

## **Cricket Club Report for Season 2017**

The FP Cricket Club 1<sup>st</sup> XI had achieved promotion to the East Premier league, the strongest league in Scotland, for the 2017 season. Realistic ambitions therefore had to be to remain in this Division rather than challenge for the title.

This was achieved. They were second bottom of the League for much of the season, but only one club is relegated from this league and we were always fairly comfortably above bottom club Falkland. Four league victories were recorded – two against Falkland and one each against Glenrothes and Aberdeenshire. Indeed, in what would have been their performance of the season, victory was very nearly also achieved in Aberdeen whilst only an exceptionally doughty batting performance from the tail enders of eventual league champions Heriots saved them from an embarrassing defeat at Goldenacre.

Before the season started, we secured the services of two South African Players from Johannesburg. They proved to be splendid recruits, Club professional Shaylen Pillay scoring 659 runs & taking 25 wickets, while overseas amateur Cariston Diedericks scored 233 runs after a poor batting first half of the season and took 29 wickets. Even more importantly, they proved to be excellent coaches, much appreciated by our Junior players.

While the 1<sup>st</sup> XI seemed to have a reasonable pool of players, it was very badly hit by availabilities. Large numbers of players were unavailable most weeks, leading to weak teams being fielded. This was reflected in our results, with the batting being particularly fragile.

Apart from those mentioned above, Hayden Mourits scored 303 runs in aggressive style, while Greg Bissett scored 295 runs in a more measured manner, passing Steve Kerr's Club record for 1<sup>st</sup> XI appearances (279) during the season. Captain Greg Ruthven (17) and Tom Hilton (11) contributed well in terms of wickets. After wintering in Australia, Elliot Ruthven was not able to replicate his achievements of 2016, but he did retain his position in the Edinburgh side (known as the Eastern Knights), the Scotland Development & Scotland A sides as an opening bowler.

The 1<sup>st</sup> XI had varying degrees of success in Cup Competitions. Our Scottish Cup run finished nearly before it began with a calamitous batting display at home against Carlton. The Masterton Trophy had a new League format in its early stages. In this we did well, winning our League group, including a revenge win against Carlton at Grange Loan, before being beaten in the semi-final by Grange.

We again fielded 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> XIs in the East of Scotland Leagues, with the addition of a Development XI in the new development League. This last named team was masterminded by David Gibson and was nearly all schoolboys, guided by David and one of our two 1<sup>st</sup> XI hired hands in each game, who coached during the games but did not bat or bowl.

The Development XI finished high up in their table, but that was not the point of the exercise. The team complemented the Thursday evening Trojans XI well in developing our Junior players into playing Senior games.

The other teams all finished mid-table for the second year in a row. This was particularly disappointing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI, who started with five wins from their first six completed games, but only won two games thereafter. Hopes had been high of securing one of the two promotion spaces, but they ended up a rather disappointing third. Ironically, this still gains promotion due to two teams withdrawing from the League. To succeed in what would be East League Division 1 they will look for a greater degree of consistency & also a higher degree of player availability, a problem which faced all of our teams and was also evident elsewhere in the East Leagues.

Most notable performances for the season were the runs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI by veterans Vic Coltherd (249) and Martin Speirs (235). At a more youthful level, 15 year old Sam Tait made his debut for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI, bowling very well. A number of S3 boys played well in the lower teams, in particular Harry Johnstone, Charlie Phipps and Rory Phipps.

As mentioned above, our midweek Trojans XI under the stewardship of Justin Taylor continues to develop our younger players. They won six of their eight midweek matches and helped bridge the gap between senior and junior cricket. Our Junior section, led by David Gibson and assisted by a band of volunteers as well as our professional and overseas amateur, now has around 150 boys and girls from P1, (and

occasionally from pre-school) to S6 turning out on various evenings during the week both practising and competing at all age levels.