

Avorians Cricket Club

Ground Report for season 2003/4

No report can be compiled without first congratulating the 1st XI on the fantastic success achieved in 2003 by gaining promotion to the elite Premier Division of the Surrey Championship.

This is all the more significant as it was achieved in the 75th anniversary of the club at a time when the club was featured as the focus in the championship Handbook.

Well done Benny and the boys!

Let's hope the wickets produced at the Avorians assisted with that promotion.

Generally I was pleased with the wickets I produced in 2003 however the general complaint was that the wickets were slow!

Let me deal with the reason for the lack of pace in the square.

The square was laid in 1947 so it is now all of 56 years old and as many Groundsman will tell you the effective life of a square is 25 years. So the only way to get more pace is to dig up the square and relay it.

As this would cost in upwards of £40,000, there seems little hope of that happening as the club has more pressing financial matters to deal with. So dealing with what we have is the only option.

In order to obtain more pace with what we have I have embarked on a heavy spiking programme through the autumn and the winter to try to get deeper root growth.

This is showing benefits already and together with fertilisers aimed at promoting the root growth I hope the desired results will be seen by all. The square is now well grown and has recovered from the rigours of the 2003 season.

The outfield has posed bigger problems with the long hot dry summer on the basically sandy soil. This has resulted in a lot of the grass dying and the proliferation of moss.

To try to combat both issues I have hand spiked the entire outfield using the Patterson wicket spiker.

Although this took four days to achieve I can already see beneficial results and with the application of fertilisers I am hopeful that the outfield will recover sufficiently.

Spraying with soluble iron in the spring will kill most of the moss and raise the PH of the soil.

I have dealt with the main issues I intend to follow however there is the issue of who does any of these tasks if I am unable to undertake them through injury or illness!

No one in the club has shown the remotest interest in the upkeep of the ground and I don't think anyone else knows how to start the mower!

If there was someone in the club who is interested I would be only too willing to show them how to deal with the ground issues in my absence.

If no one comes forward I must remind you that to employ someone to do the job would cost the club £8,000 per annum and that is something that this club can ill afford.

There are issues on the ground that will also need a band of willing volunteers notably for leaf clearing in January / February 2004 and preparing the ground in March for the upcoming season.

As the end of season 2003 work party was badly attended as usual, it seems that the memberships lack of general interest remains.

However if the necessary assistance is not forthcoming in 2004 then you will have to play in the conditions that the ground finds itself in!

Please do not take the issues I have outlined lightly as if you wish to continue playing cricket at Convent Lane at a club with ambitions then you have to give a little time yourselves in order to ensure its continued existence!

John Lane-Groundsman