



The Carlton Lockdown Newsletter

Till the gates of Grange Loan are open again

ISSUE 8

Two for the Future?

Recollections from John Boyd's spell as Junior Convenor

I took over from the excellent Gavin Scott in early 2007. There was a healthy membership of 104 juniors - now grown to well over 200 plus extensive waiting list.

Most fell by the cricket wayside, but it's heartening to see that a small number remain involved with the club in one form or another today. Two names do jump out - a particularly grumpy teenage fast bowler, and a young all-rounder who had recently taken up cricket after moving on from tennis.

The tennis player has gone on to play international cricket for two different countries, has hit an ODI hundred, and appeared in World Cups. She is, of course, Leigh Kasperek. I remember a kwik cricket tournament at Arbroath when she started smashing young boys out of the park, much to the delight of the local Cricket Scotland representative.

As for the one-time grumpy bowler? Ali Evans is now captain of Carlton and led us to our first ever Scottish Cup win in 2017. And in 2018 I watched him star in the Scotland team that beat England, as he took two key wickets including that of the England skipper, in the finest win in our country's history.

Not bad for a couple of Carlton youngsters. I'm sure there are plenty more like that to come from our current and future juniors.



In this issue

**More from Ali and Leigh
Learn about the Performance
Squad**

EVVO!

A question and answer session with Carlton skipper Ali Evans

What's your first memory of Carlton?

When I was about 10, my father took me to winter junior training at Merchiston. The session was run by Gavin Scott but there was the young Fraser Watts helping coach. The memory that sticks however is Brian Forrester constantly trying to get me to bend my front knee when driving, something he still tries to do.



What is the most important thing a coach has ever said to you?

The best piece of advice I have ever received is, be the best version of what you do best. All cricketers have strengths and weaknesses and in striving to improve it is easy to focus only on weaknesses. However, ultimately it is our strengths that will allow us to succeed. So this should always be the basis on which improvements should be built.

Who is the best you've ever bowled to?

I learned the hard way during the World Cup in 2015. There have been very few occasions when bowling I have felt completely out of control. This was the case when bowling at Kumar Sangakkara against Sri Lanka. The time and control he had was phenomenal, and it was clear to all that he knew what his strengths were and he was going to stick to them.

Favourite wicket you've ever taken?

Unfortunately I wasn't able to get him out during that game, which I certainly would have classified as my favourite wicket ever. I'm not sure I have a favourite wicket - my most memorable would be when I was at Derbyshire and played a 3 day game against South Africa. I removed Jacques Rudolph, LBW with one of the few balls I have ever actually swung. This was on the back of bowling 3 or 4 maidens to Hashim Amla. Unforgettable.

Your best moment for Carlton?

It has to be winning the Scottish Cup final. It wasn't only the fact we won, it was the way we did it. The way in which the whole team fought back on three or four occasions when it looked like the game was getting away from us and pulled together still sticks with me. Also the fact that it was a team spread from Carlton players through and through, spanning the generations made it so much sweeter.



**Did you recognise the pads in Issue 6?
They are Zaki Yusaf's**

The Carlton Performance Squad

John Beattie gives an insight into how Carlton is investing in the future

Development of junior cricketers is a cornerstone of Carlton's identity as a cricket club. It's a proud boast that, when we won the Men's Scottish Cup in 2017, seven of the team were ex-Carlton juniors. Last season over 50% of the men's first team and second team were Performance Squad players, and there's a strong pipeline of junior talent coming through.

It's a big jump, however, from promising junior to first team superstar.

The Performance Squad was formed three years ago as a means of developing junior players to form the backbone of the 1s & 2s in 5 years' time. We have a squad of twenty five 15-25 year olds: most have played age group cricket for the Eastern Knights, many have U15/U17/U19 Scotland caps, and one, Hannah Rainey, has received full caps for the Scotland Wildcats.

This winter's training programme was extensive: Over 100 hours of training and skills sessions at the National Cricket Centre and James Gillespie's High School, a further set of 10 Strength and Conditioning sessions and an online Sports Psychology programme.

Coaches include our own legends Fraggie & Stevie, and this year further coaching inputs came from Dewald Nel, George Munsey and Olly Hairs.

Sadly, all the hard work had to grind to a halt in March. The squad has been keeping in touch with Zoom calls, training challenges, and fitness programmes, including Ali Shah's brutal fitness test (1 minute each of push-ups, squats, sit ups and dips - record Mo Nauman 228 total).

Fingers are crossed for cricket in 2020, but rest assured we'll be doing it all again for 2021.

It's our investment for the future.

**"When you carry your bat,
you don't carry it alone."**

The Wait

a short film issued recently by
the ECB

see it on this link

<http://www.ecb.co.uk/video/1670476>



**THANK
YOU
CRICKET
LOVERS**



KASPER!

When Leigh was asked about Carlton she came over a bit poetical

What I love about Carlton

- I love the cherry blossom in full bloom down by the nets.**
- I love the view of Arthur's seat, a reminder of how close we are to the city.**
- I love that no matter your age, gender or level - your success is celebrated.**
- I love seeing young kids down at the nets playing with their friends, while older faces patrol the boundary and keep the benches warm.**
- I love coming back home and being greeted by familiar faces and instantly feeling the warmth of the heart of the club.**
- I love hearing and watching everyone help out at the ground.**
- Experienced hands trimming hedges while younger folk pull the roller over the wicket.**
- I love that in big games the smell of a BBQ is never far away and the support of the club can be seen out in full.**
- I love on junior night the whole ground is covered by enthusiasm and Carlton graduates to give a helping hand.**
- I love that Carlton was one of the first clubs in Scotland to have a women's team - this made me very proud.**
- I love-hate the undulating hill on the north bank which adds character and confusion.**
- I love the memories I have of Carlton and everything I learnt whilst being there - most so getting captained by Bob.**



Leigh then and now - receiving the outstanding junior award in 2009, and at the 2018 T20 WC.

Fantasy Bob pays his own tribute to Leigh here

<https://fantasybob.blogspot.com/2018/07/kasperek.html>