

Junior Convenor's Report Poloc Cricket Club AGM, March 2012

I'm pleased to be able to start with a number of encouraging statistics and facts about our juniors.

Firstly there's the cold stat' that the number of junior members in our club increased by over ten percent in 2011. Notwithstanding the many youngsters who register with us, 72 took out memberships. The subscription income this generates for, as well as the "vibrancy" juniors bring to, our club, shouldn't be overlooked.

Looking beyond these relatively cold stat's, I'm also pleased to say that the club again played in every competition open to it in 2011, from Under 10 "Kwik Cricket" festivals, through all the age-group WDJCU leagues – including both the B Leagues – to the four junior cup competitions open to our youngsters. But not content with just this large volume of games, we also managed to arrange a number of friendlies, including against Largo CC who came over to Glasgow during the school holidays. And so even though season 2011 was another blighted by poor weather, we managed to provide a huge number – as well as real variety – of cricket for our juniors.

But playing matches is just one part of our junior programme. Coaching and practice continue year-round, with off-season indoor coaching taking place every Sunday afternoon at Hutchesons' Grammar School Sports Hall, leading from – and then back in to – our summer, in-season, programme. 2011 again saw junior coaching at Shawholm three evenings a week, and my thanks are due to the many senior players – as well as our overseas player/coaches, Carl and Tinus Huyser – who gave so much of their time, and willingly, in this regard. Mention by name should be given to David James, Matt Coyle, Craig Young, Aamir Kayani, Russell Lauder, Paul Flanagan and Cammy Armour. The club's junior programme simply wouldn't function without the input of these people.

Our junior programme also wouldn't work without the support of the many parents who assist with match logistics. Name-checks here would see Zameer Chaudhry, Jon Raine, Stuart Rousen, David and Jacqueline Armour, David and Eilidh James, Colin McWilliam, Stuart and Helen Macdonald, Grant and Frances Cathcart, and Brian Spence all get mentions. To repeat: without this help, we simply couldn't carry out the amount of work we do.

Another component in any successful junior cricket programme is the support of ground-staff. Again in this area we are lucky to have incredibly willing people, from groundsman Adam Richardson and Ground Convenor Colin Scott, through the Huysers brothers, to Les' Ingram-Brown. All these people put in a power of work throughout the year to provide a standard of playing facility that is second-to-none as far as what juniors at other clubs are being provided with. Our youngsters are fortunate indeed to be playing their junior cricket in such conditions and surroundings.

Attracting youngsters to the club centred again on the programme of schools-based coaching undertaken in the Spring, much in conjunction with the club's related coaching charity, The Community Coaching Initiative. 2011 saw us coach in more schools than ever, links with Pollokshields Primary, Glendale Primary, Annette Street Primary, Langside Primary, Tinto Primary, Merrylee Primary, Mossspark Primary, Sir John Maxwell Primary, Belmont School, Bellahouston Academy, Shawlands Academy, Craigholme School, Busby Primary, St Ninian's High School and Eastwood High School all being maintained and/or instigated in

2011. The demand for this only grows and we already have new schools in the programme for 2012. From these programmes we attract new juniors.

Also, as in my report last year, in this general vein it's maybe worth mentioning the continuing Partnership Agreements with both Glasgow Caledonian University and Langside College. Both remain good examples of how we are trying to develop cricket in our community.

Turning now to on-field activities.

The end-of-season league tables saw our Under 18s as runners-up, the Under 15s finishing third, the Under 15Bs runners-up, the Under 13s runners-up, the Under 13Bs runners-up, and the Under 11s runners-up. A good season, if quite a lot of "bridesmaid" activity going on! The Under 11s, who'd won the south conference missed out on winning their league on a wet and cold night at Hamilton Crescent when West of Scotland, winners of the north conference, narrowly beat them. The Under 18s, too, just missed out on a league win, and their chances of a Frank Smith Trophy disappeared with the rain as Finals Day failed to beat the weather.

A number of individual players also turned in performances of note. In junior cricket we saw two hundreds scored, as Danial Chaudhry and Craig Young both scored tons in T20 Under 18 league matches – no mean feat. And it might've been three with Scott Millen just missing out on a ton with a 91. Craig Young also scored over 500 runs in Under 18 cricket, averaging over 50. On the bowling side Ashar Mirza and Oliver Raine took the plaudits with thirteen wickets apiece. At Under 15, three batters scored over 200 runs, all three – Ross Armour, Elliott Rousen and Saif Sajjad – notching up half centuries along the way. And with the ball, Haider Akram and Elliott, again, were the main wicket-takers. In Under 13 cricket, Akhil Ahmed scored nearly 300 runs, and Lewis James got near to 200 in a season cut short by injury for him. Kess Sajjad, though still playing Under 11 cricket, was the stand-out bowler in the Under 13s, taking eighteen wickets. Akhil's sixteen and Lewis's fourteen, however, weren't far behind. Our talented Under 11s also saw impressive individual season's performances: Ahmed-Raza Hanif's 22 wickets was really impressive, as were Aliyan Qureshi's nineteen and Rorie McWilliam's eighteen, whilst Kess Sajjad ended the season with a batting average of just shy of 50 and Calum James averaged a shade over 35.

Beyond club cricket there were representative honours for a number of our young players. Lewis James, Kess Sajjad, Aliyan Qureshi and Akhil Ahmed all played Under 13 South Glasgow Area Squad cricket in 2011. Ross Armour, Elliott Rousen and Saif Sajjad were members of Cricket Scotland's Under 15 west Regional Development Centre. And Danial Chaudhry and Craig Young were both members of Cricket Scotland's Western Cricket Academy. Craig captained the academy throughout the 2011 season, leading them to victory in the inter-academy tournament. Craig also scored his second hundred of 2011 in the academy's match against a touring Australian side, pleasingly right here at Shawholm. Danial and Craig both represented Scotland at Under 17 level in 2011 too, Danial also playing for the Under 18 side. Both Craig and Danial also featured in the club's 1st XI throughout 2011, and both made league 50s. Scott Millen was another junior who featured regularly in the SNCL, whilst a plethora of juniors played other weekend senior cricket.

And, finally, and though he wasn't a junior any more, it's also worth mentioning that Bilal Chaudhry played with Scotland Under 19s in 2011, reflecting his continued development.

Congratulations also to the many other young players whose contributions to their teams in many ways, and on many occasions, was just as valuable. And thanks to those juniors who also contributed around the club – from helping on the ground to helping with practice and matches.

A final couple of comments if I may: whilst we don't "put in" to our junior programme to "win gongs" it's, nevertheless, nice when what's done is acknowledged. In this regard the club was given the Accredited Club of the Year award by the Sports Council of Glasgow at its annual awards dinner in 2011, having become only one of two Glasgow sports club to have been awarded the highest Clubmark accreditation by Glasgow Life. One of our young players, Calum James, also became the "poster-boy" for a new sports brochure produced by Glasgow Council, appearing on its front cover, bat in hand, a girl on each arm! Good times!

So I believe – notwithstanding the weather! -our juniors are in good heart, are developing in good players but as importantly good club members, and I look forward to another busy season starting in just a few weeks when, again with lots of others, I'll be trying to maintain our club's reputation for excellence in this area.

Keith Young
Junior Convenor
March 2012