

U's NEWS

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THE NEWSLETTER OF UPMINSTER CRICKET CLUB

www.upminstercricketclub.com



Welcome



Given where we were in June this year, it's fantastic that we are able to look back on 2020 with so many positive cricketing memories. There is a lot to catch up on in this offering of U's News, as well as a look back to a great day in 2014, and I'm sure you'll enjoy reading this edition.

It felt that we made up for lost time with so much happening in what was a very short 10 week season, and well done to all of the playing sides, both senior and junior, on a very successful playing season. Particularly to our Men's 2nd XI on winning the Pritchard Division, and to our U9's who won the Metropolitan District competition undoing a strong Ilford side in a well-attended final at the park. Congratulations also to "The Sharks" on winning the inaugural edition of the Women's Windmill Whack, and to one of our founding franchises The Govani Maestro's on their first ever win in the Men's competition.

The summer has been one of adaption and invention, as we've seen with our online coaching and social events, and the new "Windmill End" podcast. We will continue our online offering through the winter with our AGM being held 'virtually' on Sunday 5 December this year. Details on timings and how to join will be circulated in due course, and I'd encourage you to attend and hear the annual reports on the club, and have your say in plans that are being put in place for 2021.

I would like to specifically acknowledge the superhuman efforts of our bar-staff Tony and Andrea Graves ensuring no-one went thirsty in very unusual circumstances over the Summer. Andrea and Tony tied the knot shortly after the end of the season, and I would like to offer our heartfelt congratulations to them on behalf of everyone at the club.

Thanks to the support and generosity of all of our club members and sponsors, we have managed to deliver a very strong financial performance over the year. This is of great relief to all of us on the committee, and has enabled to us to invest in significant projects like the replacement of the storage containers and more recent the welcome addition of four new bowling machines for both the senior and junior sections. These are already seeing some action with the 198 junior cricketers currently going through our Winter Net program at Coopers' School.

As we go to press, another period of lockdown is looming large across the country. With people's ability to travel and interact with each other once again becoming heavily restricted, the importance of local community clubs and networks is of great significance to many individuals and families. I would encourage everyone to do what they can to stay in touch with each other, and to please keep an eye out for your team mates in what will no doubt be a very difficult winter for everyone.

On behalf of the club, I send best wishes to all of our members and their families. Please do stay safe and look after yourselves.

Best

Ollie

Ollie Peck
Chairman, Upminster Cricket Club

2020 UPDATE



When we put together the previous version of the Newsletter in June, it's fair to say that we faced a very uncertain summer, and a very realistic possibility of making a significant financial loss.

Thankfully we were able to make up for lost time once the green light came in July, and in the end we will be able to report a very positive financial situation at the AGM in December. We had a fantastic response from so many of our Colts Parents who willingly paid their summer subscriptions at a time when we could only offer Zoom sessions for the colts training, and our thanks go to them for supporting the club in this way.

Our sponsors and playing members have equally been fabulous in terms of protecting our usual revenue and this support, along with Covid related grants from Sport England and some reduced expenditure lines, have delivered a strong financial performance. Of course, the fantastic social events from the early summer also raised £7,500 for the club – even if that seems a very long time ago now!

We have already invested a significant amount in acquiring new bowling machines to support junior and adult coaching, which will prove a very popular addition to training. We're also exploring other options to improve playing facilities for the club, so that we can continue to expand and deliver as much cricket for all members throughout the summer.

Our winter sessions commenced in October, and we have secured the services of Adam Wheater and Aaron Beard to support these. The update this year is truly record breaking for UCC, with nearly 200 children signed up for 10 weeks coaching sessions. This really does bode well for the future health of the club.

Thanks again for all of your support over the year so far, and let's hope next season is much more like a normal cricket season!

BENEFIT DAY REWIND - CHEF COMES TO TOWN -



In most years, we'd round off the season with a Benefit Match against an Essex XI at Upminster Park. In the absence of a match in 2020, we take a misty eyed look back at the biggest day for the club in recent history. The England captain Alastair Cook has been granted a Benefit Year in 2014, and on Sunday 7 September he brought a very strong Essex team with him to take on Upminster CC.

Paul Middlemiss (Benefit Day Manager): I remember it getting to April and thinking it wouldn't happen. Although we had done the matches for the previous five years, and 15 of the previous 17 years, I think we all felt that Cook's profile at the time meant the match just wouldn't be on his radar. Normally we would have it all booked in by December or January, so come April and with nothing in place we were kind of giving up hope.

Rob Bannister (Committee Member): We've had a Benefit Day every year for as long as I can remember, and we were obviously excited at the prospect of getting the England Captain to play. But we just didn't know if it would be feasible or if he'd even have the space in his schedule to do it.

PM: I remember his Manager then calling me in

mid April. I was actually at College in Moorgate that week and remember being late back after lunch after spending absolutely ages on the phone. His manager laid out what they would need from us before considering a game at UCC and while it was all fair enough it seemed like a big ask to guarantee certain things. It was all a lot more money than any other game we had taken on.

Ollie Peck (1st XI Captain): There was a lot of debate about what commitment we would be making as a club, and what financial exposure we would have if it rained and couldn't get the game on. But once we got our heads round how we could mitigate any risks, it all started to fall into place.

RB: We knew we would put on a good event and make it profitable, but we also knew we would be on the hook for £4,500 if the game was rained off. We've got some fantastic long standing sponsors though, and I think we managed to quickly realise we could underwrite this worst case scenario.

PM: We had a conference call that night with the all of the committee and a lot felt it was bit too much to commit to. Banno though was massively in favour of going for it, as were

Pecky and Bez, and we were all very positive about what an opportunity it was for the club. In the end, we said we would go for it!!!

RB: It was a massive task to take on, and Middle worked so hard through the summer to sort out a million different things. Everything we normally do had to be re-examined and scaled up for this year. Alongside that, Cook was having a really tough time that summer and it looked inevitable at times that he would be an ex-England captain by the time September came round. Thankfully, he found some form in the Test Matches and came out of the other side of that.

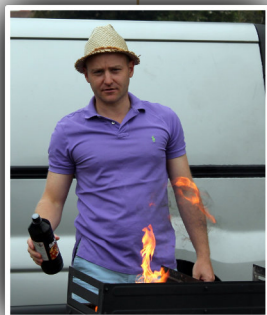
PM: Leading up to the game we had a lot of interest from sponsors and guests, more than we would normally get for the match. I did think at times we had bitten off more than we can chew. We had some extra stuff to arrange such as additional catering, hire a small marquee (which we hadn't done for years), as well as sorting extra toilets and scale everything up.

Benefit games have been blessed with fabulous weather over the years, and thankfully this was no exception – the forecast was set fair, and we were in for a bright and warm day.

PM: Everyone spent the few days before the

game permanently looking at the weather forecast. I cannot tell you how big a relief it was that we had a sunny day for the game!!!

Paul Stratton ('Head of Public Catering'): It's always a great atmosphere on the morning of Benefit Day, as there's generally around 30 volunteers over the park before 8am to get everything ready. I'm usually on gazebo duty, which should be a 20 minute job but ends up taking well over an hour because Banno has lost the instructions again, and four of us end up doing what is basically a teambuilding exercise. Exact same story this year...



PM: Kev Heazle always lifts the spirits at this point, when he turns up with about 50 bacon rolls! We had even more people over in the morning to help out so we actually got everything done quickly. I had gone home to get changed when someone called me to say Cook had arrived!! There was still 3 hours before the game was starting!!

RB: He was the first car in the car park, and he definitely caught us a little by surprise. He was finishing a call in his car, so we didn't want to disturb him but a few of us were hanging about so that we could welcome him properly.

PM: When I got there he was casually having a cup of tea and chatting to Dave Parish and the guys behind the bar. Right from the start he was so relaxed with everyone, chatting to anyone who wanted to chat and stopping for every single photo request.

As well as fielding a strong 1st XI team, the Upminster side always features a 'club' player and a youngster or two. On this occasion, 3rd team seamer Mark d'Cruz (aka "Grumpy") was the lucky player to feature.

Mark d'Cruz: I was actually a late call-up, as there had been a late injury – I remember Pecky texting me and as you can imagine I didn't take long to say yes!

OP: 'Grumps' was pretty nervous on the day itself, and that was only made worse by the rest of the team winding him up. Earlier in the summer he had tweeted that Mark Pettini was "nicking a living" from Essex and wasn't good enough to be in the team....we spent a couple of hours telling Grumpy that Pettini was fuming about this and was out for revenge!

MDC: There was a big crowd gathering very early that day, and I remember being disproportionately nervous! I couldn't eat the pre match curry that I love every year, and the lads were all on at me that Pettini was absolutely furious. I still don't know to this day whether anybody had actually said anything to him or not.

Alan Ison (1st XI batsman): The pre-match curry is always very popular with both teams, never mind all the sponsors and guests. It's always nice to chat with the Essex lads beforehand, and

we've obviously played against quite a few of them in club cricket over the years. Although Grumpy thought we were stitching him up, I don't think anybody said a word about it to any of them!

So far so good, with everybody turning up and the sponsors and guests all being fed and watered in the pavilion. Around the park, the chairs were all taken and the public were making camp around the boundary in huge numbers.

PS: I was in my usual role at the public BBQ and by midday we already had a steady stream of customers and it honestly didn't stop for the next six hours! We had borrowed about five BBQs from various members, and Bezza,

Deaders and Staples were trying to knock out enough burgers and sausages to keep up with demand.

PM: By the time the game started the Park was packed. I have no idea how many people were there but it looked at least double what we normally get, probably around 2,000.

PS: Thankfully we still enjoyed the usual 'reciprocal arrangement' with the Beer Tent, which keeps us fully 'hydrated' and those guys well fed. We got the best of that deal as the beers were definitely flowing well throughout the day, but I don't think they got 30 seconds respite to even have a hot dog! I'd helped stock the Beer Tent in the morning, and I'd taken the precaution of lining up a stash of Bulmers within easy reach of the BBQ.

RB: I think it dawned on us by about 2pm that the crowd was even bigger than we had dared to estimate – everywhere was absolutely buzzing. And I don't think anybody had got within 400 yards of the park that day without Larkey jumping on them and selling them a Programme..he was brilliant that day!

At around 2.30pm, the big match commenced and got underway in dramatic fashion.

OP: Going out for the toss with the current England captain is obviously a fabulous memory that I will tell the grandchildren about. He was a legend at the time, and is even more of a legend now, and the whole day was a great thrill really. The abiding memory for everybody was really what a top bloke he is...really genuine, down to earth, nice guy.

MDC: Yes, the crowd definitely wasn't helping my nerves! I was glad to get onto the pitch and ease my way into the game with some fielding. But when

Pecky saw that Pettini was opening the batting for Essex, he whistled to me at fine leg and told me I was bowling the second over.

OP: Easiest captaincy decision of the year! I'd always start off with our 1st team opening bowlers in the Benefit game, but there was no way we were doing to miss out on this...he was a nervous wreck and I was stood at slip waiting for Pettini to smash his medium pacers out of the park.

MDC: I guess I was all pumped up with nervous energy and so I ran in with everything I had. I think I just wanted to give the illusion to the crowd that I was a genuine opening bowler! I don't think any of us on the field could believe what happened next.

OP: From nowhere, he's bowled an absolute jaffa and knocked Pettini's middle stump out of the ground. It's literally gone cartwheeling about 15 yards and he's cleaned him up in his first over. We just all gattered round with stupid grins on our faces...just couldn't believe it had actually happened.

MDC: I've run in as fast I could and he's just played all around a straight one. It look brilliant though with one stump out of the ground. At the end of the over the umpire said to me "*just tell them all in the bar that it swung in the air and nipped back off the seam through his gate...I'll back you up*", but in reality it was dead straight!

PM: It was pretty surreal when Cook himself finally went out to bat in the Park with 2,000 odd people crowded round watching.

RB: He's not the most natural big hitter in the world is he, and I remember he was scratching around for a while before we got into his stride and made a few big hits. I think we were all grateful he didn't get out early, although I'm sure Pip would have called a no-ball if he needed to!

OP: We had to shout a couple of times early on to make sure the boundary fielders didn't make too much effort to catch him out. One shot went straight to Max Carter-Miller and thankfully he made a total hash of it...he swears he did it on purpose, but I can't believe he was switched on enough to think about that.

MDC: I was fairly low key in the field after that, apart from spilling a catch on the boundary towards the end of the innings. Luckily the crowd weren't too drunk by that point, but one elderly gentleman on the boundary suggested he could have made a better effort than I did!

OP: It's ironic that I would spend all season moaning about how pedestrian we are in the field for 18 weeks of the season. Then a big crowd turns up and all of a sudden the same players start fielding like Jonty Rhodes for two hours.



AI: Fair comment that, although I remember letting one straight through my legs on the boundary and copping some abuse. It happened to be right in front of Paul Hurworth from Ardeigh Green, so that wasn't great

PM: I do remember someone dropping a tough chance off Cook early on and then he entertained everyone with 80-odd before Pecky (of course) got him out with a full bungler (of course).

OP: Haha...my favourite mode of dismissal! It went straight to Shabz and there's no way he would drop the England captain!

Meanwhile, the flow of booze, burgers and ice-creams showed no signs of slowing down on the other side of the boundary.

PS: By mid-afternoon, we were pretty much overwhelmed by the crowds. We have dozens of people queuing up for food, and we obviously couldn't cook it fast enough. It was coming out burnt to a crisp on the outside, but still raw on the inside, and I was doing my best to throw enough onions and cheese on everything to try and cover things up! I can vividly remember Steve O'Dowd bringing his burger back to me and letting me know it was "still ****ing raw"! We had to slow things down a bit at that point, or we'd have had a major Public Health Incident on our hands!

RB: I can remember for a couple of hours in mid-afternoon I was getting handed bundles of money at every turn, whether it was the BBQ, raffle sales or the tea tent. I was responsible for getting it locked up safely, and it was just an unbelievable flow of cash that didn't seem to stop. I kept having to return to the pavilion to lock it all away.

PS: I ripped up the Price List in the end, as people just had to have whatever we happened to have ready at the time.

In the reply, the Upminster side put up a noble effort to chase the runs 328 runs needed for victory.

AI: Freddie and Shabz opened up together and we made a strong start. They were playing big shots and trying to smash it out of the park every ball, so much like every other game that season. After they were out a few of us made 20s and 30s and kept the game moving along.

MDC: When I came out to bat. I managed to get into double figures, and even hit Tymal Mills for 4 which is a nice memory! He was bowling off one pace though, but he still managed to bowl a surprise bouncer at me the next ball! In the end, Pettini actually got his own back and got me out...I imagine my scalp is not too high up on his list to be fair.

OP: A client of mine, Antony Alberti, had made a very large donation in order to play in the team, and he'd told me he was a bowler. But he was so nervous, that he landed his first two deliveries by his own toes and I was wondering what the hell we could do with him. He said he hadn't batted for 15 years, so I was a bit worried for him at that point.

PS: As the game was in its final knockings we totally ran out of burger buns, and I was raiding the freezer at the back of the pavilion for whatever I could find. It was that kind of day – I must have sold about twenty burgers and sausages without any bread at the very end of the day.

OP: Turned out Antony smashed it everywhere...one six was as big as anything the Essex boys had hit...and he nearly won the game for us! He ended up with 50 not out, and he deliberately didn't try and hit the last ball for six as he assumed it was bad form if we were to win the game.

Fittingly, Essex won a high scoring game by 1 run with Cook picking up 3 wickets, and the crowd gathered round the pavilion for the presentation of the giant cheque and a few words from the great man. And once club President David Parrish had finished, Alastair Cook made a heartfelt thank you speech.

PM: After the game I remember Alastair standing for ages and ages signing autographs and posing for photos. Not one request was turned down, an absolute gentleman. His wife, Alice, said they couldn't believe how many people were there and they were all thrilled with how much had been raised for his charities, particularly the David Randall Foundation which he is patron of.

RB: We'd asked the kids (and adults) to wait until the end, and Alastair had promised he'd sign everything and pose for photographs for anybody who wanted one. He was there for more than an hour by the time he had finished. I remember taking him a lager top as he was doing it, and I don't think it touched the sides.

AI: He must have given most of his kit away that day as well! He was giving out shirts and all sorts to the kids, as were a lot of the Essex guys.

OP: After the crowds had disappeared, a few of us sat in the Away dressing room with him and had a couple of drinks. He chatted really openly about everything and was great company – he certainly wasn't keen to rush off and was very generous with his time.

With the sun beginning to set on an incredible day, it's straight into the job of packing everything up again before darkness falls. Finally, a chance to rest tired feet and enjoy a couple of beers whilst swapping stories of the day.

PM: I think it's pretty tough now to think how many people put in so much effort to get the game on and for it to run so smoothly. To cater for 2000 people including about 150 guests and sponsors is a pretty amazing effort. The lads on the BBQ and in the beer tent just didn't stop the whole day. The way everyone pulled together should give everyone a feeling of immense pride.

PS: Although memories of the Benefit Day tend to blur together over the years, this one stands out for the sheer size of the crowd. It was like nothing we'd ever seen before; although we expected a big crowd to show up, I think it still took most of us by surprise that there were quite so many people.

RB: It's always a full on day, and everyone was totally spent by the time we'd finished this one. I just remember everybody was floating on air really...the day couldn't have gone better, it had been a brilliant day and we were all so proud to be a part of it.

PM: We were all absolutely exhausted by the end of the day! But yes we were all delighted with how it had gone, and that we'd done ourselves so proud as a club – hosting the England captain for the day and putting on such a great event was a great feeling.

PS: I've no idea how much money we raised on the BBQ that day, but it blew all expectations out of the window. We'd been offloading the takings throughout the day into Mission Control, and then Middle oversees the counting up operation after everything has been cleared away. It must have been gone 9.30pm when I realised I still had £700 in my back pocket, so I went and added it to the pot. I thought he'd be pleased, but I got a massive rocket from Middle as he'd just finished writing up all the numbers!

OP: To see the park absolutely buzzing all afternoon was brilliant. It was such a major undertaking to put the event on, and the fact it passed off without any real issues was testament to the planning and the efforts that so many people put in.

PS: I was devasted a couple of years later to find that the BBQ had basically been outsourced to a professional outfit that knew what they were doing. I made the immediate decision to retire the famous straw boater.

PM: We went to Cook's match and dinner at Wanstead two weeks later and he came and sat at our table for a while and had a really good chat and he said how much he had enjoyed it etc. These guys obviously know how to say the right thing, but there's no doubt he was genuinely appreciative and had enjoyed his day with us.





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Well, what a season 2020 has been! With the prospect of getting any cricket played looking extremely remote at the start of April, it was so rewarding that we managed to get games in at all our grounds most weeks when playing was given the go ahead. The main square was in use virtually every Saturday and Sunday from early July until late September and the decision to direct our groundsman Mark Severn to prepare the square as in previous years paid dividends. Our out-grounds at Coopers and Campion were also being prepared for matches and thanks must go to both schools for being pro-active and accommodating our requests.

With so much work undertaken on the main square over the past two autumns, this year only top dressing and some aeration will be required on all three of our squares. Late September and October have been so wet, which has prevented Mark from completing the post-season work when he would have liked, however he has managed to scarify, dress and seed Coopers' and Campions' squares. The main square has been scarified and treated, but Mark is looking for a window where a few days of dry weather are forecast which will enable him to complete the work at Upminster Park and put the square to bed for the winter.

During the early part of the season, it was decided that we would install a removable fence around the square to protect our playing surface and prevent damage from unwanted pedestrian traffic. Chris Moore custom made the poles, which were sunk into the ground with the help of John Curtis, Paul Middlemiss, as well as others who helped out during lockdown. Although there were concerns that the new fence could be vandalised, thankfully, there were only a handful of incidents where the rope and poles were displaced. Last weekend, the permanent winter fence was installed and thanks must go to Don Triggs, Mark Hortop, Kevin Roome and Rob Bannister who gave up their Saturday morning to assist. Hopefully, the winter fence will again afford the playing surface the protection over the winter months.

As well as the work undertaken on the square, the club invested in new net facilities and took delivery of new containers to store equipment, which also incorporates an elevated score box and viewing gallery.

Unfortunately, some vandals found a way of getting up onto the top of the containers and caused damage to the decking, however the implementation of some anti-climb paint will hopefully prevent further damage. The containers and scorebox will be ready for use at the start of the 2021 season and the club is extremely grateful to

James Evans who has given up numerous hours of his own time to install the electrical cabling to power the facilities.

I would once again like to thank everyone who has given up their time to help out with the various ground duties and maintenance during the course of the season. Without the help and hard work from club members, it would not be possible, or financially feasible to continue to develop and improve our facilities for all members.

Finally, I would like to wish you an enjoyable winter and let's hope that next season, we can return to some kind of normality, whatever that may look like!

Bobby

Bobby Mack
House & Grounds Secretary



A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS



As we come to the end of our 4th year as the Main Club Sponsor, we feel very proud to be involved with such a wonderful community club. The spirit and dedication shown by all involved, from the youngest club member to the Club Chairman, has been amazing during such a difficult time.

We have missed the annual Benefit Game and seeing everyone, but we hope that this will mean that next year will be even bigger and better! That said, we were so pleased for you all when the restrictions were lifted to allow at least half a season of cricket for everybody.

Since March we have been working hard supporting our clients during this very strange year. Our website and monthly newsletter do provide plenty of information, but I thought I would provide you with a summary of help offered by the government as follows:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Grant Extension

This will be limited to self-employed individuals who are currently eligible for the SEISS, and available to individuals who are actively continuing to trade but are facing reduced demand due to COVID-19.

The Job Support Scheme

The existing scheme known as the furlough scheme, comes to an end on 31 October. As part of the Winter Economy Plan the government announced it will be introducing a new Job Support Scheme from 1 November 2020.

The Jobs Retention Bonus

The Bonus will provide a one-off payment of £1,000 to UK employers for every furloughed employee who remains continuously employed through to the end of January 2021 and who earns at least £520 a month on average between 1 November 2020 and 31 January 2021.

Enhanced Time to Pay for self-assessment taxpayers

Taxpayers were able to defer the income tax self-assessment payment on account for 2019/20, due by 31 July 2020, to 31 January 2021.

Cash grants for businesses

Business required to close because of local lockdowns can claim up to £3,000 per month. Under the expansion, firms whose premises are legally required to shut for some period over winter as part of a local or national lockdown will receive grants to pay the wages of employees who cannot work.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss any of these points further. We welcome all enquiries and do let us know you're from the cricket club when you call.

Wishing you all the very best over the next few months and hope you all keep safe and well.

Esin

Esin Hunter
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On the Field



It was a season that looked for a long time like it would never start, but in the end it was a hugely enjoyable and successful one for all who played senior cricket for the club. 2020 was a season like no other in the Club's 162 year history, but it turned out to be a memorable one in so many ways.

After such a positive pre-season, under the guidance of new Head Coach Scott Simmons, there were high hopes for the summer for all of the club's senior sides, so the delayed start to the campaign was especially frustrating. While cricket seemed insignificant in the context of the Nation's problems, there was a sense of excitement, relief, anticipation and togetherness when the season started on the 11th July with a weekend of friendlies. After four months where members had not been able to do many of the things they would normally take for granted, getting out on the cricket pitch with friends and enjoying some sport was a much needed boost for many. Availability for most weeks of the season was better than ever, and there was a great atmosphere around the club and ground on matchdays.

The league season began on 18th July and while many of our members, and members at other clubs, were left a little confused by some of the divisional set ups, we must be grateful and thankful that the SNEL Committee put a structure in place at all at a time when many leagues around the country had thrown in the towel for 2020.

The 1st XI enjoyed a positive, if ultimately frustrating season in the Ten Doeschate Division. There were a number of comfortable victories, a couple of tight affairs, two rain offs and an extraordinary climax to the season with defeat off the final ball of the season to Chelmsford 2nd XI who snuck in to take the title out of Upminster's hands.

For the 2nd XI there were no such problems on the last day of the season. Eight wins from eight, and a rain off against title rivals Hutton saw Nicky Ison's men claim the Prichard Division crown by the narrowest of margins. The side amassed some huge scores along the way as Tom Daniels, Stu Connor, Adam Qusted and the captain himself piled up the runs. Bowler of the Year Sam Twine, Mark D'Cruz, Ellis Pickering and Shaffiq Rahman shone with the ball while Ehsan Afzal showed his all round ability when not on duty with the 1st XI. Captain Ison was certainly pleased with the campaign. "At the end of a truncated season like 2020 I think we can all look back on things in a really positive way and with a lot of hope that we've put in place good foundations for a successful challenge in 2021. If the core of the squad can stay together then we can seriously push for promotion next summer."

It was a slightly disappointing season for the 3rd XI after two Premier Division titles in 2018 and 2019. They ended up in fourth place in the Harmer Division, although they were still in the hunt for the title as the season went into the final two games. Wicket keeper Paul Middlemiss felt it was still a positive ten weeks. "I think all of us were just glad to play some cricket in reality. We under performed in one or two games and lost two tight ones, but as always in the 3rd XI everyone who played enjoyed themselves, and at a time like this that element was in many ways more important than the results themselves." New recruits Akabur

Rahman and Louie Collins starred with bat and ball respectively, while Dan Simpson and Andrew Berry also made good contributions and the captain Ollie White enjoyed his best senior season to date.

Ian Munn led the 4th XI to the runners spot in their division. An early season defeat against Brentwood in a rain affected contest proved crucial, but they put in some excellent performances against Chelmsford and Hutton to stay in the title race until the end of the season. Most pleasing for Munn would have been the emergence of youngsters Jamie Green, Gus Siggins, Harry King and George King who all showed their potential for the future.

The 5th XI were also in the title hunt until the last round of matches as new skipper Aalok Latey enjoyed his first season as captain. Alex Bottoms, a veteran of many campaigns in the lower elevens, enjoyed a superb season with the bat, and he was well supported by Rafe Smallman and Nathan Brown. Brown also kept superbly to claim the Club's Fielder of the Year award, while Michael Jones supported the captain well with the ball (and an extensive red wine collection).

It was a sign of how much people were enjoying their cricket and wanting to get in some sporting action at the weekends, that the 6th XI were able to play a number of friendly fixtures during the season after struggling for numbers in the previous two campaigns. Captain Ray Calder was able to call upon the services of a number of old hands, new faces and promising youngsters as they played various local clubs. Many thanks must also go to Chairman of Selectors Karim Govani and Fixture Secretary Nicky Ison for getting the side so much action.

All in all there were more than 60 games played against other clubs, a phenomenal effort in an 11 week season. Nearly 40 of those games were won, showing how well everyone performed, and there were a plethora of good individual performances from a number of our young players. But most of all after four months of lockdown everyone enjoyed their cricket and enjoyed being part of a season like no other.

First Team Captain - Alan Ison

While that was not the way Alan Ison and his side would have wanted to finish the campaign it was still a great year in many ways. Callum Berry, just 14 years old, came into the side and impressed with bat and in the field and picked up the Colt of the Year award, while newcomer Pulkit Gupta made an instant impression with the willow and claimed the Batsman of the Year gong. Nehal Butt and Ehsan Afzal were also great additions to the side while youngsters Ellis Pickering and Kiran Kullar impressed.



"Despite the late start to the season, I have to say that it was a very enjoyable season and I was really pleased with how we performed" Ison commented.

"The new guys all settled in well, on and off the pitch, and Callum was a real bonus in the way he performed in a number of games."

"It actually feels like the whole club has progressed upwards by a couple of levels in the last 12 months, with the coaching regime totally transformed and big investments in the nets and bowling machines this year. What's really been amazing is the take up on the Women's Whack and all of the girls junior training that's been happening. It's all massively developed this year and it's brilliant to see the club wider its attraction like this – let's hope we can continue to support and develop the women's and girls cricket even more over the next few years."

With old hands like the skipper, Ollie Peck, John Curtis, Harry Jenkins, Louis Pickering, James Evans and James Aggio-Brewer also showing they still have plenty to offer things are looking really bright for the 2021 season. Division One will be very different to the Ten Doeschate Division but there is no reason why Ison and his men should not approach next year in a

Colts Season Review

228 children take part in summer of cricket despite difficult situation

The euphoria of the winter colts sessions with Scott Simmons, and Essex players Adam Wheeler and Aaron Beard, (as well as the appearance of the County Championship and Vitality Blast trophies at one session) was quickly forgotten in late March and early April when it became clear the 2020 summer would not proceed as planned for our junior section of over 200 children.

Not to be put off, Coach Simmons soon put new plans into place and on the 24th April, Friday night cricket for all began as normal.....well nearly as normal!! The colts season began in glorious sunshine in peoples back gardens, as Zoom came to the rescue and enabled junior cricket to continue. That first session saw an astonishing 200 log ins as our junior members, and their families, enjoyed a series of fielding and bowling drills to get the season underway. Over the next 11 weeks every boys and girls squad would take part in their own designated midweek session before all of our colts came together for the Friday night fun session. During that period there were well over 2,000 individual log ins to the sessions, with an average of nearly 100 log ins per session on Friday evenings alone!! For the most part the sun was shining but when the rain did fall our new Head Coach was on hand to move things inside and take our young players through the tactical aspects of the game.

Friday 3rd July saw the announcement that everyone in cricket had been waiting for, meaning that from the following weekend the game, and outdoor training could recommence!! There were several caveats to this green light, and the next 10 days saw Scott Simmons and all the Team Managers put in a huge amount of work to make sure outdoor sessions could begin. The last Zoom session (for now) took place on the 10th July and on Monday 13th the U11 squad were the first to step outside and begin training.

Each squad would have their own evening training session as in normal years, with squads divided into smaller groups so social



distancing could take place, but the Friday night sessions for all age groups had to be put on hold due to the situation. The Team Managers also continued to work incredibly hard to get as many games in place as possible in various competitions so that nobody missed out on their cricket fix!!!

One of the biggest successes of the summer was the continuation from the winter of our girls training sessions. These sessions took place in separate age groups across four nights each week and thanks to Scott's enthusiasm and the work of Ladies and Girls Co-Ordinator Kerry Quinlan, and the rest of the managers, they were well supported and great fun for those taking part. In all 53 girls between 4 and 14 took part in the programme and the U11 girls showed how much progress had been made by winning the softball competition which the Club hosted in August. Winter sessions for the girls have now commenced with nearly 50 of those are signed up for the indoor training and girls teams entered in the U10 and U12 Central District Indoor leagues for the first time.

Windmill Whack Review

The 2020 Windmill Whack season was like none of the previous four campaigns for a whole host of reasons. The games were crammed into a 7 week period due to the delayed start to the season, the squads were assembled at short notice due to the uncertainty around when cricket could commence, and for the first time ever there was a Women's Edition of the popular interclub competition.

Credit must go to Chairman Ollie Peck and the captains of the five franchises in the men's competition for getting their squads together and organised during such strange times. The squads looked very evenly matched when revealed in the days before the opening round of matches on 19th July. The Chairman's Choice looked to have the ability and experience to overcome their obvious fitness issues and they started with two wins in their opening two contests, while the Hunter Hurricane's struggled early



on and were on the verge of elimination after their opening pair of games. Meanwhile the Govani Maestros, the Apple Finance Firebirds and the Kushoom Bugh Tigers all picked up a win early on to keep themselves in contention. The Maestros then overcame the Firebirds in an excellent group contest that was marred by a nasty injury to Birds' batsman Paul Stratton, but that was the Birds' only defeat as they topped the group to advance straight to the Grand Final while the Maestros claimed a play-off spot where they would face the Choice who nudged out the Tigers for third place in slightly controversial circumstances. James Aggio-Brewe's young and improving Maestros then saw off the Choice in the morning play-off on Finals Day and they continued that form in the Grand Final where a brilliant knock from Arun Kullar helped see off the Firebirds despite a gutsy innings from Tom Hilson. Aggio-Brewe did a marvellous job getting the best out of his side and the Maestros were worthy winners of Windmill Whack V.

Five sides lined up in the first ever women's edition of the event. The Ace Avengers, Burley's Bandits, The Sharks, The Phoenix and The Panthers were all vying to become the inaugural winners of the competition. The Sharks showed some excellent form in their

opening games to make themselves the early favourites, but all the other franchises picked up victories to stay in contention for a place in the Grand Final. In the end it was Burley's Bandits who emerged from the pack to claim second spot in the group and go forward to face the Sharks in the showpiece game. In front of a large crowd the Bandits bowled and fielded superbly, captain Vicky Waters to the fore, to give themselves a chance of victory. But in the end Claire Dixey's batting and Freya Killilea's bowling proved the difference as Sharks' captain Jemma Cresswell accepted the trophy from Chairman Ollie Peck.

The Windmill Whack is always a great event and popular with club members, but 2020 saw it take on even greater significance. After four months in lockdown and with all the uncertainty and worry that this brought, the event gave everyone a great opportunity to get out, play some cricket and catch up with other members and friends in a safe and socially distanced environment. There was great support at all the matches and the addition of the women's event proved an overwhelming success. Well done to all involved and all who played or came to watch. Roll on 2021!!





2020 Awards

After the final league games of the season had taken place, and the club members were enjoying alfresco drinks on a pleasant September evening, the annual club awards were announced during a break in a very competitive Beer Pong competition.

The playing awards were tightly contested this season, with many outstanding performances across all teams. Our congratulations go to all of the worthy winners below.

President's Batsman of the Year Award – Pulkit Gupta

1st XI newcomer Pulkit Gupta claimed the batting award after a fine first season with the club.

Also nominated: Tom Daniels, Akibur Rahman, Arun Kullar and Alex Bottoms.

Colin Hart Bowler of the Year Award – Louie Collins

Young leg spinner Louie Collins picked up the bowling award after an excellent season for the 3rd XI.

Also nominated: Ollie Peck, Sam Twine, Jamie Green and Michael Jones.

Fielder of the Year Award – Nathan Brown

Young wicket keeper Nathan Brown scooped the award after an excellent season behind the stumps for the 4th and 5th XI.

Also nominated: Callum Berry, Adam John Qusted, Andrew Berry and Mike Larke.

John Nash Colt of the Year Award – Callum Berry

Callum Berry took the award after a breakthrough season for the 1st XI. 14 year old Berry has impressed throughout the truncated season, making 50 against Goresbrook and playing a vital knock yesterday against Chelmsford.

John Dean Team of the Year Award – Upminster U9s

For the first time this award was won by a colts team, as our U9s were announced as winners. The team won the MEDCB Don Coates Trophy after a brilliant season, squeezing 19 games into their nine week season and using 43 of their young players.

Keith Martin Club Person of the Year Award – Upminster Cricket Club

At the end of a very unique season, the judging committee wanted to recognise the way in which the whole club membership had come together to support the club financially, and work together to make social events and training sessions via Zoom possible, and make the match day experiences as positive as were possible.

The very worthy individual nominations for this award were:

Chairman Ollie Peck for his tireless work over the last few months to get cricket played and for organising two hugely successful on-line social events;

Rob Mack for his amazing efforts to keep all of our grounds in good order and ready to play on during this difficult season; Andrea Osborne and Tony Graves for their tireless efforts running our take away bar service on four or five nights a week since July;

Young members of Upminster Cricket Club have been recognised by the Jack Petchey Foundation for nearly two decades for outstanding contribution that they have made for the club.

We are delighted to announced that this year's winners are:

Mitansh Shah; Fenton Everingham; Kai Bannister; Michael Pedrick; Amy Pedrick; Ross Taylor; Emily Quinlan; Ethan Berry; Louis Collins

Each young person has been put forward by a panel of young people, all of whom have been previous winners of the Jack Petchey Award scheme. Contributions that have been recognised include being valued team members; individual performances that have inspired their team winning a match; sportsmanship; volunteering and supporting fellow team members.

The committee of Upminster Cricket Club would like to congratulate all nominees on their awards and they will all be presented with their certificates and medals in due course.

S P O N S O R S H I P

Well, that was a strange summer, but at least we got matches in!!

Squeezing so many games into such a short time period though led to some cracking weekends up at the Main Ground, with several double-headers of both the men's and women's Windmill Whack.

Thank you to all involved, but special thanks to Andrew Bennett (ACE Avengers) and Paul Burley (Burley's Bandits) for your financial support in helping get this first ladies season up and running. I look forward to seeing this grow in the coming seasons, hopefully with the addition of new team sponsors. Please don't hesitate to have a chat with me or any committee member if you'd like to sponsor a team or have a suggestion for businesses to approach.

(Don't forget to mentioned the cricket club to obtain your Ace discount, whenever you're in there)

Thank you to all our Whack franchise sponsors, your continued support is very much appreciated, and I look forward to welcoming you back next season.

I'd also like to express a huge thanks to our main sponsor, Hunters, who very generously provided us with the plastic, non-disposable, cups for the Pavilion and enabled us to put on numerous drinks promotions this summer. It certainly appeared to be a very popular move!!



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We also welcomed First Class Learning as a new sponsor at the end of this season. First Class Learning is an Ofsted registered Maths and English tuition service, managed by club member Ray Calder. The tuition programme is tailored to each child through a Skills Assessment, and Ray is offering FREE assessments and registration for UCC members, their friends and relatives, giving a saving of £60. Please do contact Ray for further information on 07710 392 503 or hornchurch@firstclasslearning.co.uk.

Sponsorship is an incredibly important form of revenue for the club, if not least to help keep annual membership as low as possible, but also provides valuable revenue for the Pavilion Redevelopment Fund.

SPONSORSHIP

Continued

We are keen to involve and work with as many local businesses as possible, so if you know of, work for, or own a local business and would like to become involved with the club, please speak to me or any Committee member or email sponsorship@upminstercc.co.uk

We have an array of different level sponsorship options, with varying benefits to the sponsors. We can also adjust and tailor sponsorship packages to the individual business.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Do you own a Company or involved with a Company that would like to have your name on some new wicket covers? Please get in touch, these would be on permanent display in the park. With the addition of the new, larger nets, the covers, when not in use, would be stored in the nets, providing all year-round advertising.

UGC 200 Club

On the final Colts day of the season, we were joined by Aaron Beard, from Essex CCC, who kindly helped carry out the 200 Club draw, with the lucky winners being;

August	Lisa Gane	£128
September	Ann & Chris Evans	£128

October is our **BIG DRAW MONTH**, with a prize fund currently standing at **£1290**. You need to be in it to win it, so please sign up – we will confirm the date of the draw shortly!

You can sign up for as many numbers as you wish. Why not have a number for each of your kids (no need to tell them if they win!!). Visit the club website and sign up.

- The cost for a number is £50 – paid in two instalments of £25 six months apart.
- A monthly draw, with a chance to win up to £2000
- With 200 members, the draw would be 10x £200, 1x £1000 & 1x £2000, over the year. (Winnings are prorated, according to the number of players)
- The revenue is split equally between the prize fund and the Pavilion Redevelopment Fund.

All details are on the website, or please ask any of the Committee members for more details.

Stu

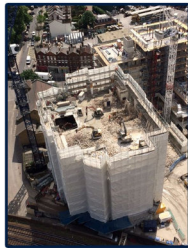
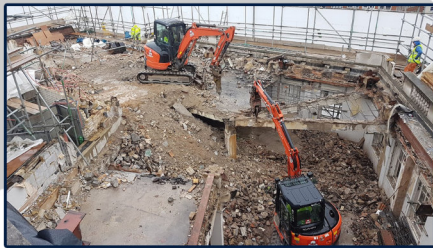
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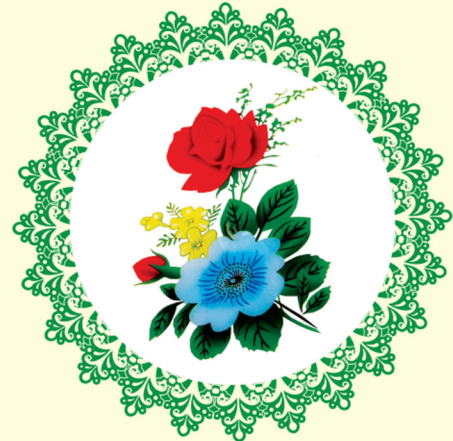
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