

## HCL Management Committee Report – 2011 season

### Playing and administration

As we remind clubs every year, administration and communication of the League is reliant on the website and emails. This allows the most efficient use of time but it relies on everybody regularly checking the website (even in winter) and ensuring that you inform the League Secretary of any change in your Club Secretary's contact details.

We are aware that over the years the bowling rate has slowed. This leads to many games continuing past 7:30 pm and in extreme cases has seen matches completed in dangerous conditions. The Committee feel that a minimum of 17 overs per over is an easily achievable rate for League cricket and asks clubs and particularly captains to try to keep the game moving.

Over the last two year we are receiving more requests to allow playing kit which is outside the ECB regulations as stated in the League handbook. Although when the Committee is asked we reject any kit which does not comply with these regulations, we are aware that clubs are increasing buying and using kit which falls outside the current code. The Committee feels that members may wish to relax the ECB regulations.

The Committee value feedback on both the bowling rate and playing kit issues and would like to hold a brief informal discussion after the AGM.

Several years ago we conducted a small trial with orange cricket balls for clubs without sight screens. Although the ball proved very popular with players and spectators alike due to its much improved visibility, the technology was still in its early stages and the ball tended to lose its shape and became soft particularly in wet or damp conditions. Our ball suppliers Dukes claim to have improved the ball and so are keen we should carry out a second trial. We are looking for 18 clubs from RD3 and RD4 to help judge the balls performance. Volunteer clubs would be provided with 2 balls (free of charge) and asked to use them once on a dry and once on a damp day. They would need to fill in a questionnaire and return it to the League and both captains would need to agree that they were happy to play with the orange ball. If your club wishes to take part in the trial can you let Jonathan Blake (League Chairman) know as soon as possible.

League is grateful to all volunteers who give their time and skills freely to the HCL. In particular we would like to thank Philip Wilson who is stepping down as chairman of the Grounds Committee, and Chris Joliffe, Sam Crompton, David O'Neil, Kevan Glass and Luke Watson (Result Secretaries). After Stewart Frazier's retirement, we have been extremely lucky to find Karen Bezuidenhout as our new League Treasurer. She took over the role during the summer and we are grateful to Karen and to Stewart Frazier the retiring Treasurer for making the process so smooth.

Jonathan Blake has indicated that this will be his last season as League Chairman. None of the current members of the Management Committee wish to take on this role, and therefore we need a volunteer to join the Committee as soon as possible. If you know of anybody willing to take on this role can you please contact Anne Craft (League Secretary).

There are a large number of proposed rule changes this year. The first 7 motions are proposed by the Management Committee and cover League administration and a change to the divisional structure for 2013. The remaining 6 motions are proposed by Fair Oak and Hambledon C.C.'s and address a series of changes to the playing conditions. The Management Committee have no view on the Fair Oak and Hambledon proposals, as we feel that the rules on playing condition should be decided by the clubs.

Please discuss these proposals within your club prior to coming to the AGM. Please remember that our Constitution allows no amendments to these proposals at the AGM.

Our thanks are again due to our website sponsors Cricket-Hockey.com and Duncan Garland who designed and maintains the Result system.

## **Treasurer's Report - Karen Bezuidenhout**

At the last AGM the League Treasurer (Stewart Frazier) retired from the position and during May 2011 Stewart handed over the "reins" to me. Stewart was helpful and understanding, which enabled the transition to run smoothly. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for all of Stewart's time and effort.

During my first committee meeting, I received my remit from the members. At the same time, Lloyds Bank had notified the League that they would be instigating bank charges on the bank account. Taking all of the necessary changes into account, the Committee decided to completely overhaul the methods used by the Treasurer. It was decided that a software package would be purchased and with the League's finances in a healthy state, the software would track stock levels as well as budgets. This allows the League Members a clear and accurate view of the financial status at any time. At the same time a new bank account was opened with the ability to process Internet banking. The new account is linked to a Savings Account which receives nominal interest on credit balances. During a "good" year, we may receive £5's worth of interest.

The League ended the Financial Year by making a loss of £312.74, which is less than was expected. With the League bank balance still at a sufficient level, the Committee approved the 2012 budget to make a loss of £2,456.

The subscription rate for 2012 has been held at the same level as 2011 even though there has been a reduction on the income received for membership fees. With regards to League stock purchases; our supplier of cricket balls, British Cricket Balls, agreed to maintain the cost. The League has again agreed to forego its mark-up and charge clubs at cost price. All cricket balls, both men's and women's, will therefore cost the clubs the same £12 per ball. During 2011, the sales of cricket balls increased by 16%, which indicates that Members' found it cost-effective to purchase cricket balls through the League.

The League investigated numerous methods to reduce the income received from fines. During the past year, this income has been reduced by 22% which indicates progress has been made in this direction. As the League is not a profit organisation, further methods will be proposed and trialled. During the past season, the fines generated were controlled by a sub-committee with the main committee having the final approval. This worked well and it has been approved that fines will be included with the internet banking facility. Therefore, in the future all fines may be paid directly into the League's bank account, as with any other payment.

The running expenses for the 2011 season increased by 10% which can be rationalized against the increase of the cost of travel. On investigation, it has also been found that the League was offered the services of Hargreaves & Co without cost. Unfortunately, due to the retirement of our sponsor, this will not be sustained. The League may need to include this cost in future years.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to the Members & the Committee, for their support and assistance during my short period as Treasurer and I am also grateful to Jim Caldwell of Paul Jones Insurance Services, who as broker carries out an enormous amount of hard work on behalf of the League.