

## **Academy Report 2006**

The Academy started the year with 36 members and had a target of 50 for the year end. We achieved the target within a few weeks and ended the year with 68 members. We ran an under-13 league team in the West Surrey Youth Cricket League, and played several under-12 and under-10 friendly matches.

The under-13 league season started with a home win against Chobham followed by a loss on a very rainy night at Chertsey. In between we had faced the problem of fielding what was essentially an under-12 side in an under-13 competition and picked up a heavy defeat at the hands of a much bigger Walton on Thames side in the National Knockout Cup. A win against Old Woking put us momentarily at the top of the league table. However we lost the next game at Pyrford – a match we could have, and indeed I believe would have, won later in the season with greater experience - and were left with the three top teams in the league to play in our last four games. We suffered heavy defeats against Walton on Thames – albeit half as heavy as the defeat in the cup match - Woking and Horsell and Weybridge, interspersed with a close defeat by Whiteley Village.

The key to the season was that we were essentially playing a side of under-12s and 2 under-10s in an under-13 league. As such we suffered from the physical difference in size between us and the opposition, but on the positive side we have created a squad that will compete at the same level of cricket next year with the experience of this year's campaign. On one occasion an opponent commented to us that they had a young team out, with 4 under-12s playing. We retorted with the fact that we had 9 under-12s playing, the other two places being taken by under-10s. We must recall that the majority of these clubs have been running colts sections for years; this was only really our second full operating year.

The under-13 and under-12 matches were played with limited success result wise but it gave us ample opportunity to give some playing experience to those who didn't quite make the league side. Unfortunately our attempts to find similar standard teams failed on the whole and many "B" sides we played were still far too strong for us at this stage of our development. There were, however, some very good individual performances during the friendly matches and we will continue to use these games to give more experience to all our Academy members in 2007.

The under-10s had four friendly matches in 2006 and again struggled a little due to lack of experience. We fielded a number of players who were under-9s, under 8-s and even an under-6 in the last match so it was inevitable that victories would be hard to come by. But it's not all about winning and many of these very promising young cricketers will come back stronger and better prepared in 2007 and beyond as a result.

Another interesting fact worth recording is the fact that we have attracted a number of girls to the Academy this year. We started the season with one and ended it with 10 of varying ages. This does present some interesting opportunities for the Academy, including the possibility in the not too distant future to develop a girls' side.

Our overall aim this year was to coach the members and develop their techniques through what would be their first experience of truly competitive cricket outside of a school scenario. We achieved this and I am sure that members who saw the Academy in May and then again in August will have noticed the significant difference in performance, not only in the technical skills but also in their cricket awareness and all the skills that older members of the club will take for granted such as backing up, walking in and running and calling correctly.

## **FfK**

We remain continually grateful to our sponsors Fuel for Kids who support the Academy in more ways than simply making a financial contribution. All Academy members have the FfK Avorians shirt, as indeed do the coaches. FfK kindly sponsored our awards night and added the FfK under-10, under-11, under-13 Batsman of the Year award to the FfK Most improved player that they kindly sponsored last year. They certainly received some good press coverage from the awards night and they now provide samples for us to supply our opponents with.

## **Awards Night**

The awards night was a resounding success. The tournament was won by "Peter's Panthers", captained by Academy captain James Palmer, who beat "Will's Warriors" in the final, contested by the two unfancied teams in the tournament. A great night was enjoyed by all and we all appreciated the presence of many senior members of the club, who came to show their support. Many thanks to everyone who supported the event and special thanks to our overseas professional Mark Higgs and 1<sup>st</sup>XI captain Jerry Hinds, for their assistance in the presentation of the awards.

Awards were presented to:

Player of the Season	James Palmer
Most Improved	Chris Smith
U13 Batsman	Jonathan Tribe
U13 Bowler	Will Davis
U11 Batsman	Ewan McTaggart
U11 Bowler	Dominic Worth
U9 Batsman	Hamish Webb

U9 Bowler	Harry Barr
Best Newcomer	Bea Mather

## **Test Match**

This year we held an internal Academy Test Match, all day with 1 hour's play equating to 1 Test Match day, with none of the usual limits on batting and bowling that the league rules enforce. It gave the members the chance to play longer innings and think more about the game as a whole as opposed to worrying about the next two overs. It was a great experience for all and we are aiming to have at least another 2 Test Matches next year with the prize being the Ashes of a stump broken during the season. Special mention must go to Jonathan Tribe who in the first over of the "5<sup>th</sup> Day" completed the first 50 scored by an Academy member.

## **Academy v Dads**

Held as the last game of the year the Dads, captained by Tim Moore, took on the Academy (captained by Sam Moore) in a 30 over match, which was somewhat closer than the actual drawn result implies. The Dads were struggling at 84-9 when Darren Talbot (the Dads' ringer!) joined Peter Worth with 10 overs remaining. Fortunately for the Dads and no doubt to avoid a season of ribbing from their Academy charges next year, Darren (32 off 32 balls) and Peter (45 off 41 balls) steered the Dads to a respectable 170-9 off their 30 overs. The Academy closed at 90-9 off their 30 overs and the match was declared a draw. Through the stiffness of the morning(s) after, the sobering thought hit us all that next year the Academy members will be a year bigger, and the Dads will be a year older! Watch this space for next year's return match.

## **The Website**

We have spent much time writing new material for our section of the website which we hope to go live soon. We are still looking for some help updating the Academy part of the website which has more than doubled the workload of our overworked volunteer webmaster, David Miller. If you would like to help, and have been or are willing to be CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked by the ECB, then we would love to hear from you as soon as possible.

## **The Ground**

As always, our thanks go to John Lane for the production of our match wickets and practice surfaces. It is critical in our belief that people should learn the game on good surfaces and with the facilities provided by John, our members can certainly benefit from that. John's continued support and passion for the Academy has been invaluable.

## **2007 and beyond**

### **Winter nets**

A most important part of our pre-season, particularly as our league season is compressed into roughly the first two months of the summer and we are planning to "hit the ground running" in 2007 to fulfil our aiming of winning the under-13 league which is by no means beyond us. We hope to start with sessions at the end of January, making sure that the teams are raring to go by the end of April. Details will be e-mailed and put onto the website in the next few weeks.

### **The League**

Next year we will compete in both the under-13 and the under-11 leagues. The under-13 squad will have its basis very much in the members who played this year as under-12s in the under-13s. The under-11s may well be fielding a young team and face some of the challenges that our league team faced this year. I am sure that they will face it with true Avorians spirit.

### **Girls**

As indicated above we now have a significant number of lady Academy members. Some will no doubt be pushing for places in the under-11 team – where mixed cricket is allowed – whereas others are just learning the game. We feel that this group may well benefit from being coached, for part of each session, as a group on their own by a lady coach. We have approached Surrey County Cricket Club, who have indicated that they have someone who may be able to help us. Clearly this has benefits for us, not least in terms of our geographic position opposite Notre Dame School and we very much hope to be able to attract some of their pupils to join us in 2007.

### **Senior Cricket**

We are one club and we hope that, all factors being equal, the Academy will provide the senior team with high quality players in the years to come. We feel that, subject to parental consent, in 2007 some of our older, bigger and higher ability members may be ready to make their "senior" debuts for the Sunday team and maybe even the odd Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>XI league match as opportunities arise. It is also our intention to start up a Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>XI in the next 2 or 3 years with the aim of this becoming the breeding ground for future 1<sup>st</sup>XI stars hopefully guided by one or two coaches and dads if they can be cajoled out of "retirement" and if they can build up enough "Brownie points" at home during the coming winters!

## **Awards Night**

This year we had 46 players at the awards night. We have reached the size when we have to consider whether the event suits in a mid afternoon – early evening format. In any event, a continued increase in the size of the Academy will make such an evening as we held this year as impracticable. We are thinking about how we may be able to work this event next year in a different way.

## **Coach Development and Clubmark**

This winter Peter Worth, Ashley Golder, Will Cooper and I will take the UKCC2 coaching certificate, Simon Yorke will take the UKCC1 certificate. Along with Brian Burgess and Steve Harpley, this will give us 7 qualified coaches (assuming we all pass!!). When all of our coaches become members of the ECB Coaches Association, we should then be in a position to achieve Clubmark status for the club. We have also made tentative enquires as regards becoming involved in "Chance to Shine" for 2008.

## **The Academy**

Between 2004 and 2006, we have expanded in size considerably. We have capacity to further expand, but it is not limitless. We need to ensure that we retain the good coach: Academy member ratio, continue to deliver a high quality of coaching, and ensure that we continue to run an efficient and safe Academy. We are now considering how to restructure the responsibilities within the Academy as it is clearly now not a "one man" job to run it. We hope to approach 2007 with new responsibilities split amongst the coaches, to ensure that we continue to deliver, what we know is, a top class service to our members. Should any senior members feel that they would like to help us by coaching on a regular basis on a Friday night, we would be delighted to hear from them. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

## **Conclusion**

2006 was another year of positive development for the Academy. Our job however is not finished, in reality it is just beginning. In the near future we hope to run a girls' team and an under-15 league team and we wish to continue to expand the numbers in the Academy. Such developments will bring pressures onto the club; we like to think that they are "problems of success" (always the nicest ones to have) as opposed to other types of problems and we feel confident that we will resolve them as they appear.

I am indebted as ever to the people who assist the Academy including my committee – Peter Worth, Simon Yorke, Ashley Golder, Brian Burgess, Will Cooper,

Matthew Jacobs, Steve Harpley and Jayne Mather, all the people who make teas, do the drinks, run the score box, score, transport kids and provide the type of support that makes the functioning of the Academy possible. My thanks also go to Tina Talbot for her efforts as Child Welfare Officer. Finally I would like to thank Sharon Evers of Surrey County Cricket Club for her continuing support as we develop the Academy.

We are all very much looking forward to 27<sup>th</sup> April when we reconvene at Convent Lane for Friday coaching when once again 60 kids plus, some who have just started learning the game and some who are challenging to get into our league sides, will be playing cricket and having fun, hopefully on a warm spring evening. This is what cricket is all about and we all feel privileged that the Academy has provided us the opportunity to coach the future generations, thereby putting something back into the game that we all love so much.

**Darren Talbot**