



HARD BALLS!!

Springfield Cricket Club Newsletter

Welcome to the July 2015 edition of Hard Balls, our clubs newsletter covering results, performances and highlights from around the club. Dont forget if you have anything you want to add or comment on please send Paul or Jimmy a mail so they can include in the next edition

In This Edition:

- More from El Presidente!
- The season so far from our captains
- Colts team section
- Crib, Striders, Spring Chicks, Tigers updates
- Kendo Quote of the Month
- Dr Warley's Injury Reports
- Mazza's Amazing Facts
- Views from the East

President John

And his coats of many colours

Cricket is now well underway, but back in April I was delighted to join our pre-season tour games in Anston and Kiveton where our club skipper Jim Symonds correctly predicted exceptional exchange rates for the Yorkshire Groat against the British Pound!

In early May I was on the island of Vis in Croatia to watch the International six-a-side cricket tournament (see Russ's article in this magazine). At the dinner and award ceremony, Andy won the "Services to Vis Tourism Award" for NOT actually crashing-out overnight on a park bench this year! Our host and Vis team skipper Oliver Rocki was again, of course, in legendary form (and for those who have seen my camouflage suit yes it did make a "notable" appearance at the Vis reception party!)

My best wishes to all our cricketers and every success to the Striders. I hope to see you on President's Day on Sunday 19 July, if not before.

Skip Speaks!

The Club Captains

Rant:



We reach the 2nd half of the season and with it bring you the second edition of the new SCC Hardballs newsletter, a light-hearted look at everything currently going on in the club.

Firstly however some sad news as we lost two much loved members of the club in the past few weeks.

Neil Carr passed away while holidaying in Jersey, Neil will be fondly remembered as the archetypal Sunday 2nd team player, a swashbuckling left hand bat and wicketkeeper who would use every part of his body to stop the ball, and would always win a muddy pads competition! Neil also knew the best way to guarantee selection every week...and was therefore always the first person to offer skipper Russ a beer after each and every game.

Roger 'Thommo' Thomson passed away in Broomfield Hospital. Thommo joined the club back in the 70's and gave many years of service in many guises, bar secretary for years, captain of sides on both Saturdays and Sundays alongside so many other roles (quiz and doms champion for sure). There are so many legendary stories about Roger's exploits but the choice he often faced between taking a catch at mid on or dropping his half rolled fag always brings a smile..(you can guess the usual outcome!!) Both Rog and Neil will be very much missed by us all.

I will leave the captains to tell you the story of an eventful first half of the season, certainly all our senior sides are in for a lively end to the season whether pushing for honours or striving for points to avoid the dreaded drop.

A big thanks as ever to the people behind the scenes, preparing teas, after match food and running the bar..this all helps in creating such a unique and tremendous club atmosphere.

The junior section is in the midst of probably its finest year ever, destroying the confidence of other children up and down the county..oh well!! Great work and dedication from Ken, the Vince's, Jonny B, The Tash and the nutty bowling machine that is Richard Trim in running such successful colts teams and seeing the boys progress into adult cricket and do so well is always fantastic.

As we look forward there are so many questions to answer in the upcoming weeks...can Gary retain his Ben Marrion batting award (he assures us he is retiring if so)? Will Dancey reach Jones/Southwell/Chalk heights in the bullying of 13 year olds bowling in the 4ths? What will Paul bring to the Presidents Day buffet instead of the much derided 4 bean salad? And will Mazza make through a match without whining or saying something ridiculous? Ok we know the answer to the last but roll on the second half of the season to find out the rest...

Up the Field.



First Team Review War And Peace Part 1

It's been quite an eventful first half of the season which started with a boozy trip to Yorkshire, it was good to get out in to the middle once more, a lot of positive signs for the coming season both with bat and ball resulted in two tour wins, the skipper was more than pleased as me made the LONG journey back, the Ford Focus (aka bullet) making the longest trip since I passed my test and although feeling like death a little glance to my left to see Shaeen made me feel a whole lot better!!!

So on to the first game of the season, the changing room was buzzing (literally with some s**te Mazza calls music) We owed Little Baddow one from our sole defeat on the opening day of last season, despite a shaky start with the bat Mani and Clarky put a great stand together with Manpreet hitting his maiden 100 for the club (followed by the worst shot you are ever likely to see) and Clarky steady as ever playing the anchor with 63 and young Chay (who I am told eats raw meat for breakfast) hitting some mighty blows we ended on a respectable 254-5..I don't believe there are any sides that could knock such a score off with our bowling attack and with wickets spread Little Baddow were dismissed and sent packing for 135, a great start to the season. Ok so now on to OC's our first real test and basically the game was decided on the toss of a coin, the wicket was slightly green but nothing too bad but with lots of cloud cover Damo tossed the coin as high as he could....I am thinking tails tails tails as it hit the ground heads I shout, lost it, we were invited to bat and what followed was some very good bowling from Wickham and Bird with the former picking up 8/19 but looking at the score sheet with only two of our batsman making double figures our performance with the bat wasn't good enough, fair play to the lads who came out fighting and having got the opposition 5 down we just couldn't quite pull off the unthinkable... We were due a bad one and here it was our first defeat in 18 league games. Next we travelled to High Roding confident of bouncing back; we had practiced well on the Friday evening so heading in the game with high expectation but this wasn't to be the case, there is an old saying that "Catches win matches" and this was very much the case although we should have got them with the bat. We move on!!!!

The Bentley game is one that we look forward to every season and gave us this time around the perfect opportunity to put a few things right, as a team we asked each other for a big performance and that is exactly what we got, watching the batsmen (Lats 101, Charlie 19, Mani 141, Jimmy 51 and Chay 20) in full flow was fantastic and the best I have ever seen in one innings, bowling wise we got the job done despite the odd moan and groan (If that bloke had been back on the boundary that wouldn't have been 4....Yes and if Mary hadn't fallen off the cart she would have had a longer ride!!!) – NO NAMES

Next up we headed down the A12 to face division newcomers Goresbrook, a side full of youngsters who were shall we say quite confident, some more excellent batting from Lats, Mani and Jimmy aided by a Maid forfa we came away with maximum points.

Next up we faced Great Baddow where once again the batsman performed brilliantly, Lats 77, Mani 80 and Charlie 107 set us on our way to a total of 333, the visitors were never really in the chase despite some lower order resistance with the innings eventually closing on 252/9 with Wasim taking 3/48 being the pick of the attack

A trip to Burnham followed without yours truly, Charlie took over as captain and a job well done I would say, we dismissed the home side for 169 with Andy picking up 3/31 and Wasim taking a fantastic 5/22, Lats and Charlie were at their brilliant best in the chase reaching the target without loss in only the 19th over, JLJ's 98 coming from only 52 balls and the skip making 68 from 45 to sew up another good victory.

Hatfield Peveral visited the Corra on a gloomy day and with rain forecast we needed to do whatever possible to get a result, after losing Charlie early Clarky joined Lats (due to Manpreet being late...again) and we set about building a decent total before the heavens opened, we managed to bat for 29 overs and post a very respectable 225/3, Lats 68, Clarky 69no and Jimmy 48no. After a few drops of rain we managed to get out on to the field in our quest to get 9 wickets with patience being key, in the 27th over we achieved this, Sven taking another couple of wickets, I managed to bag 6/28 with Chalky also bowling well.

An away trip to Thurrock was our next fixture, the home skipper won the toss and his exact words were "we will have a bat as we don't want to be chasing the ball all day"!!!! So out in the field we went, wickets fell at regular intervals and despite some late order big hitting (mainly off my bowling!) the home side were bowled out for 151, once again a great opening spell from Sven 3/8, I managed to bag another 3 and a couple for Chalky. It wasn't long until the home skippers words were made a reality the ball was hitting the boundary rope off the Willow of Lats and Charles, both had good starts and set us up to chase down the total in the 20th over with Jimmy and Clarky seeing us home, Mani also looked in great nick once more until he tried to hit one to Romford!!!

End of Part One!

First Team, War and Peace Part Two!!

A trip to picturesque Little Baddow was next up, we owed them one for inflicting our only defeat last season, toss won we will have a bat, what followed was truly unbelievable Charles calling for a single at the non strikers end turning like the QE2 and run out for 1.....Mani joined Lats in the middle and from here in it was boundary after boundary, Mani after reaching his 50 attempting to hit the next ball for 12 was caught, Jimmy joined JLJ who by now must have been seeing them like a beach ball and batting as well as you will ever see anyone play, a partnership of around 230 developed between the two and with Lats nearing a double century he was trapped LBW for 182, Clarky walked to the middle and Jimmy hung his head knowing the "Machine" would make the old boy run in what was by now around 35 degree heat, James (36no) continued his excellent form and Jimmy hit the last ball of the innings for 6 to bring up his double century, the final total being a new Premier League and Club record of 500 which won't be beaten for a while!!

Off out in the field we went, with an unobtainable target set we needed ten wickets so the plan was to attack from ball one, opening batsman Sodhi was the only player really to show any resistance and came within one of his century, we were excellent in the field and some good bowling saw us dismiss the home side for 207, 3 wickets for Sven and 4 for myself including the key wicket of number 11 Raina (Suresh)

OC's visited the Corra on what was by far the biggest game of the season, win and we are still in the title race, lose and it was all over bar the shouting, Manpreet turned up on time for the first time all season...had to be a good sign of things to come. The toss was critical coin up as high as possible Damo called heads, down comes a tail...result we will have a bat...out strode the best opening batting partnership in the league to face Mr Wickham with the new nut, Rob had bowled very well in the away game taking 8/19 and had told everyone in the world it seemed, a good battle between batsmen and bowlers was developing before Wickham dismissed Charlie with a sharp full pitched delivery and Mani followed soon after with one that got big on him, Jimmy joined Lats who was going about his work nicely without looking in any danger, we then received a lifeline, Damo dropped Jimmy off Wickham second ball, to be fair to the former Springfield player it was a tough catch, straight to him waist height and he didn't have to move....! Lats and Jimmy both looked in good touch before Lats fell to a good catch at mid wicket and Jimmy caught and bowled by Faz, the tail didn't wag and in the innings closed on a rather disappointing 203. After a break for tea we went out knowing only our best would be good enough, opener Ahmed played aggressively while partner Meer looked more assured, Mazza got the early wicket of Meer and then patience was the key, chances would come it was key we took them, opener Ahmed reached his 50 and some middle order hitting from Westwood and Wickham kept OC's just about in the game but in the end we managed to get them 9 down for 185, Wasim and Charlie bowling their best spells of the season taking 4 and 2 wickets respectively, all in all we used 7 bowlers all performed with great credit and it was a real team effort and one that shows what we as Springfield are about, the win leaves us 3 points off the leaders with a lot of cricket still to be played.

On behalf of the team and the club I would like to take the time to congratulate Jimmy on reaching 10,000 Premier League runs, an absolutely tremendous achievement, a club man through and through who works tirelessly coaching the stars of tomorrow as well as keeping the beer profits up at the club, top work fella.

One final mention from me, during Mazza's stag trip to Magaluf Mr Dance broke the sad news that he no longer wished to be considered for the first eleven and that the Goresbrook game would be his last, my vague memory of this was being a little shocked as it was something I expected to hear at the end of the season, a little tear was shed I must admit as in my short spell with the club I've experienced some great times with this bloke as I'm sure you all have over the years, a fella with the upmost respect of not just his team mates but also that of our great club and even more so of the T-Rippon league, I know Simon wishes to drop down and become a batsman as well as offer bowling advice to younger members of the club which is most folk to Dancey! So long as he doesn't pass on dress sense tips as one night out in Maggas he looked like a love child of Johnny Depp and Elton John, developed the worst Northern Irish accent you have EVER heard and renamed a former political leader "Jimmy Adams"! Luckily enough the speaker phone he was contemplating buying didn't work! "YOU'RE SHOUTING"

Si you will be missed mate, get your nut down and get some runs.

All the best and let's make sure that come August 30th we are where we belong at the top of the Premier League.

Brooky

Frostys Forum

Views from the Second Team

The second team have had a great start to the season so far with 5 wins from the first 9 games; leaving us 3rd in the division.

An excellent start at Rayleigh saw us skittle the opposition, knock off the runs and get back to the club by 5pm - perfect start.

The second game was more than likely lost at the coin toss (first of a few poor calls from me!!) as Rainham put us in and took advantage in perfect conditions.

Back to winning ways the following week with a good bowling performance against South Weald before games against possibly our two toughest opponents in the division.

An incredibly tight one wicket defeat, after a superb fielding and bowling display, against Little Waltham was then followed by an even more dramatic 5 run defeat at home to Hornchurch.....two incredibly unlucky Saturday's - which perhaps on another day could've easily been 2 hard fought wins.

A perfect bounce back performance was produced away at Great Waltham the following week - which was then continued with a tense but victorious finish at home to Rayleigh Fairview in the gloom - a win that, at one point, looked unlikely.

The chance to make it 3 wins in a row was taken away by a wash out away at Writtle, but a fantastic batting performance at the Corra the following week against Havering Atte Bower saw us score 334 and seal a comfortable win to move us up into third place.

Some stand out performances so far from Matty Hartley, Josh Attwell, Sam Brown, Northy, Ali Khan, Iestyn and Chalky with the ball and Luke, Ollie Prudence, Chris Frost, Northy, Ollie Goldsmith and Chalky again with the bat - not to mention an unbelievable grab from Luke away at Little Waltham, which will probably be catch of the season, and some horrific dropped catches from the skipper!!

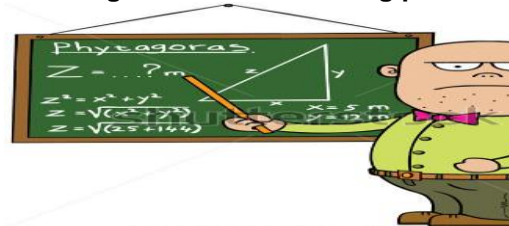
Superb effort to date from everyone who has played - we've got some very very big games coming up against the other teams in the top

5 shortly so, with continued strong performances, no reason why we can't compete or even get promoted in this division!!!

Andy Frost

Vinny, the Nearly Man

Counting was never his strong point...



“98, 99.....B*gger!”

3rd Team Views

The first half of the season has been very difficult, which was to be expected after promotion to Division 4 last year.

This was made even harder after losing leading wicket taker Martin Southwell to England duty. Last seasons top scorer T. Roy also let himself and the team down missing a large chunk of the first half of the season by agreeing to a cricket season wedding! The next hit came when Mr Hartley, whilst attempting a suicidal single, suffered a double calf strain and put himself on the physios table for a number of weeks.

I must also mention my form hasn't been great, (I'm being outscored this season by my 9 year old son...comfortably).

But...it looks like in the last couple of weeks we have finally turned the corner, two cracking wins have brought us back into the pack and so the fight for survival continues.

The mighty 3's will prevail in the end!
Vin



Doctor Warleys Injury Report

- Checks all green on Dr Al's "Gentleman's Area" after stopping a straight drive with his &%\$*
- Captain Courageous does his back sneezing on the sofa
- Nurse Blundell introduces a new Triage treatment (of which more in the View From The East
- But the hero of the season so far is our Gazza. Who "caught" one square in the eye when attempting a catch with his hands (really!) 8 stitches and grounded for 6 weeks. And he still owes me for match fees and petrol money for running him to A&E!

(notice its all Sunday 2s! In this section!)

Kendo's Quote of the Month!



"Who is this Bert Wishes?"

Bryn's Babble

The Sunday Firsts Speak Forgive me but I will start on a serious note. The Sunday 1st XI were struggling for players early on this season and coupled with playing against incredibly strong opposition, regrettably the decision was made to withdraw from one of leagues we are in - the North Essex Cricket League. This is unfortunate however we must do what is best for the club and the young talent coming through the ranks must be nurtured and allowed to reach their full potential and that wouldn't have been the case should we have remained as part of that league. I would like remind all that we are still playing matches in the Warsop league and the Warsop T20 competition. The results at glance make for a pretty grim read, however on the pitch the matches have good fun, played in good spirit and have been close run events. Vinnie also ensured we got our first win under our belts (the only game I haven't played) and now we can kick on and finish top...half. We will also be ensuring that umpires know the rules when it comes to leg side wides!

Continuing in a lighter vein, there have been a lot of positives coming from the team such as using our coloured kit and orange balls and time limits on innings to ensure that the matches are finished by 18:00. There have also been a couple of highlight reel performances such as Durrants mate "Bob" scoring a devil may care 50*, I.Powell dragging the team to 130 with a 70, M. Trimm using his diminutive stature to lure batsmen into a false sense of security and last but certainly not least I'm sure you'll all join me in congratulating O.Swann on his maiden senior 5 wicket hall – Well done Swanny, that's worth a selfie!

Kiddies corner

Under 9s

Matches progressing well
 All Players progressing well in their first taste of Hard Ball Cricket
 Could do with a lot more concentration and application at net sessions
 Excellent turnout on Practice Evenings with much enthusiasm throughout
 Very well captained by Steven and Luke
 Highest Partnership 4 overs batting total so far this season is Steven Turner and Maaz 41 Runs
 Well Done. Many thanks to all Match Day Helpers

Very few matches for the **Under 11's** in May due to a combination of rain and opposition calling off. With a number of regulars playing in the Peter Coe Cup an under strength team went to Hutton and ran out convincing winners, while a highly competitive, (and a little too noisy boys !) game against a Great Baddow Under 12 side also resulted in victory. In our annual fixture against the Central Essex Development Team, we narrowly lost a very close and competitive fixture. Special mention must go to Stephen Turner for a stylish 45 and Harry Lloyd who scored runs, took wickets and had a run out. Well done also to Ben, Fin, Elliot and Max who played a major part for the Central Essex District in convincing 8 wicket wins against both the North and the West Districts.



Captain Courageous Comments

The Season so far for the Sunday 2s

The first and saddest part of my update is to pay tribute to Neil Carr who most of you will know passed away suddenly. Neil was the reason I started playing for Springfield having met me at Lloyds and asked if I fancied a game. Many of you would have played with him and seen his own personal style of keeping which tended to be more use of the pads than the gloves, and batted with a huge Oak tree! His teas were legendary especially on Presidents day (Eaton Mess being a particular favourite of mine!). For these and many other reasons he will be missed and our thoughts and prayers are with his family. RIP Neil mate.

Onto the cricket, which like many teams started patchy, in performances, results and cancelled games. With the first team pulling out of the NECL being just one of 5 teams who have folded so far in the league. Its great to see, however, that the 2s still have a good core of regulars and colts willing to play on Sundays.

We started in the league with a home game against Rayne. This game encapsulates the season so far in that we should have won comfortably but dropped catches and batting collapses cost us. We dropped one player 3 times who went on to get 101 out of their total of 171! Shan picked up 3 wickets while Martin led the way with the bat getting exactly 50. Definitely a game we should have won.

Next up was Aberton when I was away so the team were led out by Andy and they went on to win handsomely (is there a link with me being away?!) It was a genuine team effort too with the wickets being spread evenly around 5 bowlers, including young Will Aldworth who returned 2-14. Keeping it in the family Aldworth senior, Paul, pilled on the runs in a comfortable chase of 189 getting 72 for himself, backed up by Andy with 20 and Martin with 52no. A very good 8 wicket win

Home to Kirby next and back to dropped catches and batting collapses (and me back in the team....?) A good start by Andy (42) and Luke (37) until Luke was run out backing up. 96 for 3 soon become 133 all out after a monumental (even by 2s standards) collapse Chalky being the only other player in double figures reaching 29 before playing on. Didn't help when the skip gets given out by his Vice Skip LBW on the front foot after an inside edge onto the pad (Andy....!!) We actually managed to bowl very well and held out until the 39th over but were again thwarted by dropped catches, 3 again for the same batter who top scored with 65no!

Our last game was a hastily arranged friendly against Ilford Catholic away, very away. Yet again dropped catches ruined the result with a record 9 dropped against the SAME batsman and he going on to get 138no out of their total of 233! The run chase started well with Andy and Martin starting but after Raj was out for 25, and Shans cameo 18 we struggled to score quickly ending on 133 of our 40 overs.

Back to the league the following week and a fantastic win against Coggeshall, Raj excelling again with an unbeaten 51 including a 6 of the last ball! Shan returning to form with the ball ended with figures of 4-1-6-4! Ant Larcher taking a worldie at short extra cover. Gazza (yes that Gazza) also taking a great catch at square leg!

More cancelled games due to weather followed before another good win away to Rayne. Jacob Bell taking 3 wickets as did Martin (our England player!) and Matty Trim tipping in with 2, Man of the Match without doubt however was Kendo with 4 catches, 1 stumping and 50 not out!

We are now up to second in the league with a big 20/20 against top spot Copford in Presidents week And I am glad to report that the team retain that attitude and humour (and weirdness) which is a pre-requisite of playing for the 2s!! Long may that be the case. CC

The Sunday 2s Champagne moment is without doubt the catch that Gazza took (yes him again) fielding at mid on and bucketing a powerful drive straight into his chest (come on you didn't think it would be his hands!) Well done Sir Gary

Mazza's Amazing Facts!

Did you know? Because he didn't!



This editions subject is:
Head Rests, what are they for?

Thanks Mazza, more next time!

Springfield Fantasy Cricket League Top 5

Team	Manager	Points
¹ <u>Aldoshire</u>	Paul Aldworth	5562
² <u>Chicago Rays</u>	Tim Clancy	5368
³ <u>Pollingers Polish</u>	Chay Pollinger	5158
⁴ <u>Charlie Super Kings</u>	Charlie Prudence	5073
⁵ <u>get over there</u>	mark pattison	5065

Round The Bend With The Spring Chicks!

The Spring Chicks season got off to a flying start (see what I did there!) with the girls having won six out of six of their matches in the league, as well as the first round of the cup. In all seven of these games, the girls have played brilliantly, demonstrated some fantastic fielding and all players contributing to the numerous Rounders scored. In four out of the seven games played, we have only needed to bat once, as the oppositions were unable to chase down our first innings total in their 2 innings.

A special mention must go to Hollie (sticky fingers) Lodge, who in five games has been named 'Player of the Game', as awarded by the opposing team, for her outstanding, multiple catches in the field (five in our first game!) and her batting, which hasn't been bad either! This award for the other three games went to Heather twice and Emma once, for the high number of Rounders they scored. Although this week Gemstones awarded Player of the Game to Hollie (again!), the Chicks thought the Lovely Linda also deserved special recognition for her determined batting, staying in to bat way beyond many of the team. We suspect Paddy's stamina training of the new Mrs O'Riordan may be paying off!

Unfortunately, last week we were knocked out of the cup by 1st Division's Three Pigeons, as we were outclassed by their serious, focused approach to the game. Still, never mind, being a 2nd division team is a lot more fun!

I'd like to say a big 'welcome' to all the new faces at practice nights on Thursdays. We are getting a great turnout, which make them so much more fun.

Thank you to Heather, who has been working on our Facebook page as well as our own website, check us out at springchicksrounders.co.uk. Thanks also to Ken Godridge for his relentless work in encouraging ladies Rounders and to Paddy O'Riordan for his coaching and umpiring wisdom.

Five years on, I think we are finally getting the hang of this game! Jennie Prudence

Views From The East

Reports of his Travels and experiences from Rusty Jones

As some of you probably know, I've been involved in organising cricket on the beautiful Croatian island of Vis for the last few years (where Springfield has toured on four past years). Each year we hold our Vis International Sixes tournament and this year Springfield were represented by Andy and Alan from the Sunday twos and myself, in cricketing exile in Brno (with supporters "Team Lambert" - Mart, Claire and our President John Mac).

The plan was simple, our UK players would fly out from Gatwick and I'd fly from Prague and we would meet in Split. Unfortunately at three days' notice, my flight was cancelled so instead of an evening's fun in Prague I had a ten hour train journey followed by a five hour overnight bus. Having arrived in Split at 6am and having strolled about the beautiful city for a few hours I decided that at 10am I deserved a beer. Craft beers are getting popular in Croatia and I found a bar specialising in them and very good they were. After an hour or so I met up with Alan who was enjoying a Karlovacko having caught the early flight from Gatwick. A few beers later the others arrived and by the time we caught the ferry it would be fair to say we'd had a few more. From the ferry it was off to the hotel and on to the Bejbi Bar...and the rest is a bit hazy, after 14 hrs drinking it was time for bed.

The next evening followed pretty much the same liquidity programme, there was a pre-tournament meeting that oddly few of us could remember attending. One highlight, or maybe lowlight of the evening was Andy performing his party piece. Most SCC tourists will know what this is so I won't explain here, just to say that we are having more luck with Nicholas and his potty training.

Friday saw the start of the cricket and the timetable had been very generous to Andy and Alan's team, the Royal Hotshots. As a team loosely based around some Posties you'd have thought they'd have been at their best acing two early games. As it turned out, by lunchtime on the first day their tournament was over. Two defeats, including one against the Vis boys team meant only a miracle could get them into the semis.

My team, the Hurricanes included Leigh from North Weald, Nigel with a broken thumb, Steve from Nomads CC with a broken finger, Matt the heavy drinking northern fast bowler who we met in Sofia and a Slovenia dance instructor called Nejc. Our start times are a little later and we got off to a winning start against last year's winners, the Chiefs Indians with Matt bowling someone when they needed two to win off the last ball. Unfortunately we were stuffed by a team from St John's Wood, not THE team from St John's Wood but a very useful team who had won the tournament a couple of years ago.

After such a bad start the Hotshots imposed a curfew on their players of 4am in order to do themselves justice the next day and it worked (note: Team Lambert's curfew was 05:30 am). Anyway, two good wins left the Hotshots rueing their performances the previous day. For the Hurricanes two good wins would mean a place in the semis and we duly obliged. The sensible option on Saturday night with an early semi the next morning was an evening of great fish and wine at Pojoda with our good friend Stanko our waiter. Unfortunately my big Northern fast bowler from Sofia took the less sensible option and failed to make it for our big game. I managed to negotiate a very good replacement but we didn't play to our potential and for the second year running my team lost in the semis, this year to Sokol from Zagreb who will be coming over to Springfield for Presidents Day. The Hotshots finished the tournament very strongly with Andy and Alan putting in some great performances, particularly Alan who scored useful runs and took some useful wickets.

Views From The East Part 2

The Hurricanes last game was the 3rd / 4th place playoff. We faced the Montenegrans who started off the tournament very strongly, six strapping lads including former Charlton and West Ham goalie Sasha Ilic. By the time of the playoff game they needed lots of strapping and three substitute players, including Alan who bowled me second ball, unfortunately for him it goes down as bowled sub...it was a very good ball, it's a shame he doesn't get the full credit for it, but he was rewarded for his performances with a player of the tournament award. The final was between St Johns Wood and Sokol, Zagreb, the two best teams in the competition and the Londoners posted just under 100 in their six overs and although Sokol played well they were never going to win after losing an early wicket.

All clubs who have been to Vis on tour will know that an evening at Roki's is a bit special and we weren't let down, a fitting end to a great tournament and one that I hope a few more SCC lads will enjoy in the future. El Presidente and Team Lambert certainly excelled themselves with scores of empty bottles and the usual SCC fixture cards lodged in traditional eye-catching positions.

During the five nights on Vis I can report on several blurred sightings of our club President and Treasurer. I took over 500 photos but never managed to collect any positive evidence (El Presidente still moves with astonishing dexterity) but we did catch a glimpse of someone in a quite striking suit one night at Bejbis, and Roki did mention that his wine supplies had taken one hell of a hammering during the tournament.

Now for the Andy Blundell First Aid Tip: or maybe not!

During a Viz game one of the local batters went for a quick single. A fielder picked up the ball and hurled it into the same end our unfortunate batter was aiming for.

Said speeding ball found its "target" at great speed directly into the stretching batters "middle stump". As all gentlemen will know this is an opportunity to suck in the breath, shout "Oooooo" and proceed to laugh uproariously while being grateful it wasn't you!

Andy seeing his chance to demonstrate his new technique raced to his kit bag and extracted the tube of Deep Heat (can you see where this is going yet?)

He then ran onto the pitch wailing like an ambulance siren straight to the now prone batter.

"Smell this mate" Shouted Blunders, offering the NON ENGLISH SPEAKING batter the lump of cream in his hand, the batter then proceeded to drop his whites and rub said cream into his nether regions while Andy was trying to explain it was a smelling salt replacement.

Nothing happened for the first 5 seconds until the obvious started and the unlucky foreign chap looked at Andy with surprise in his eyes (and fire between his legs). He then completed the 100 yards back to the sanctuary of the changing room and some cold water faster than Mr Bolt, then quickly and liberally applied the cold water to his now nuclear tackle!

Lesson to be taken from this, if you are injured and see Blunders running on to assist, whatever your injury rise from your position and run like hell!