



End of Season Newsletter

When I applied for the job of Head of Cricket I had heard that cricket was a well loved game at RGS. After my first year in post, I am glad to say that is true however, it is even more loved than I had imagined - which is fantastic! This term we have had 450 boys playing cricket in their Games sessions, over 250 boys who have attended after-school cricket clubs, and almost 250 boys representing RGS in over 100 competitive matches. Those figures are greater than most clubs as a whole, so to have those numbers is very encouraging and shows the passion and enthusiasm for the game at RGS.

The hard work started back in October for many, with 120 boys attending development sessions in the evenings. The winter training was my first opportunity to build a culture of challenge, ambition, and belonging and the boys certainly responded well to that and have made good progress with the foundation of that culture. Throughout the sessions the younger boys built foundational techniques through skill development drills and games while the seniors' gameplay was challenged and developed with field setting, bowling to plans, and batters being able to score 3600. Alongside that, a number of the boys got stuck into strength and conditioning sessions to improve their general fitness, strength and how they move. The modern game demands athleticism, so the Y7-10s building their athleticism will bode well for them in years to come. A huge thanks to Mr Drage and Mr Gardner for leading those sessions.

As we moved into the Summer Term the boys undertook Games sessions on a two-week rotation. 1 week working on fundamental skills with drills and skill-based games, and the other applying those skills in either the nets or a middle practice. All the boys, no matter what their starting ability and confidence, have worked on basics such as driving, cutting and pulling the ball, their bowling action, run up and bowling slower balls, as well as lots of catching and throwing. Over a number of years that reinforcement of basics and a variety of skills will enable the boys to have lots of success and a life of playing, and doing well in cricket at their chosen/appropriate level.

I am a big believer in shared opportunities that help a larger number of people develop and enjoy the game in Y7-9. As such, I have implemented a rotation policy within a side so that over a number of games everyone will have batted in the top four, middle order and tail, also that everyone will bowl 2 overs in Y7 and Y8 in friendlies. This will help more boys to develop a wider range of skills that, in turn, will help them achieve success as they get older, while also ensuring everyone gets a good opportunity in a game and therefore fosters a love of cricket.

The number of close games endured by RGS sides this year was great to see. I could write a dossier on the matches, the twists and turns, individual performances and spectacular moments. I won't though - I will save the reading and give a brief summary.

Cups

U12s - A promising first season with a number of convincing wins. They ended up as Runners Up in the County Final against a very strong Dr Challoners.

U13s - The County Cup took the format of a league structure this year as only four sides entered. After losing a couple of close matches and winning one they finished 3rd in the county. I am confident they will build on that and challenge for the title next season.

U14s - After a convincing first win they lost to Stowe in the County Semi-Final. They played some great cricket later in the term which is very encouraging.

U15s - Having won their first two rounds they lost to another very strong Dr Challoners side in the County Semi-Final.

U17s - After having to concede in the National due to a clash of dates the U17s enjoyed a run in the National Plate, eventually losing in the Regional Final.

U18s - They won their first two matches setting impressive totals and defending them. Unfortunately, when needing to chase a large total in the Regional Quarter-Final they lost to a well drilled Forest School.

The RGS Cricket Festival

The side won three matches, lost one (to Newcastle who won the Festival) and had one abandoned which earned them 2nd place.

Despite not winning the overall trophy, we had the Player of the Festival in Monty Evans, the highest run scorer (Monty Evans), joint leading wicket taker (Tharul Wanniarachchi), and most dismissals (Nipun Chopra), so a good effort on the individual accolades.





Milestones

A number of boys achieved either 100 or 5-wicket milestones this year, and they will have their names added to the Honours Boards in the pavilion.

Alex Lloyd-Taylor - 118* v Christ's College, New Zealand (1st XI)

Max Feare - 117 v John Hampden Grammar School (U14A)

Monty Evans - 102* v John Hampden Grammar School (1st XI)

Tharul Wann Arachchige - 6-22 v RGS Guildford (1st XI)

Leo Byrne - 5-18 v Aylesbury Grammar School (1st XI)

Thanks

I would like to thank all the staff for their hard work and continued support of the cricket programme to enable the boys to have the opportunities and experiences they have. Thank you to Howard who has done an excellent job as groundsman. The countless hours are often missed when people enjoy playing on manicured pitches. Without his hard work, we would be greatly disadvantaged. Thank you to Friends of Cricket for their support of the programme through fundraising and events such as the End of Season Awards, which was a great success. Finally, a special thank you to Cathy Henry who does a fantastic job behind the scenes to ensure everything runs smoothly with fixtures, events and so much more.

It has been an exciting season. It is also a season that can be built upon at all age groups. The hard work will begin again in October. Until then, I encourage everyone to play as much cricket as you can. There are still two months left of the season with clubs and counties so make the most of every opportunity.

Have a great summer!

Mr Pardoe
Head of Cricket