

## **EMPIRE CC - CAPTAIN'S REPORT 2005 - Richard Wheeler**

**I was dearly hoping that after Empire Cricket Club's first year in the Finnish SM 45 League I could have had more encouraging words to say. However, as I sit here after our difficult season, I have to be honest and say I don't think we have progressed as far as we would have liked. I certainly don't think we raised our game sufficiently from last season to be competitive enough to really test our opponents (despite a few exceptional spells like against Turku and the SKK Lions games). However, an inability to concentrate, focus ourselves upon the job in hand and to bat a decent innings found us out. The ability to bowl a consistently tight line but general inability to bat cost us heavily.**

**It's disappointing because I feel we have a team that is capable of winning games and finishing higher in the league. I know we are an amateur club, and the game needs to be fun, but now we are in the SM 45 league we need to improve the quality of our whole approach.**

**As a first team, we certainly don't practice enough and never together at one time. Even if we do practice once a week, we need players to turn up or else the session is a waste of time for those who do turn up. There is also always the problem of getting twelve players together regularly to turn out for match days. Due to family commitments and other arrangements I don't know how we can improve this. The bottom line is maybe that WE NEED MORE PLAYERS.**

**However, enough of the negative stuff.**

**On a more positive note, I was pleased to see that all our bowlers continued their solid and consistent performances. Nick again proved he is a main stay in the wicket-keeping department and his batting is coming on a bit too! Who's to fill the void if he turns in the gloves next year? We need to look at Nick bringing on the youngsters in that department, and also training any adults who might be interested (I am thinking about it).**

**We have had a number of new comers to Empire this year all of whom have helped us move forward.**

**Youngsters were to me the highlight of the season. All the juniors who played for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI did themselves proud. They all ran around the pitch with energy that was lacking from some of the more senior players. Hopefully they have learned that they can be good enough to score lots more runs at this level next season with more patience and by taking singles and not always looking for a 6 to define an innings. I'm sure that they have also learned that despite their young age they are good enough even now to hold a 1<sup>st</sup> XI slot.**

**Finally, on a personal note, I have to say that it has been a pleasure playing with all of you guys, we may have lost every 45 over game but we still go out there with smiles and wanting to play the game in the spirit it was made for. I know from this report it looks all doom and gloom, but if I'm honest I do believe that**

**next season we can win games and put Empire where they belong. Mid Table looks good for next season.**

**I would also like to thank Laurence for his endless work with equipment, mat transport and his work on the Viikki wicket, doing his usual “McGuiver” act and also those who turned up for every training session come rain or shine.**

**Lloyd, Nick and Max's support for their work and success with the juniors and 20/20, Reesh and Lloyd for catering the games, Imran for collecting subs at the matches and also working along side me during the games and Nick for keeping us in the black?**

**Finally I'd like to thank all of these and the rest of the club members who have contributed in their own way, be it with preparation of food, helping with the mat and equipment or giving match day lifts etc. These efforts are not underestimated by me.**

**Thank-you for your time and I hope that we are united in trying to make Empire Cricket Club one that can compete in the Finnish SM 45 League on more competitive basis in the future.**

**Richard Wheeler 3.01.2006**