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## **Captain's Report for the AGM**

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Some people have said that 2022 season was the most successful in the club's long and distinguished history.<sup>1</sup>

After three early defeats – coming at the hands of long-time rivals KSOB, and strong Hunwick and Collingwood sides – DCSCC put together a winning run that included victories against Mallards, Hild and Bede, Sunderland NAS, King James, Farmers, Josephine Butler, Grey SCR, E=MCC and Knights. This 'run' also included three defeats, one of which frustratingly, came (again) at the hands of KSOB. We finished the season with a record of played 21, won 11, lost 10. The great Tony Blair once said that it is better to lose and do the right thing than to win and do the wrong thing. True. But it is surely better still to win and do the right thing.

At a star-studded close-of-season awards dinner, Ian Boothroyd took the prize for most wickets, Rory McInnes-Gibbons for most runs, and Rory and Mujeeb Chaudry split the prize for player of the season. Special mention

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<sup>1</sup> Unattributed.

also goes to Patrick Card for his exploits in the field ('Fielder of the Season') and Hilal Misgar for his clean-bowled hat-trick ('Moment of the Season'). The Spirit of Cricket award went to club Secretary Aidan 'Duffman' Duffy for his tireless work on behalf of the club. We are all grateful to him and wish him the very best as he moves on this year. There's always a game for you here, Aidan, if you find yourself back in Durham.

The real winner over the past year however, was cricket itself. The team spirit, camaraderie and cheer with which the members of DCSCC conducted themselves over the course of the season was truly heart-warming, and was the foundation of some of our more memorable victories, including those against both Hild and Bede and Josphine Butler. With the exception of the fiasco that was Rootball, minor altercations at both Wearmouth and Hunwick, the Captain throwing his bat at the Farmers' midwicket fieldsman during a downpour on MC2, and an unfortunate encounter with traffic police on the outskirts of Sheffield, the members of the club conducted themselves admirably throughout the season.

The sense of optimism that carried the club through the season was continued through into winter nets; beginning before the end of the season in September, a twice-weekly session at Maiden Castle has seen attendances regularly well into double-figures, much to the embarrassment of Duram City Cricket club in the neighbouring net on a Thursday evening. Hilal takes the top spot with 39 attendances to-date and as such is an automatic first-name on the team-sheet for our season opener. In all seriousness, our winter preparations suggest that we are in a good place for the coming season, with

club regulars peaking in time for the first game at KSOB. We'd bloody well better beat them.

Looking forward, we must continue to both recruit new players and open up fixtures against new opponents. With respect to the former, we particularly welcome Vinay and Guy, who have been super additions to nets this winter. It is a real pleasure to welcome such nice people and fine cricketers. I hope and expect them to score many runs between now and September and for many years to come. With respect to new fixtures, the year past saw us playing away at Bamburgh and Sheffield, as well as hosting a visiting team from Edinburgh. Hopefully we can find new opponents – both in County Durham and beyond - over the coming year. The more people we bring in, of all genders, creeds and classes, and the more new fixtures we open up, the healthier the club in the long run.

With this in mind, I would like to express my thanks to Jill Cartledge. Jill has informally taken over as Club Secretary. She will – I anticipate - be officially given the role this evening. Jill has already put in a great deal of effort in arranging matches for the coming year. We should all be grateful to her for her hard work without which all of our hours of practice would be wasted. So thanks, Jill, and welcome to the post. Thanks are also to be expressed to those who have continued to fulfil their roles over the past year. This includes Nigel Metcalfe for keeping the website (without which I would not have been able to write this report), Eckart Wrede for keeping and managing the kit, and Tony Cleaver for making people go to the pub on a

Thursday. Thanks also to Rory for his unofficial but important work as Safeguarding Officer.

This list should also include our Vice-Captains who, over the past year have been Mujeeb, Rich Root and Stephen Boothroyd. As I will be ‘working’ in the United States for the first half of the season, it falls on their shoulders – or whoever takes on the role of Vice-Captain this year – to skipper the team to success until the away season begins in July. I have asked Mujeeb if he would be willing to captain the team for College matches. He has been kind enough to agree. If the club are willing, I think we should take him up on this offer. We, his friends and team-mates, are also pleased to be able to congratulate Mujeeb and his wife on the recent birth of their second child. Our very best to all of you. For friendly games in the early season, Steve has said that he is willing to take charge. I leave it to him and Rich, if he is willing to continue as vice-captain, to split the duties between them. Again, this is pending the club’s approval.

This brings me on to one final matter. As many of you may know, it looks as though we will be losing one of our longest-term players this summer: Steve Boothroyd. As well as a Vice-Captain and Treasurer – both roles that now need filled, let me add: volunteers welcome – we will be missing a very fine and highly decorated opening bowler and the owner of the longest run-up in County Durham, as well as a very handy occasional opening batsman (out, lbw, playing across the line). With Steve moving on we will be all be down a good friend and one of the most popular presences around the club. DCSCC matches, training sessions and events won’t be quite the same

without him. We all very much hope that Steve will come back to join us whenever his new schedule allows. Thanks, Steve.

I shall now hand back to the Chairman, Tony Cleaver.

Christopher Cowie  
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DCSCC.