual contributions at the start of their league cricket careers which will give them a good basis on which to build.

Many of these players also had the opportunity to play in the Sunday side, run by Ian Wakefield and Anton Williams. Friendly Sunday cricket nowadays is a challenge to organise given the growth of national and local cup competitions, and we are grateful to fixture secretary Mick Clay for his hard work in producing a full programme of fixtures.

This leads on naturally to the junior section, which again had a full programme of league matches at the various age groups. Our thanks go to the managers, Graham Milnes, Matthew Parker, Nick Goode and Scott Cobby. Mention should also be made of the welcome backing of parents who supported the teams in a variety of practical ways.

All the managers and coaches will have been especially pleased by the development of individual players who graduated to senior cricket. Mention has already been made of Andrew Cooper and it should not be forgotten that fifteen-year old Niall Dawkins made an impressive start in the First XI. The 2010 season was also notable for the selection of Ellie Cheatle for the DCB, the first girl from the club to achieve county recognition. Let us hope that other will follow in her path.

It is on the development of young players that the future of the club depends, and we are grateful for all the hard work put in by our junior co-ordinator Gareth Marshall and his team. Gareth himself is to be congratulated on achieving national recognition by coming second in the ECB Young Coach of the Year award.

Inevitably, however, as coaches gain experience and qualifications, many more external calls are made on their services, emphasising once again that the club must continually strive to build and sustain coaching capacity by regularly augmenting its pool of coaches from within. This is illustrated by the fact that at the moment, although eight of our members have at some time in the past gained coaching qualifications, including one Level 3 and one going through Level 3, for the reasons mentioned above and because of work and family commitments, only three are able to coach regularly at the club.

And so, in this respect it was gratifying to see Tom Yates, Nigel Tate and Louis Burrows, having qualified as young sports leaders, throw themselves with such enthusiasm and success into the Kwik Cricket section this year. This enthusiasm proved infectious and the numbers of children attending the sessions grew swiftly, giving us an excellent foundation for future hard-ball teams and we hope, eventually, senior sides.

As usual we were fortunate in having a very able pool of scorers to support the teams — Barry Wynne, Paul Smith, Paul Burton, John Hodson and Terry Ford. The first-team scorer also found time to delight the readers of the Burton Daily Mail with the elegant literary style of his weekly chronicles of First XI matches. Alan Featherstone's regular reports for the Fourth XI, were also well read, with both correspondents contributing greatly to the impressive total of almost 635,000 hits so far in 2010 for all sections of the rollestoncc.org. uk site.

The Play-cricket website again attracted many visits and we are grateful to Anton for making sure that all the scorecards are entered promptly.

All the necessary work was done for the annual internal verification to retain Clubmark status. The next external assessment will be in 2012.

The ground committee, under the chairmanship of Ian Wakefield has also had a busy year. We again participated in the Natwest Cricket Force weekend when many maintenance jobs were completed in preparation for the season.

Last autumn, over £8,000 was spent in re-laying drains on the west and north sections of the outfield. It is pleasing to report that this work, carried out by the assistant head groundsman at Derbyshire CCC was a complete success. Indeed, on one Saturday last season we were treated to the spectacle of cricket being played at the Willows when other matches were abandoned because of water-logged pitches – a complete reversal of the previous state of affairs.

The two pitches renovated in autumn 2008 were brought into use for the first time and produced the intended increased bounce and pace. It is worth pointing out that this work was done following a specialist pitch survey and scientific soil analysis paid for by the DCCL. It is hoped to continue this renovation programme.

Many compliments were paid on the standard of the pitches and outfield at both the Willows and Marchington, a testimony to the skill and hard work of David Woodburn and John Hodson. John of course also saves the club a huge amount of money with his voluntary service in maintaining and repairing the ground machinery. We are greatly indebted to him for his work.

We should also thank Dave Jobson for his efforts in making the boundary rope winder at Rolleston and for supplying and fitting wheels to the covers at Marchington.

The ground investments referred to earlier help to stress the point that running a cricket club is very expensive business, and we are grateful to Richard Wyatt and Nigel Winfield for arranging a host of fund-raising activities throughout the year. Special mention should be made of the auction organised by Richie which raised over £1,600. Thanks also go to Tom Yates and the Kwik cricketers who raised valuable funds for kit through a Fun Run.

We are also grateful to all our sponsors - in particular those who donated money via Guy Hall – Mectek Mechanical Services, Structural Fabrications. Interbelt Ltd., Derby Decking, Cavill Fabrications and Matte Fabrications – who in total sponsored the Club for over £1000. We also received a cheque for £500 Yorkshire Bank, thanks to Jane Yates. Other individuals donated significant sums of money to the Club for which we are most grateful.

As ever the bar, run so efficiently by Mick Acton, provided a steady source of income as well as liquid refreshment. It is clear from travels around the cricket grounds of Derbyshire that Rolleston CC's Bass is considered to be one of the best-kept real ales amongst the aficionados of CAMRA. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Mick and all his helpers.

On the subject of refreshment we also need to express our thanks to all those who provided such high quality teas throughout the season for all teams. As your treasurer pointed out so succinctly but tactfully in one of his match reports, it is clear that many clubs cannot even approach the traditional standards of Rolleston haute (or high-tea) cuisine.

One sad note during 2010 was the death of one of our members – Chris Richards. Several members attended Chris’s funeral and we received £200 from the Funeral donations, to be used by the Club in some way that we may remember Chris. An annual fixture between Rolleston and Walton Cricket Clubs is also being arranged in Chris’s memory.

To conclude then, it has been another busy twelve months in the long history of the club, which will be celebrating its one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary in 2012. Preparations are in hand to make sure that this milestone is appropriately celebrated.

It is, however, vital that as we commemorate and retain the best traditions of the past, we continue to look to the future and set ourselves high standards on and off the field in today’s highly competitive environment. The concluding words of last year’s report are still pertinent.

“ It is only by committing ourselves totally to a policy of continuous improvement that we will be able to achieve our aim of promoting cricketing excellence whilst at the same time being firmly rooted in the local community and providing opportunities for all to play the game. “

One year on, it only needs to be stressed that these objectives are entirely compatible.

Bob James, Chairman
Trevor Foster, Hon. Sec.

November 2010