



DRAFT 2024 Season Report

Chairman's Report

I am delighted to report on another successful year for our club. Across every measure the club has built on the progress of recent years, and we continue to build for the future. Six trophies and three promotions are only part of the story.

The year's highlight has to be the promotion of the men's 1st XI into Section 1 after winning Section 2. The unbeaten league run from 6th May to 31st August and the comprehensive nature of many of the victories demonstrates that our time has come to compete in the higher league. Add to that the repeat success in the T20 bowl, the experience gained by several younger players in the team, and we can reflect on a very successful year for the team.

The success of the Junior 3 league-winning 2nd XI demonstrates an improved strength in depth in our playing numbers and will also provide a stronger pathway for aspiring 1st XI players.

The growing strength across 3rds, 4ths and 5ths is further shown by our ability to field 5 teams reliably in any weekend.

The progress of the women's 1stXI was a further highlight of the year, winning their league and competing well in the cup competition. It's great to see the competitiveness of this group growing as quickly as their numbers.

Once again, our Youth section provided cricket opportunities for over 250 youngsters, catering for all levels of competitiveness - from the U11s winning their league and cup double to softball blitzes. The Club also provided a strong number of representatives to the NCU teams at all ages, with particular congratulations to Sam McMillan for selection for Ulster Schools (in addition to a terrific year at the top of the 1stXI batting order).

In all, our club fielded 18 teams in NCU competitions last year. Our continued success depends on the quality of our coaching. Congratulations go to Jonny Parker for his award of NCU Coach of the Year. Junior and senior players alike have benefited greatly from his work right through the year and his award is well deserved. In addition, Robbie Van Harte made a great contribution on the playing field and the training field, and we hope to welcome him back next year.

I'd encourage anyone with an interest to volunteer and train to be a coach at the club - it's a vital and rewarding role.

Thanks must go to Stephen Burns and all of the volunteer grounds team for preparing a magnificent ground for us to play on each week. With a bit of luck, we will continue to improve Ward Park back to its past condition, and we thank Bangor Grammar School for the use of their grounds.

This year has seen our Club embark on an ambitious and overdue renovation of the clubhouse. This will add another piece of the jigsaw to us building a sustainable, successful community club. I'd ask you all to contribute what you can to the fundraiser. Once this is successfully completed, we can begin planning to bring our cricket training facilities up to the standard required for our playing numbers and aspirations.

A final thanks to the many volunteers who do all the necessary jobs to make our club work. There's lots more to do so I'd finally ask for future volunteers to come forward to help out and wish you all a successful 2025.

Peter McIlwaine



Bangor Cricket Club – Grounds Report 2024

In addition to the normal activities through the off season, the square was vertidraind (aeration) 3 times, November through to January which helps promote root development and break up the table caused by intensive rolling.

Unprecedented levels of rainfall however lead to several major issues on areas of the outfield which meant these areas remained out of bounds and uncut. Ultimately these issues (which were being experienced across the NCU and wider afield) meant postponement of the opening fixtures something that has never happened before.

Improved conditions and additional works soon had the ground fit for play and Upritchard hosted a friendly v neighbours Ards & Dee on 27th April. The standard of all pitches and the outfield were both top class throughout the season and this was recognised in the recent NCU Grounds ratings where, Upritchard Park was for the 2nd running, the top-rated ground. This is a significant achievement for a Club where its grounds are maintained by a group of willing volunteers. At Bangor we have been fortunate in this regard with a growing number of volunteers participating, showing a keen interest and taking great pride in producing the best possible ground to be enjoyed by our members and visitors alike.

Regular work continued on the revived square at Ward Park which saw a number of both senior and junior games successfully hosted there.

In recent years, we have been able to invest in new and essential equipment for our grounds and this year saw investment in a new Dennis mower for pitch preparation and square maintenance. This has meant we can now use the older but still functional Dennis at Ward Park to further enhance the quality of pitch preparation there.

For fear of forgetting someone, I'm not going to mention names, but it has been a fantastic collaborative effect from many individuals across our Club and I extend a big thankyou to everyone involved.

Stephen Burns – Grounds Convenor



2024 Season Recap

The sun has set on the 2024 season and what a season it was!

On the field things have hardly ever been better with our Senior & Junior sections, with the club in rude health with record numbers of players & teams turning out regularly for the club in games.

2024 might not be quite the historic season of 2004 but it's not far off it for the club and what a season it was for all seven teams this season in the Senior section. The Men's 1XI at the second time of asking made it out of Section 2 and back into Section 1 as champions in an unprecedented 20 or so hour period. First, successfully defending their T20 Bowl title from last season at home on the Friday evening before the next day wrapping up the league title in sensational fashion defeating the then 2nd place side Dundrum by 10 Wickets. The side are now in a really strong position and ready for the challenge that Section 1 will bring but are undoubtedly in a much stronger position to the side that came down back in 2022. One other bright note of the season was the emergence of some of our younger players in Myles McNaught, Daniel Rayner & Max Escott who all made their debuts for the side. All three who came through our Youth section with more undoubtedly on the way in the years to come. Many congratulations to skipper Johnny Parker and all the squad for a quite brilliant season, one to remember for a long time!





It was a similar situation for the 2XI side, who dominated Junior League 3. The side has a similar set of talented players to choose from as the Men's 1XI, with plenty of experience of 2XI Cricket at the forefront for the team on a weekly basis. After a win and a loss in the first two games, for the next 12 games the side would go on to win 11 of those with the only loss being a tight defeat at Lisburn. The side move back up to Junior League 2 at the first time of asking and similar to the Men's 1XI are in a stronger position to compete now in that league than the side that came down back in 2023. Many congratulations to skipper Conor Cox and all of the 2XI on a truly brilliant season which was capped off at a sunny Upritchard Park with a dominating 10 Wicket Win over league rivals Lisburn 3XI.



The 3XI's season can be seen as another successful season finishing comfortably in mid table in a competitive league with the side regularly coming up against Premier League club's 4XI sides. The side also went on a notable cup run reaching the quarter finals of the Minor Lindsay Cup before falling to the BISC 3XI side when on another day the side could have walked away with the win. Another terrific season in Junior League 5 from skipper Matt Pitts and the 3XI squad.



The 4XI side picked up a hard-earned promotion to Junior League 8, going on an impressive 7 match winning streak to cross the finish line with the sides last game of the season. They confirmed their promotion on their own terms from the weekend just gone with an impressive victory over Templepatrick 4XI, two days after defeating the PSNI 1XI side. The side is very much a mixture of some of the experienced heads in the club and some of our youth players continuing their development in senior cricket. Congrats to skippers Muhammad Hamza & Stuart Johnstone for their hard work over the season and indeed the whole squad. The side could be confirmed joint champions too but dependent on results over the next week or so.



The 5XI (aka the Dads, Lads & Gals side) is very much the enjoyment & fun side of the club. Even though not quite as results driven the side as others, they did very well in their league finishing in joint 2nd place along with Dundrum 3XI. The side is very much the entry point for our talented youngsters to experience senior cricket alongside their Dads and friends. Congrats to Rory McMillan and all involved on another great fun filled season. One of the highlights of their season was an impressive 46 Run victory over league winners Lisburn 5XI, handing them their only defeat of the league campaign.

Last season was very much an introductory season for the Women's 1XI, but the side were looking forward to getting down to business and start playing games regularly. It was a historic moment for the side and the club when they picked up their first victory in the Challenge Plate competition at home to Carrickfergus. The side then went on a tear winning their next 5 games including their first league win. They went on a great cup run too reaching the semi-finals before losing in disappointing fashion in a very tight defeat to Hollywood 3XI, showing great heart and fighting spirit to take the game as deep as possible. It remains to be seen what league the side will feature in next season with the side currently top of the league with sides below having games in hand, but it can only be viewed as a huge success this season. Many congratulations to skipper Emma Rayner and her whole squad and optimism is already high on next season for not just the side but the Women's section of the club! One particular highlight as well as the wins, was the debut of Coach Robbie's daughter Chelsea, who was over from Cape Town visiting. She played in her very first game of Cricket, scoring some runs, picking up a wicket and taking a catch.



The Midweek team had a what might have been season. They narrowly missed out on qualification to the semi-final stage of the Midweek leagues despite losing just twice all season with their final game at Lisburn being called off due to the weather. It's a great additional avenue of playing time for some of our senior & junior players to play cricket during the week, in a fun, sociable & competitive environment. Thanks again to skipper Tommy Speers for rallying together his troops on a weekly basis and the squad on another great season for the side, with bigger & better things to come for them. On an additional note, it was great to see cricket being played at Ward Park in the evenings some weeks as well. The highlight of the season was a dramatic 1 Wicket win for the side against Dunmurry at Ward Park sparking jubilant scenes, a win very much against the odds!

Our Youth section continues to go from strength to strength with record number of kids playing cricket at Bangor this season with more teams than ever before. The undoubted highlight once again were the invincible U11 Boys side who won a league & cup double for the second year in a row, a truly incredible achievement. Other notable successes were the U15 Boys side who reached the semi-final stage of the league before unfortunately losing but had won all their games to that point. The newly formed U11 Girls



side also won all their games this season which is a hugely impressive feat considering this is their first year playing competitive cricket. A big, massive thank you to all the coaches & parents who put in a lot of effort throughout the season to ensure the kids can keep playing and enjoying their cricket.



There are of course a load of thank you's for those off the field who put in so many hours during the year to keep the Bangor CC wheel spinning. To all those on the committee a massive thank you to all those who put in a huge amount of work behind the scenes before, during & after the season. Stephen Burns and the grounds team who we all owe a massive thank you for the tireless work they do all year round at Upritchard Park. Peter McIlwaine as well for preparing the square at Ward Park for some senior & junior games to take place when it was needed. We are so lucky to be able to play our cricket on such a fantastic grounds during the season and the players really do appreciate it.

A thank you as well to our sponsors and partners. Legacy Wealth Management our platinum sponsor once again continues to be an amazing supporter of the club and what we are trying to do in the local community with what we can offer for all ages. Bangor Grammar School for continually allowing us access during the season to their ground during the season to play games when Upritchard Park is being used. Bangor Academy too, for allowing us access to their brilliant indoor nets facility during the off season and during the season with our Junior Summer Camps for when the rain came, we could pivot quickly into the main hall to keep the kids busy.



Bangor Rugby Football and Cricket Club
Upritchard Park
Bloomfield Road South
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Co Down
BT19 7PN



Those were just the highlights of the season but there were so many more for every player, coach & supporter this season following Bangor CC.

What a season, what a club!

Monthly Reviews can be found at -<https://www.bangorcricketclub.com/category/club-news/>



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NCU Age Group Representative Players in 2024:

Sam McMillan
Daniel Rayner
Josh McMillan
Myles McNaught
Jacob Campbell
Felix McMillan
Max Walker
Finn Merriman
Oliver Campbell
Teddy McIlwaine
Toby Hopkins