



Benwell Hill Cricket Club

2020 Season Review

2020 Annual Review - President's Forward



Tom Williamson
President

My first year as Benwell Hill Cricket Club President has no doubt been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic but I was delighted we got to see some cricket in 2020, and whilst it was short and sweet it didn't diminish the enjoyment and quality on show.

We should be very thankful to the tireless work of the Board. Especially Simon Lunn for coordinating the many aspects of running Benwell Hill. Larry Dawson for the financial management of the crisis and Phil Haves for guiding us through the numerous rules and regulations we needed to adhere to, to start trading through the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members who have supported us throughout the year, and hope you and your family are all staying safe and well. With the great news of the national rollout of the Covid vaccine hopefully we can look forward to a lot more cricket and socialising at Benwell Hill Cricket Club in 2021.

Chairman's Report



Simon Lunn
Chairman

I am delighted to provide an introduction to the Annual Review of Cricket Activities at Benwell Hill in 2020 – a season quite unlike any other in the 137 years of our history. At the start of March nobody could possibly have foreseen that there would be no cricket on the ground until the half way point of the season. Indeed at one point it looked like there would be no cricket at all such was the grip of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

As fate would have it the latter half of the season did take place and what follows is the story of how our various teams fared. With regard to an overview of Benwell Hill Cricket in 2020 I could not possibly better the input of our exceptional Director of Cricket so I will not try - I would urge you to read Kyle's input carefully. He hits a number of nails firmly on the head.

Moving forward, I must thank the professional staff and the legion of volunteers who work tirelessly to provide cricketing opportunities at Benwell Hill for all standards of male and female player. Our Club remains firmly in the vanguard of North East Cricket which will never be straightforward considering the number and the quality of the competitions that we take part in.

Life may never be quite the same again but at the time of writing the signs are that we can anticipate a full season in 2021. I believe our administrative and playing structure is fundamentally sound and our excellent leaders on the field are fully committed to taking the Club forward 'in the Hill way'.

Chairman's Report - continued

Finally, my sincere thanks to all who have contributed to this unique 2020 Season Review and onwards to 2021 when the runs will flow, the wickets will tumble and our Ground will be full of cricket and life in all its glory.

As always I am available to contact at the following :

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Kyle Coetzer, MBE
Director of Cricket

Kyle's 2020 Season Review

Well where should I start with this review? It seems to be a similar question which we continued asking from April onwards. "When can we start practicing and when will we start the season?" Amidst all the chaos and heart-ache that was going on around the country and the world, my overriding recollection and reflection of the season is nothing but positivity, commitment and love of the game.

A huge well done and thank you is owed to the board and everyone who played their part in pulling the club together and making sure the future is in good hands following these tough times.

We've all had our individual challenges and I'm confident we have all learnt many lessons, in some way the pandemic might have even reset us all to understand what is actually important in our lives. This brings me to the passion and care I saw towards our club and friends within. If you managed to take a step back and watch, you could have seen this in abundance when we all came back together after the easing of restrictions to return to activity. I will leave the reviews of each

Kyle's 2020 Season Review - continued

team down to our outstanding captains and coaches who managed to rally their troops when competition did finally commence. Once cricket did eventually start, it all happened in a hurry. Please see the areas of real positivity to take out of the 2020 season noted in bullet points below:

- The commitment to practice and games was the best I have experienced at the club. This is a must to continue into the 2021 season if we intend to become and stay one of the leading clubs in the area.



- Geoff Chambers and his team prepared and set up some amazing practice facilities which I doubt would be matched by many clubs in the area if not the entire country. Please don't forget the excellent work he did to prepare the ground and square for competition. Many hands make light work, thank you to those who go unnoticed doing the graft behind the scenes for us players to turn up and just think things magically get done by themselves.

Kyle's 2020 Season Review - continued

- Barry Pearson and his coaching team at short notice pulled together various age group matches and practices which included high levels of content for our junior members. This also included further development of some of our own young coaches in Max Williamson and Rory Hanley. The more people willing to help moving into 2021 would be hugely welcomed. A big thank you to all who volunteered in this area to help provide cricket for our juniors.
- Our captains as always spent countless hours of their own time organising their teams throughout the club. Each team showed some excellent performances, increased development of skills while at the same time representing the club in the right manner.
- The togetherness shown to use any outside space to socialise when possible without any complaints making the best out of the current situation.
- The integration of a new BHCC team app which was put to use and will be further implemented into 2021. Please keep an eye on the app and the website for updates during the winter.

As you can see above without even getting into performances there has been so much progress and development at the club. I sense some special years ahead if we can maintain our commitment and togetherness. Players will undoubtedly arrive and leave for various reasons before next season, but those who choose to embed themselves into the growth of the club will reap the rewards. Rewards come in more ways than just silverware, but we intend to pick some of that up along the way too! Stay safe during the winter and I look forward to delivering some positive news of when we can get back into some kind of cricket. Maybe a socially distant event or two along the way would be a nice addition. Any suggestions are always welcomed.



Pete Halliday
1st XI Captain

In my first edition of the season review, I must start by expressing my pride at being asked to lead the 1XI in 2020. It's a huge honour to captain such a great club, and I can promise my undivided attention in reaching success both on and off the pitch. Equally important, I hope to encourage and inspire our next generation of leaders, of which there are many. I'd also like to place on record my thanks to Kyle for putting his trust in me as his successor – he has improved all parts of our club, and I am delighted that he remains committed for the long term.

When the season finally got underway in late July, we were presented with a difficult regional group. Whilst the reformed Saturday format probably suited our playing style, we were under no illusions as to the challenge ahead. Our only addition over the winter was the signing of Phill Bell from Whitburn – Phill has a clear pedigree and strong record in the league and proved to be a welcome addition to the group. He also holds the record for the best individual fine of the season, an accolade which cannot be underestimated!

After a bright start to our group campaign with two wins, we suffered defeat to Felling (again!), Finn McCreath's magnificent 101 in vein. We did however recover to win our 4 remaining matches to top the group. I'd love to say these victories were comfortable, but that wouldn't be consistent with the true Hill spirit. Notable mentions to Cal Harding (4/24 vs Tynemouth), James Schofield (49 vs South North), Mohsin Mukhtar (4/13) and a maiden half century for Belly in the same game at Ashington. Contributions were made by every player during the group stage, which is a clear indication of the depth within our squad.

Onto the quarter finals, and a home tie against Eppleton. Kyle's

1st XI Review - continued

brilliant 102 was the highlight as we posted 202 from our 40 overs. At 48-5, then 100-6 in response, the visitors' chase looked unlikely, but some strong lower order hitting provided the Hill crowd with the tense finish they regularly enjoy. We eventually dismissed Eppleton for 174, with 2.3 overs remaining.

In the semi-finals, we travelled to Chester Le Street. Due to a late change to the team (!), Luke Doneathy was promoted to open the batting and made a strong start to the innings. When the opening stand was broken, we lost wickets at regular intervals, and never really settled into the innings. Some positive play towards the end ensured we posted 153, which felt light, but was certainly enough to bowl at. Chester are a well-oiled machine in these situations and made the chase with relative ease in the end. The way they managed the middle overs of both innings was impressive, and certainly something that we can learn from as we look to develop.

There was a real sense of togetherness within the group this year. We fought hard to win in situations where we've struggled in the past, and this was probably our best effort in a social capacity for many years. Our newly appointed fines committee, Max & Rory, generated record-breaking returns, and we look forward to the Amsterdam (via Dublin) away fixture in due course. Whether it be Nico's wild running stories, Adam providing his usual enthusiasm, or even Daley regularly contradicting team talks, in an otherwise challenging year, on and off the field, everyone played their part.

In summary, we have every reason to be optimistic as a club. We have incredible depth within our squads, as clearly evidenced when Anth and Archie stepped seamlessly into the 1st team at different points of the season. People are knocking on the door for promotions throughout the club, which is a fantastic position to be in.

1st XI Review - continued

Many within our side will be the nucleus of a successful Northumberland team in the future I am sure. We can expect success next season if we build on our progress this year.

With my increased presence around the club, it's striking to witness first-hand the monumental efforts of our volunteers. They make sacrifices every day to provide us with the best possible conditions for play. They also live and breathe every ball with the team, home and away, and I sincerely hope that my 2021 season review includes tales of an excessive celebratory evening in September with all of our supporters.



Andy Dawson
2nd XI Captain

2nd XI Review

2020 has been full of surprises that no one, not one person, has ever asked for and this would prove to be the theme of the second XI's 2020 campaign. With the league format abandoned and T20 competitions ruled out, we were left with a Banks Bowl like competition, minus the coloured kits and orange balls, to try and salvage some cricket from the season. This 40 over regional mini-league began as soon as global pandemic

would allow, which turned out to be August 1st.

We began at home to Newcastle and at the half way stage it looked like we were on course to continue last years' excellent form – we posted 235 from our 40 overs largely due to 50 from Joe Moore and a century from Joe Anderson. However due some charitable bowling on our part along with some uncharacteristically poor fielding, we found ourselves very much in a game. Going into the final over, the guests required 11 from the final over to snatch a victory out from

2nd XI Review - continued

under us – we were to be saved by a great over from Joe Torre who picked up the final 4 wickets in just 4 balls when the lads finally found their hands on the boundary. The following week we ran riot at Felling – a typically dominant display against a Felling side who were forced to play in a stronger league than they were used to. Janders scored 60, Nemo this time the centurion and Anth Hunter and Joe Torre chipping in with 4 wickets and 3 wickets respectively. So far, so normal, for a side that have become used to success. But the third weekend saw the visit of Tynemouth and the cracks which we had paved over in week one came to the forefront once more. With Ben ‘The Fig’ Mussett flitting between cricket and golf on a biweekly basis, there gave an opportunity to the enigma, who was Arun Phogatt. Arun scored an altruistic century on a day where the rest of the order failed to fire, before hauling out when we needed to push on. With a shortage of bowling options in this 5-bowler competition, we were unable to prevent an experienced Tynemouth from knocking off our modest total. This would be the first of three consecutive losses in the coming weeks (the most disastrous run of form for the 2s in the last decade) – losing away to an improved, table-topping Gateshead Fell and the old enemy in South Northumberland.

In truth, we had not performed to the best of our ability all season and we looked to have been dumped deservedly out of the competition, only for a Bank Holiday Monday miracle to occur. Comfortably beating Ashington shouldn't have been enough to see us through, but a young Felling side somehow managing to overcome an experienced Newcastle team would prove enough to see us through by the skin of our teeth. One mysterious, Felling-based hero made himself very popular with the second team boys with his match-winning performance. Some people say he never blinks, he

2nd XI Review - continued

never blinks, he has two sets of knees and that he roams around the woods at night foraging for wolves; others say he's wanted by MI6, his skin has the texture of a dolphin's and that he sleeps upside down like a Bat; all we know is, he's called The Goose.

Having burgled our way through to the quarter-finals, Peter Jones returned from his 6-week holiday in the shortened 6-week season. We went on to beat Washington comprehensively, and then Chester-le-Street narrowly – see Anth Hunter for details of his batting heroics. So in a year where we scarcely deserved it, we found ourselves in the final. But in a fitting metaphor for 2020, the final was then cancelled due to Covid-19 – cue the conspiracy theorists.

In a season where we were far from our best, there were still a number of positives to take: young bowlers Harry Reaves and Safiun Bhuiyan deputised very well in difficult circumstances; Adam Heather brought welcome experience and focus to the side; and Joe Anderson finished as the competition's top run scorer. With some senior players reaching the twilight of their careers (and others peddling their services at Newcastle CC) 2021 is likely to provide opportunities for some talented young players coming through.

As always, thanks to Joe Kilpatrick for his work as VC, Fenwick Marley for his work as fixture secretary, the crucial figures who keep the club functioning behind the scenes (Pearson, Haves, Lunn et al.), and finally to Owen Blackburn for the efforts he's taken to make his handwriting legible.

Stay safe and see you in 2021.



Chris Pounder
3rd XI Captain

3rd XI West Tyne Review

The 2020 West Tyne League season finally got underway for The Hill on 19th July after a long wait to see if we'd ever get any cricket played. A half season would see us finish 5th as in 2019 on 122 points playing 9 games winning 5, losing 4 with 1 game cancelled. In a season that took on a win/loss format our wins would come against. Mitford, Hexham Leazes, Haltwhistle, Humsaugh and Stamfordham.

Two of those wins (Humsaugh and Haltwhistle) were against recent winners of beating the Stronger sides in the league.

The defeats would prove frustrating as we always found ourselves in with a chance of winning these games although on a positive note we didn't let our heads drop and would take the games into the final overs.

Stand out performers this year with the bat go to Davey Ladd and Rohan Aatif. Davey would finish the season with 287 runs finishing 2nd in the WTL standings scoring three 50's. Rohan would finish with 166 runs with two 50's. Regular contributions throughout the season include Rashid Shad and Zain Ullah

In the bowling department Zain Ullah finished the season with 12 wickets followed by the V.C. with 11 and Matthew Lockey ending the season with 8. There would be 4 wickets each for Davey, Akee, Ishmael and Harry.

It's good to see some new faces in the WTL 3's this year. Fardin and Safit Bhuiyan coming into the team along with Liaqat Khan. All contributing to the team throughout the season.

The C Division season was cut to four games. 2 cancelled, 1 win, 1 loss

3rd XI NE Premier Review



Barry Pearson
3rd XI Coach

With the Covid pandemic meaning we had a truncated 2020 season, the NEPL Sunday 3rd team played an extended regional Banks Cup, played along similar lines as the 1st and 2nd teams. With the absence of Ashington, we played 6 games with two wins, three defeats and a rained off game against Felling resulting in a mid table position.

As only one team was certain to qualify for the semi finals, defeats in our opening two games against strong Blaydon and South North teams really put us up against it. Both games followed a similar pattern in that we were in good positions at certain times but couldn't quite push on to finish the game off. Two wins against Tynemouth and Gateshead Fell were to follow to get us back in the hunt, an excellent partnership of 70 between Matthew Lockey and Jeff Mason was crucial in a low scoring game at Tynemouth, while 50s for Rohan Aatif and Rashid Shad led us to victory at the Fell. The abandoned game at home to Felling meant we couldn't then qualify, before we were well beaten at Jesmond in the final game against group winners Newcastle.

Very much on the plus side was the introduction of some of our younger juniors to senior cricket, Owen Blackburn and Fardin Bhuiyan were two who made great progress, while Haydon Mustard showed glimpses of his talent with the bat and also with the ball when he took three wickets at Gateshead Fell. My thanks go to Andrew Jewitt and Joe Fletcher who shared captaincy duties and all the players who represented the Sunday team this year. Hopefully next season we can return to a full League season and some sort of normality.

Ladies Team Review



Sally Anderson
Ladies Manager

The Northumberland Women's Cricket League in 2020 was unfortunately cancelled due to the Pandemic, however it was with much relief that we were able to organise 8 friendly matches when lockdown restrictions eventually allowed play to resume in July. This gave Benwell Hill Ladies an opportunity to introduce 6 new players as well as mixing batting orders and bowling attacks to accommodate all players to have a much required run out after months without sports. The new girls we welcomed included: Laura

Pearson, Maisie Sinclair and Becca Oliver all previously from Newcastle; Katie Chomse, a Durham Jet; Lottie Glover-Stewart who has played county cricket alongside many of our girls and Rowan Rochester a great hockey player and new recruit to cricket! All the new players brought a great deal of energy and depth to the team, and the chemistry between new and old players proved a good fit.

Out of the 8 arranged friendly matches, frustratingly 3 were cancelled and sadly both fixtures to South North ended in defeat. However, we did have three strong wins against Stocksfield (twice) and Tynedale.

Personal stand out moments in the matches were Niamh Brennan's hat-trick at South North in our first game, and Emily Whiting scoring 50 at Tynedale.

There was certainly a renewed appetite for Ladies Cricket this year and we would like to thank Ty Buckley for coming along to lead a few training sessions which were very well received. Our aspirations

Ladies Team Review - continued

would be to have a competitive team in 2021 looking to be serious contenders in the Premier Division. We also want to encourage as many new players into our squad to enable us to have a second team playing fun, friendly matches and developing player's skills too. To achieve both goals we need to recruit more players as well as having an allocated training night and coach. So here is the call for all wives, daughters, sisters, nieces, Mums and even Grannies come and join our small, friendly squad. Finally, it goes without saying that we will also look forward to the return of our much loved suppers in 2021 too.

Our thanks as always to Geoff Chambers for his support and preparation of pitches and Tim Anderson for umpiring our matches ... even if his daughter didn't always agree with some of his decisions!



Barry Pearson
Junior Supremo

Junior Section Review

As with everything else in 2020, the Junior season was badly affected by the Covid pandemic as we couldn't have any cricket on the ground until the start of July. However, as it looked in April and May that we wouldn't get any cricket at all last season, we were grateful for the eight week window that we were allowed, and we did see in that period further development of some of our talented Junior cricketers that gives further reason for optimism next year when hopefully we can return to some sort of

'normal'. The major downside of the restrictions and guidelines that we had to follow was that there were no All Stars and Under 9 games in 2020 and we couldn't have all of our young 5 to 9 year olds on the ground on Tuesday nights, we can only hope this can change next year

Junior Section - continued

so this age group can return once again.

The Junior age groups were allowed to play some games late in the season, with many positive results and performances from these teams, and this has led to several of our cricketers being selected for the winter County squads where the Hill will have a high representation. James Walder and Jim Robinson did a fantastic job with the Under 11s where as ever there was the usual mix of talent and enthusiasm, Scott and Max Williamson led an excellent Under 13 squad with a win at South North being their stand out result, while Rory Hanley was a massive help to me with a young Under 15 squad where there were also some strong performances in the limited time we had. The addition of Max and Rory to our coaching team was a major development as we look to provide a mix of experienced coaches along with younger guys with fresh ideas, and we will look to develop this further going forward.

All in all, in the brief period of cricket that we were allowed in 2020, there were lots of positives to take forward, and my thanks go to all of those at the Hill for their efforts to make this happen in difficult circumstances.



Rory Hanley
U15 Coach

Junior U15 review

Although the 2020 season was badly affected by the Covid pandemic, a young and enthusiastic under 15 squad were restricted to just five games, but there was enough talent on show against some good sides to give us great encouragement going forward to next season. Under the captaincy of Dan Ramsay, we played three T20 games and two 35 over NEPL games, but unfortunately also had two games cancelled because of the weather.

Junior U15 Review - continued

First up, we came across a strong and experienced Tynedale side, and although we were well beaten, under 13 Freddie McGregor played his best innings of the season with 45. We were always looking second best at Tynemouth until an excellent unbeaten partnership of 75 between Abu Siddique and new guy Will Bowman led us to victory in the last over. Our best T20 performance came at Medicals against a strong Newcastle side where on a difficult wicket we scraped together 94 runs before excellent bowling and fielding led by Owen Blackburn and Haydon Mustard saw us home by 20 runs.

The best game of the season came in the NEPL match against Newcastle at the Hill. We did not start well in the field and the excellent Newcastle opening batters scored 180 in the first 20 overs before we fought back strongly in the second half of the innings to restrict them to 239 all out which was a fantastic effort. Fardin Bhuiyan took four for 12 before then getting the innings off to a great start in reply with 50, then Haydon Mustard took control showing his undoubted talent by hitting a splendid unbeaten maiden hundred, including smashing the window in the away changing room, and the Hill ended up winning by 4 wickets. Unfortunately, we were missing over half the team in the next round at Tynemouth, and lost there by 50 runs.

In 2021, we will only lose two players who will be too old for the under 15 age group, so with the current under 13 squad looking very strong with many of them getting a good taste of under 15 cricket this year, we have lots to look forward to and we just hope that the current situation changes for the better and we can have a full season. It is also encouraging that we have had several new players joining the Hill in 2020 who have all made a good impression and will be returning next year.

Junior U13 Review



Max Williamson
U13 Coach

It would have been a travesty if the U13 team of the 2020 season had not been able to play, as 1 to 11 they were undoubtedly the strongest team we have fielded for many a year at this age group. Every player had a role in the team and contributed to what was almost a perfect season results wise.

Despite the delayed start to the season we managed to play 6 games, winning 5 including an excellent victory over South North and losing only 1 to Tynedale.

A real team ethic was the key to our success throughout the season with lots of contributions with both bat and ball. Every player made match winning performances though out the season, some of the highlights included:

- Ben Robinson taking 5 for 2 vs Newcastle City
- Freddie McGregor, Jayam Patel and Rory Mustard all scoring 30no against Tynemouth, in a team total of 206 in 20 overs
- Aaron Armstrong 4 for 9 including hat trick vs Tynemouth and 4 for 0 vs Newcastle
- Issac Mcintosh 31no vs Ponteland
- Rory Mustard and Abu Siddique 30no vs Newcastle
- Excellent leadership from Freddie McGregor and Abu Siddique

So many aspects of the team's game came on leaps and bounds throughout the season, fielding and match awareness especially, which I am sure was in no small part due to the impromptu practice sessions the lads arranged every Saturday afternoon. Have no doubt we have some very talented and committed lads in this group who are all capable of becoming great players in the future.

Junior U11 Review



James Walder
U11 Coach

It is a big step up between the Under 9 and Under 11 formats and this year we had a number of players make their debut for the Under 11s. There is a huge change from Under 9 cricket with the move to wearing pads, helmet and all the other equipment, a much harder ball and bigger pitches. Several of the stronger Under 11 players also played more the Under 13s but that gave us the chance for new players to get a chance at this level.

We ended up playing 8 games including playing Stocksfield three times. We managed to come out on top in some close games and also had a couple of defeats.

We were really consistent with our bowling throughout the year with a number of players adding a yard or two of pace. Highlights were good bowling performances from Thomas (4 wickets in 4 balls), Seb, Gabriel and Nicholas.

Some of the more experienced players led the way with the bat. Fergus and Ben both had a bit more power but all players gained confidence over the summer as they got used to the kit and harder ball. We even saw the occasional shot on the offside (Freddie and Gruff) and it was really pleasing to see the players learn that sometimes a good ball just needs to be kept out. Focus for next year is on being more aggressive with the bad balls and seeing some more boundaries!

There was a really high standard of fielding for most of the season – despite this there was still the odd chaotic scene of a dropped catch creating a run out opportunity only to result in over throws!

Junior U11 Review - continued

Ibrahim, Daniel and Ellie all took great catches during the year and we managed to get a few runs out via the wicket keeper. A special mention must go to Thomas for volunteering to keep wicket at the start of the season and very quickly becoming an effective keeper.

All in all it was great to get some cricket in and we have some great foundations in place for next summer when hopefully we can have a full season of training and games.

Finally thanks for all the parents for their support during the year both at training and the weekend games.

Roll of Honour for 2020

All Senior and Junior Player of the Year awards will be announced in early 2021.

Congratulations to the following players who scored 100's in 2020:

- **Joe Anderson** for the 2nd XI v Newcastle
- **Kyle Coetzer** for the 1st XI v Eppleton
- **Finn McCreath** for the 1st XI v Felling
- **Haydon Mustard** for the U15s v Newcastle
- **Arun Phogatt** for the 2nd XI v Tynemouth

Congratulations to the following players who all took hat tricks in 2020 :

- **Aaron Armstrong** for the Under 13s v Tynemouth
- **Niamh Brennan** for the Ladies v South North
- **Thomas Hewison** for the Under 11s v Tynemouth
- **Joe Kilpatrick** for the 2nd XI v South North
- **Joe Torre** for the 2nd XI v Newcastle