



SOUTHERN ELECTRIC PREMIER CRICKET LEAGUE Management Committee Report 2009

2009 SEASON

With almost a decade as an ECB accredited Premier League, the Management Committee would like to congratulate all clubs for their team and individual performances in a season of excitement and yet more disappointing weather, that tried hard to endanger more games than we would have liked. Our congratulations go to Havant, Rowledge and Paultons the respective winners of Premier Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3. Congratulations also to second placed Calmore Sports who re-join the Premier League from County Division 1 on adoption of the Management Committee's recommendations.

Lymington were crowned Southern Electric Twenty20 cup champions, beating Ventnor in the second year of our new competition. Thanks must go to the Hampshire Rose Bowl staff who were able to offer the use of their excellent facilities, providing a great setting for an exciting floodlit final.

Bournemouth, the inaugural Southern Electric Twenty20 Cup winners in 2008, went on to add the prestigious ECB Cocksbur T20 Cup to their silverware collection under the gaze of the Sky Sports television cameras at Derby. They emerged victorious from initial play-off matches against Sully Centurions and Mochdre in South Wales before qualifying for the national finals with a thrilling one-run win over Bridgwater. Despite arguably being underdogs on the day, Bournemouth reigned supreme at Derby, beating much fancied Reigate Priory in the semi-finals before chasing down 153 to beat Nottinghamshire Premier League champions Cuckney by six wickets in the final. Bournemouth's achievement, added to Totton & Eling's televised success in the 2007 North Gear Championships, was a marvellous advertisement for Southern Electric Premier League cricket and our sponsorship. Southern Electric's name and logo was highlighted on Bournemouth's coloured playing attire in the Cocksbur T20 finals. The team won a trip to Barbados as a prize for their success.

The league Management Committee as ever worked extremely hard throughout the year to ensure the continued success of one of the most respected recreational cricket leagues in the country. While discipline is needing added focus as we enter into a new season, we would ask all clubs to ensure that the correct level of attention is given to administrative procedures. All relevant club members must be aware of the commitment and requirements needed from member clubs of the Southern Electric Premier Cricket League. Several hundred pounds of fines were levied this year – creating more and unnecessary work for all those involved.

Following the promotion of Portsmouth & Southsea and Sarisbury Athletic, the committee ran its first 'induction' to help clubs understand how our league works – assisting the administrators of our new clubs to navigate their way to a successful first season. Following its success, it is our intention to repeat this where required in future years.

Various representative matches were played throughout 2009, culminating in a remarkable win over the Surrey Championship in the ill-fated CCC Premier League Cup and victories in Twenty20 matches against the Army and Royal Navy. We had the pleasure of hosting Australia's national (and typically powerful) Indigenous touring side at Hursley Park. An Under-21 development side produced a disappointing performance and was well beaten by the Isle of Wight CB at Newclose.

Our ever popular website located at www.southernpremierleague.com underwent some cosmetic changes this year and still continues to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors – from both home and abroad. Thank you to Cricket-Hockey and specifically Jamie Harvey, for the extra time and effort he has offered to its continued success.

In 2009 we saw the return of our Annual Awards Dinner to the refurbished Southampton Novotel; and what a spectacular success it was. "Superb food" ... "Good turnout & atmosphere" ... "Brilliant entertainment" "Fantastic evening" were just some of the accolades afforded from those in attendance, including our Sponsors. Our thanks go to Adrian, Mike and Paul for their hard work.

ECB ACCREDITATION

In August, at the annual Premier League Chairman's meeting, the main topics of discussion were: Discipline & the ECB support for positive action, including suspension from National competitions; The need for consistency of registration for all competitions; Possible funding for feeder leagues; National Knockout and the need to increase entry of Premier Division Clubs; The Cocks spur Club Twenty20 with thanks for support; Managed Migration & engaging an Overseas player; Play-cricket registration take up (24 of 25 leagues); Club mark accreditation; and reducing bureaucracy.

The perception of Paul Thompson, our vice chairman who attended the meeting, was that apart from the Play-cricket registration where we are yet to participate, all other facets of our set up are considered to be best of breed and/or a bench mark for other Leagues to attain. Our real challenge is to stay there!

SPONSORSHIP

Scottish & Southern Energy Group (Southern Electric) continued to offer us and the local community fantastic support through the final year of our current contract with them. Special thanks are due to our new account manager, Huw Lock who has worked with the league through the year, bringing with him a huge degree of drive and commitment to our wonderful relationship and mutually beneficial sponsorship agreement.

At the start of the year, clubs were issued with branded memory sticks and notice board items, the first of many new branded initiatives that the league and SSE wish to expand on in the coming months. The funding invested into our Development Fund, made possible by Southern Electric continues to offer financial assistance to clubs looking to upgrade facilities and drive forward youth development – from grass roots level and beyond

GROUND AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT – ACCREDITATION

Please see the enclosed HCB Assessment Report which is included with these AGM papers.

- Chris Westbrook of Hursley Park CC receives the 'Groundsman of the Year' award
- Liphook & Ripsley are awarded the 'Most Improved Ground'
- From two years ago, our accreditation process takes into account the need for CRB checks - 'All coaches must be active and in possession of a valid CRB check'
- Several clubs have had to be 'downgraded' with regard to youth accreditation, owing to missing either the required number of active coaches or those coaches with the right level of qualification.
- The league is now pleased to confirm that all clubs within the league have either been awarded club mark or are awaiting their presentation. Our congratulations to those clubs who have recently completed their 'renewal' already.

PROMOTIONS AND RELEGATIONS

By accepting the Grounds and Youth Development report from the HCB at our October meeting, the Management Committee confirm the following promotions and relegations that, subject to your acceptance of this report will take effect for the 2009 season :

1. Andover CC who finished bottom of Division 1 are relegated to Division 2
2. With Rowledge not meeting the requirements of accreditation for Division 1, second placed Ventnor, following the accreditation of their new ground at "Newclose" are promoted to Premier 1
3. OT's & Romsey and Hambledon who both finished at the bottom of Division 2 are relegated to Division 3
4. Paultons & Bournemouth II are promoted to Division 2.
5. Purbrook are relegated to County Division 1 of the Hampshire League
6. We welcome Calmore Sports back to Division 3 – with only one club who qualifies for promotion having the necessary accreditation, United Services (Portsmouth) remain in Division 3

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

2009 saw the end of the first year with Adrian Poole as our Treasurer. Adrian has contributed to the committee in a huge way this year and has been a fantastic addition to our management team. We thank him for not only assisting in keeping our financial business in order, but for his assistance in both disciplinary hearings and indeed our league dinner last month.

After serving on the committee for the last few years, Brian Woolley will step down following the AGM. Thanks go to Brian for his time served on the committee.

After four years of service as Chairman of the Southern Electric Premier Cricket League, we are sorry to announce that Paddy Heffernan has decided not to stand for re-election. Not only did Paddy have a difficult challenge in stepping into the shoes left by Alan Bundy, Paddy served in office while having to travel several hundreds of miles each month in order to attend meetings from his base in the Midlands. Paddy has steered the committee through some very challenging times and must be recognised for the good job he has done. During his first year in office, Paddy ran the Premier League while also heading up the committee at Alton CC. His dedication and commitment to cricket is clear, and while we will miss him, respect his decision and wish him well. In recognition of his services, and upon agreement from our membership, the Management Committee intend to bestow upon him a Vice Presidency.

With Paddy stepping down – the committee had to consider how best to fill this vacancy and had no need to look any further than our current Vice Chairman, Paul Thompson. A former Southern league Treasurer, Club administrator and player. Paul added a depth of experience and wisdom on many different levels to the committee for which it is most grateful for. The committee were therefore delighted to offer Paul our nomination which he has accepted. Subject therefore to the approval at the AGM, Paul Thompson will become the newly elected League Chairman.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On behalf of the Chairman and Management Committee, we wish to thank once again our friends from Scottish and Southern Energy, Cricket Hockey.com and Hampshire Cricket for their invaluable support to the Southern Electric Premier Cricket League during 2009.

We owe much thanks to all the efforts of Dave Kirk and his team at the South Coast Panel of Umpires and Scorers, who again have offered solid support in officiating our games.

Finally, thank you to the Hampshire Cricket Board's Grounds and Facilities team (Chaired by President Alan Bundy), including Ben Thompson and Chris Westbrook for their help in assessing and managing the accreditation process.

CLOSING NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN, Paddy Heffernan

I trust you have read and understood this detailed Management Report and appreciate the endeavours that go on behind the scenes. Your Management Committee work very hard on your behalf to ensure that as far as possible the clubs can get on with the business of playing cricket. We appreciate there are always noises about the administrative burdens placed on clubs and some of the repetitive nature of some of the information requested by various offices. We have taken this to the ECB and are working with them and the HCB in an effort to address some of these concerns.

The administration of a league requires considerable time and effort put in by those few who volunteer their services. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Management Committee, including co-opted members for their support, time and effort during 2009.

As with all committees we are always on the lookout for new blood- particularly from the clubs; we really do need PLAYING representatives from Div 2 and Div 3 clubs, don't wait to be asked please feel free to volunteer!

On the discipline front, the disappointing thing to say is that we still have some issues to deal with; not many it has to be said, however the fact that there are any at all is a shame. One of the things the Committee have been very pleased with is the apparent improvement in the way most of the clubs appear to be 'disciplinary conscious' and are taking action against players before it comes to the League. It must be understood however, that this does not mean that the league will not take further action against offenders, if deemed necessary. On a positive front we as a league appear to have a better grip on this issue than many of the other 24 Premier Leagues.

Last year I informed you that the ECB were looking at several changes to recreational cricket, firstly a national 20/20 competition – which we are pleased to record that one of our clubs, Bournemouth won. This is destined to continue with possibly additional club 20/20 competitions being introduced. The National Knockout was saved from cancellation, through particular pressure from the SEPCL. The ECB are looking to continue this and are actively searching for a sponsor. The ECB continue to push our playing format as a blue print for Premier Leagues and currently we understand that an increasing number of other leagues have now adopted our split format.

As a continued and important reminder, all Clubs Registered with the Inland Revenue as a Community Amateur Sports Club and enjoying large rate rebates are at risk if they were to be found making (or having made) payments to players. Apart from being against league rules it opens the club to prosecution. Indeed over the last 4 seasons several clubs in other premier leagues have been

investigated by the Inland Revenue and prosecuted. There is intense speculation that payment for playing is happening, and as such we the Management Committee are determined to ensure that it is not. Clubs should be under no illusions that any SEPL club found guilty of paying players for playing will be dealt with most severely.

All clubs should be clearly aware of rulings/rule related to this and other matters, and it is their responsibility. We would therefore STRONGLY recommend, that all clubs review their financial policies, and brush up on rulings. A warning was given again at the ECB Chairman's meeting that these investigations would be continuing, apparently several clubs in the Cheshire leagues have had visits.

I am sure none of the clubs need reminding of the changes to the Visa system and other immigration issues, please take care.

As you will all know by now, this is to be my fourth and last closing report; the intention was that I would ideally stay in the post of Chairman for 3 years; however one or two loose ends dictated that a fourth was necessary. Prior to taking over the Chair from Alan Bundy I had been Vice Chairman for a year and so it was a planned succession, this time around we have also had a Vice Chairman in place for a year and I am delighted that Paul Thompson has accepted the Committee's nomination for Chairman of the SEPCL.

When I took over as Chairman we had just finished collating the results of a survey/questionnaire which we had issued to the clubs. This highlighted some items that the clubs felt might improve your league, some were taken on board and changes implemented over the next 2-3 seasons. Some were only minor changes; fine tuning we'll call it. Therefore I trust we are handing over to the new committee and Chairman a league with a strong foundation to match its obvious strength on the field of play.

Another of my aims 4 years ago was to cement our strong relations with Southern Electric, this included a 3 year Sponsorship contract (to replace the annual one). This we succeeded in achieving and this is now up for renewal. I would like to offer my personal thanks to the Scottish & Southern Energy Group (Southern Electric) for their fantastic sponsorship, and the opportunities this has offered us and hope that this relationship will continue for many years to come.

My congratulations to all the League Winners, Promoted teams and Cup Winners.

Paddy Heffernan

Report written and prepared for and behalf of the Management Committee by Steve Veal, General Secretary – November 2009.