

1st XI Season Report

Swanage 1st team had a very good introduction to life in Premiership 2. Due to the incredible work by the committee, the grounds team and all members behind the scenes, Swanage got promoted in this season in a new division shake up. The formats this season included the 1st set of 50 over games, T20, declaration, and our final stint of 50 overs. During this time, Swanage finished a very respectable 4th place in the 50 over/declaration league and 2nd in our T20 group.

Our first round of 50 over games saw us play Chalke Valley, Christchurch, Blandford, Hamworthy and Martinstown. Against Chalke Valley, we were lucky to get a game due to wet weather leading up to the game, and the toss, putting us into bat, decided the result. On a very damp pitch, we were reduced to 46-7 until a near 100 partnership between Ben Hodder (51) and Ryan Stearn took us to a competitive total of 147. But with the batting power of Chalke, this was never going to be enough, as they strolled home 3 wickets down. We bounced back strong against Martinstown with a good batting performance, scoring 204, Charlie Dyke being the pick of the batters with 55 off 34 balls. Christchurch collapsed in reply and were all out for 74 with Stephen Ramsey picking up 5 wickets for 29 in his 10 overs. Blandford looked to be a tough opposition and looked well set at 203-4, but an 8 wicket haul for Ben Hodder put Swanage back onto the front foot, bowling them out for 228. In reply, Mike Salmon smashed a rapid 113 and was backed up by the rest of the team chipping in to secure a 3 wicket victory. Hamworthy put on a solid total of 226 with James Harding the pick of the bowlers with 4 wickets. Swanage couldn't gain momentum, losing wickets at regular intervals, and aside from Tom Wells (74), the team fell just short by 15 runs. Martinstown posed a very tough side and reduced Swanage to 125-7. However Ben Hodder (83) and Stephen Ramsey kept their head and put on a 100 partnership to keep them in the game, finishing with 250. In reply, the tables turned and they returned the 8th wicket partnership strength onto us, nearly amassing 100 themselves getting them over the line with 2 overs to spare.

In the T20 cup, we played 2 matches against Blandford, Martinstown and Bere Regis. Against Dorchester, it was the Mie Salmon show, scoring a 139 not out in the first game and backed it up with a 50 in the second. Swanage came out victorious in both affairs. Next it was Martinstown, in which we shared a game each with all round team performances. In the final round, we didn't show up to either match, and were comprehensibly beaten in both games.

Next was a new format of Declaration cricket where there were a maximum of 100 overs in the day and the team batting first could bat up to 55 overs, and the team second gets the remaining overs to get the total, and draws were possible. Swanage have much to learn in this format, as we lost all games but 1, which was abandoned. Standout performances during this period were: Ben Hodder 154 vs Chalke Valley, Craig Wells 78 vs Chalk Valley, Craig Wells 51 vs Hamworthy, Tom Rutherford 82 not out vs Martinstown.

We then returned to 50 overs. Chalke showed their imposing nature, smashing a massive 444, and we fell very short with only Freddie Long's 43 standing out. Eager to bounce back, we took on

Christchurch, and with some excellent bowling from Mike Salmon and Charlie Dyke, bowled them out for 96. In return, a good platform set by Mark Stacey (40) was more than enough to see us home by 7 wickets. Blandford saw a competitive total produce of 232, with good bowling from debutant Jernimain Barry. Mike Salmon came to the party once more and smashed a quick fire 118 to set up a comprehensive victory by 5 wickets. Once again at Hamworthy, there was a washout. Our final game was against Martinstown who found another level against us, building a formidable total of 330. We never really got going and were bowled out for a shape over 100.

This season has been a privilege to watch the team grow. There are plenty of lessons learnt and positive performance to look to build on. Some fantastic development from the juniors gave the selection committee a headache, and it was encouraging to see so many new players enter the fold. I wanted to say a massive thank you to all of the players for their efforts both on and off the pitch in helping with the preparations, and a big congratulation to the team for winning the Fair Play award for Prem 2. I also wanted to thank the incredible members of the committee who consistently strive to push the club and set the standards in all areas; the grounds team who make impeccable wickets and outfielders week after week; the volunteers who help provide our fantastic teas which cricket would be lost without; the selection committee where open and honest discussions are at the forefront to gaining the best for all teams; the coaching team who selflessly give up their time to develop the players throughout all ages and give the backbone to the future of the club, growing us to 4 league teams; and finally my Vice Captain Ryan Stearn who tirelessly works off the pitch and behind the scenes making my job so much easier. Thank you members too, for helping to contribute to a Swanage club that is only going good places, and makes me proud to be a part of it. Hope everyone winters well, and see you for the next chapter.