

Potters Bar U11 v Winchmore Hill U11

Sunday 8th June

What a match!! After missing the last two games the teams Captain, Timmy Richards, was back and back in some style. Losing the toss but being asked to bat first gave us the chance to post a high score. Winchmore Hill is historically a strong set up and they didn't disappoint. Bowler after bowler served up good length balls coupled with an excellent line. We took some time to get going but Timmy Richards and Drew Daniels Smith at the top of the innings saw off the first few overs and then got us off to a goodish start. Once Drew was caught at the wicket Pat Scott, our most experienced player in the absence of Palmer and Ilott to County duty, saw about trying to score some valuable runs on a slow but true pitch. Runs were hard to come by and once Richards, P Scott and Charlie Scott (who got an absolute pearler of a delivery first ball) were dismissed Vice Captain, Freddie Scutt, was joined by Luke Jupp.

Some defence was required initially to 'stop the rot' however the overs were ticking by fast and a few words of encouragement from the umpire(!) saw the beginning of some excellent running between the wickets and all of a sudden the Winchmore fielders were at a loss to know how to stop the pair – good balls were being tucked away for singles and bad balls were being punished. I hope in the very near future this attitude of running between the wickets will start from ball one and not in the 16th over. This way the players will learn the beauty of rotating the strike and putting the fielding side under pressure – I want to take away the emphasis of hitting boundaries and more adulation for the quick singles! It's doesn't take Einstein to work out that if we score 2 singles an over extra than we are currently then we'll score 40 more runs and win all the games we play.

Luke Jupp continued to impress with an excellent knock of 16 not out and that partnership with Freddie Scutt probably won us the match.

A final score of 70 was posted and although this wasn't a great score it was certainly competitive. It meant that we had to field and bowl like demons and give nothing away – I asked for everything and on the whole I got it. Tom Price playing in just his second game turned the game our way with a ball of utter quality. Their County Squad player didn't quite know how to deal with the ball after it's second bounce so he tried to slap it through extra cover – what he forgot to do however was keep the ball down and Pat Scott leapt like a salmon returning home to take a catch that would grace any Test arena in the world. 2 for 1 and their best player back in the hutch. Tom's opening partner, Jupp, then showed the crowd that he is ready for cricket at a higher level by taking two wickets in his first over. 10-3 after the first two overs and the game was turning our way.

Because the run rate was never more than 2.5 per over Winchmore Hill didn't need to take any risks but for some reason they did. After a good partnership their number 4 batter opted to take the aerial route against the always dangerous Alexander Dale and paid the ultimate 'Price' – a skier that Tom teased the spectators, umpires and batter with by dropping the ball once but catching it twice. The breakthrough was made and we were back in the game. 8 overs were left and I was conscious that I hadn't bowled

James Cattlin yet so on he came and a slightly high full toss was top edged to Timmy at square leg where the catch was held successfully only to hear the cry of no-ball from the square leg umpire. There was a little debate about the tardiness of the call but the right decision was made in the end and the batter continued. Pat was to bowl the remaining 4 overs from the bottom end and I was hoping he would bring the bacon home for the Potters Bar boys – and he certainly helped with the odd wicket but I think he'll agree that he bowled too many extras in a tight situation, from some players I would accept it but Pat is a very good player and I would hope he could bowl 24 balls without giving away a wide or a no ball.

But up to the plate stepped the Captain, Richards. 1.1 overs, 2 runs and 3 wickets and the sweet taste of victory was ours. Our closest league game yet, by far. I hope all the boys learnt something from the game not necessarily the result.

A special word about two players – Hadley Caswell who donned the gloves at 5 minutes warning and did an exceptional job. He would normally be one of my main bowlers but the fact he was prepared to forego his overs knowing that he'd be batting down the order and take on the responsibility of being the wicket keeper shows what a true team player he is and what an asset he is to this U11 side. The other is Freddie Scutt who did not pick up any wickets but bowled an extremely effective spell at a time when the game was really in the balance. The only shots that came from his bowling were hoiks to leg because they had no answer for his line and length. Every good ball he bowled would be accompanied with a look to the umpire for approval – Freddie, you don't need my approval young man, you're doing just fine – now believe it.

Everyone played their part today and I was probably more pleased about this win than any other as it was done without our Middlesex County players and hopefully now the boys will believe that they too, can win the match.

Special mentions:

Richards – 11 & 3-2(!)

Jupp 16 not out & 2-9

P Scott – 2-14

James Cattlin – excellent run out.