

THE HAMPSHIRE CRICKET SOCIETY

Patrons: John Woodcock Frank Bailey Shaun Udal

NEWSLETTER No. 338 – October 2014

MEETINGS

Wednesday 8 October 2014 – Meeting

The Society extends a very warm welcome to **LAWRENCE PRITTIPPAUL** to this evening's meeting. He will be remembered in Hampshire's history as the man who scored the last ever century at Northlands Road: a glorious 152 in 241 minutes against Derbyshire in 2000, during which he shared a fourth wicket partnership of 248 with Will Kendall. At the time, the latter was writing a weekly column in the Hampshire Chronicle and referred to our speaker's "wristy elegance and nimble footwork".

It was only his third first-class match. Right-handed, he had made his debut at Canterbury with 52 and 35, and followed it with another 35 at Chester-le-Street. He was only 20 years old and seemed to have the world at his feet. However, as with many other batsmen, his career foundered on the testing wickets whilst the square was bedding in, at the then Rose Bowl. In a career to 2005 he played in 23 first-class matches, 62 List A matches and 13 Twenty20 matches.

LAWRENCE ROLAND PRITTIPPAUL was born in Portsmouth on 19 October 1979 and educated at St. John's College, Southsea and Portsmouth College. Cricket flowed through his veins; his cousin was the remarkable Shivnarine Chanderpaul who is still going strong for the West Indies in test cricket at the age of 40. He played his first match for Hampshire in the National League in 1999, having previously impressed with some fine performances for the Hampshire Cricket Board in the Nat West Trophy.

Since leaving Hampshire, he has played club cricket for St. Cross in the Southern Premier League. Most notably, though, he has been a pioneer of Cage Cricket, of which members will undoubtedly learn much at this evening's meeting.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 12 November 2014 starting at 2.30pm

Members wishing to eat at Test Valley Golf Club beforehand should contact Susanne Marlow (see membership card for telephone no.) so that she can appraise TVGC of potential numbers. Both a simple meal of ham, egg and chips or similar, or sandwiches will be available.

Thursday 4 December 2014 Annual Dinner

Application forms for the Annual Dinner will be available soon. Members who have attended the Dinner in the past have always found it to be a convivial occasion. It is the Society's premier social event of the year and it is hoped as many members and guests as possible will be able to attend.

HAMPSHIRE'S CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2014

In the year of the 150th anniversary of their inaugural match as a first-class county, Hampshire gave their supporters much to cheer with another fine T20 run, culminating in their fifth consecutive appearance on finals day, and winning Division 2 of the Championship at Glamorgan's SWALEC Stadium at Cardiff in the last match of the season.

Going into the last match of the latter competition, Worcestershire were already promoted (largely due, despite their protestations to the contrary, to the efforts of the now banned Saeed Ajmal) and were being pursued by Hampshire and Essex. If Hampshire won, they would be promoted as champions; if they failed to win, and Essex won, then the latter would go up to Division 1. Essex were on a roll having won five of their previous six matches. They duly completed a sixth victory - against Worcestershire at Chelmsford - on a bowler friendly pitch.

Hampshire duly defeated Glamorgan, but not without initial alarms. At one stage on the first morning, they were 53 for five. James Vince (a magnificent 144) and Sean Ervine (an equally impressive 107) then added 225 for the sixth wicket to set Hampshire on their way to a competitive total (357). Glamorgan showed little appetite for the fight and were bowled out for 172, with Matt Coles (3-58) and Chris Wood (4-42) inflicting most of the damage. Jimmy Adams chose to bat again, rather than enforce the follow on, and led the way in scoring quick runs with an aggressive 91. He declared on the fourth morning, setting Glamorgan 444 to win. James Tomlinson then delivered one of the performances of his life as he claimed the first six wickets to fall. He finished with six for 48 and Hampshire cantered home by 291 runs in the afternoon, a day ahead of schedule, to secure the title.

The Division 2 Championship title was achieved over a period of almost six months. The first match started on 6 April; Hampshire's final day of the season was on 25 September. The scheduling programme meant the players had to adjust continually to meet the demands of both 4-day and T20 cricket.

Hampshire's seven Championship victories were the most in a season since 2005, when they obtained nine to finish runners-up in Division 1. In 2014, they started strongly by winning three of their first six matches in April and May. The last of those wins, against Leicestershire at Grace Road, was accomplished just after the start of the T20 competition. They almost added another against Derbyshire at home in the seventh match, but rain on the final day resulted in Hampshire just missing their goal, with Derbyshire holding on with eight wickets down.

Having started strongly, they also finished at a gallop. With T20 finals day out of the way, and the 50 over competition completed but for one match, Hampshire gained a second wind and won three of their last four matches from mid-August to the end of the season. It is undeniable that, though they were successful in the T20, it created an unwelcome distraction in their push for promotion in the 4-day game. They suffered a definite blip for two months from mid-June as they were second best to Worcestershire at New Road, Surrey at The Oval, Gloucestershire at home and Essex at Chelmsford. The latter match resulted in their only Championship loss albeit by just two wickets. However, rain definitely warded off defeat at the hands of Gloucestershire. It also did so against Kent at the Ageas Bowl in the penultimate

match; it was a strange, lack lustre performance, completely out of character with the rest of the season.

The other win came when Essex were comprehensively thrashed (by 470 runs in three days) at the Ageas Bowl in the middle of June.

Much credit must go to Giles White and Dale Blenkenstein for managing the playing resources. At various times of the season, Hampshire had to compete without Michael Carberry (with England and then injured), James Vince (with England Lions) and Kyle Abbott (injury and then return to South Africa).

Though the 2014 season will be regarded as a “good” summer weatherwise, no fewer than nine of the 16 matches were interrupted by significant rainfall, five at home (Worcestershire, Surrey, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire and Kent) and four away (at Derby, New Road, The Oval and Chelmsford). Only at Chelmsford was a result achieved: as already mentioned, Hampshire’s only loss.

Hampshire’s title - their first in Division 2 - was a fine team effort. Three batsmen, Vince, Adams and Will Smith scored over 1000 runs. The former was the first man in the country to reach the landmark and went on to register 1525 runs, the most by any batsman in the country, at an average of 61 - the highest in the Division. His 240 against Essex at the Ageas Bowl was a career best, and was exceeded in the Division only by Alex Gidman’s 268 for Gloucestershire against Leicestershire in mid-September. Smith recorded his season’s best (1187 @ 51.60). There were very few matches where he did not contribute; his lone hand of 140 not out against Kent at the Ageas Bowl to stave off defeat was a monumental effort. He showed his adaptability by scoring runs in all the first four positions in the batting order. Adams reached the 1000 run landmark for the fifth time - easily a record for the county since four-day cricket was introduced in 1993. He also scored 231 against Leicestershire at home, his fifth double century; only Phil Mead and Gordon Greenidge have scored more for the county. Carberry (847) would surely have also reached 1000 runs had he not been absent for four matches. Ervine’s late flourish took him to 856 runs. He developed the happy habit of scoring runs when they were most needed; his two centuries in the last two matches of the season, against Kent at home and Glamorgan at Cardiff, were both made in adversity.

Adam Wheeler scored a rapid century against Essex, his former County, at Chelmsford; earlier in the season he had made an equally storming 83 against them at home. Towards the end of the season, however, he ran out of runs, probably due to fatigue; his predecessor, Michael Bates, did so similarly in 2012 after he had enjoyed a fine season with the bat until the start of the T20 competition.

Of the regular batsman, only Liam Dawson struggled. He had enjoyed a season’s best with the bat in 2013. Injury confined him to 10 matches this summer; before the injury, he was hitting the ball solidly and a big score seemed just around the corner. On his return, he never quite found his form but it must be said that until the last two matches, he was batting down the order and not at three as he did last summer. He will surely come again.

One of the most diverting aspects of the season was James Tomlinson's performances with the bat. He was a revelation. Against Gloucestershire at the Ageas Bowl, he scored the first half century of his career (51) and stayed with another under-rated batsman, David Balcombe (65 not out) whilst 117 runs were added for the last wicket. In the return against Kent at home, he then kept up one end whilst Ervine farmed the strike in masterly fashion in a tenth wicket partnership of 98. He was 11 not out. In the second innings, he aided Smith in eking out the overs to deny Kent of victory. Though helped by ten "not outs", he averaged 22.50, an astonishing average for a number 11 batsman.

As for the bowlers, Kyle Abbott (36 wickets in nine matches), Tomlinson (47) and Matt Coles (41) gave the Hampshire attack more penetration than in previous years. Abbott took five for 67 on his debut at Bristol and was a constant threat until towards the end of his stay in early July. His accuracy and hostility enabled James Tomlinson to thrive, though the latter reserved his best performance for the end of the season at Cardiff. Coles was an enigma; he is a considerable talent but often seemed disenchanted by being asked to perform the third seamer role. When opening the bowling, as he did when he originally joined Hampshire in 2013, he bowled with verve and genuine pace and looked a different bowler. He claimed 19 wickets in the last four matches; against Kent in the penultimate match, he carried an otherwise below par attack.

Of the back-up seam bowlers, Sean Ervine took 19 wickets. The late season momentum was generated by Chris Wood in August. Returning to the side for the first time in the season in four-day cricket (following injury) at Canterbury, he took five for 39. With Coles (three for 58), he was then instrumental (with four for 42) in bowling out Glamorgan in the first innings at Cardiff. Wood has shown that he is an all-rounder in the making. With the bat, he has time to play his shots and already has a first-class century under his belt. It is also evident that he is very competitive.

The decision to bring back Imran Tahir for the final two matches will long be debated. Danny Briggs, who made way for him, had taken 27 wickets hitherto at the healthy average of 26.11. Hampshire made the reasonable assumption that their former leg-spin bowler was a potential match winner. However, he was expensive (three for 140 in 36 overs) as Kent piled up 507 at the Ageas Bowl. Surprisingly, given the volume of international cricket he has now played, he has still not curbed his habit of running on to the pitch in his follow through. He was twice warned by umpire Nigel Cowley. He then took three tail end wickets at Cardiff, but had the distinction of bowling Bull to claim a famous victory. Liam Dawson claimed 17 wickets (avge. 31.11).

In the field, Vince, Dawson and Ervine were generally reliable at slip. Smith was a good fielder in any position; at the age of 31, he even fielded under the helmet at short leg.

Details of departures from the playing staff, new signings, and the unveiling of the new War Memorial and the naming of the Arlott Atrium will be covered in future Newsletters.

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