

Potters Bar U11 v Islington U11

Timmy Richards won the toss and elected to bat first and some excellent running between the wickets and a few great shots thrown in for good measure saw an excellent first wicket partnership with Luke Jupp. Richards finally fell to a good delivery for 9 but the pair put on 21 in good time. I asked for 5 an over to take us to 100 and they were certainly up with the rate.

Drew Daniels-Smith then came in at number three to try and continue the momentum and show us all a few lusty blows but it wasn't to be as his first ball snuck past the outside edge and was promptly bowled. My asking him to put bat to ball was put to the full sense of the word and maybe I should have suggested to 'have a look at a few first!'

Harrison Palmer then came in at 4 and immediately played himself in and with Luke still hitting some fine shots of his own, the score moved promptly to 60. Harrison then played a shot most unlike him and missed a straight one to get bowled for a good 20. Luke soon followed for 21 and Hadley Caswell was at the crease with James Ilott. Quick singles was the order of the day and these two did just that and with James putting the bad ball away expertly the score was ticking over nicely. Hadley was eventually out and with Freddie Scutt also soon out after trying to put bat to ball it was left to Alexander Dale to nudge one round the corner for a fine 3 and then James put the rest of the over to the sword and ran extremely well to take 12 off the last over.

101-6 was posted and all were confident of this being a match-winning total. I reminded the boys that the job was only half done and that we would have to field and bowl like we have been doing if we were going to progress to the final.

Things started fine enough with Hadley opening with a maiden and then David taking a wicket in his first over but with McQuinn and Powe at the crease things started to go downhill for our confident and successful team. These two batters put pressure on the fielders and ran everything, some suicidal, but the panic set in and pretty much every run was cruised. And to boot some players even forgot the basics of backing up, which gave away very valuable runs.

5 an over was required from the start and they were regularly scoring at 5 an over. James Ilott had a side strain from his efforts on Monday (no match report for that game sorry as I wasn't there!) so I wanted to use him sparingly but I had to bring him into the attack to try and force a wicket. But Powe even had the measure of him carving him away for an exquisite boundary past cover. Singles were taken to everyone including Harrison behind the sticks and every throw just happened to miss the stumps. It was one of those days.

Timmy came on and took the important wicket of McQuinn and at that point Islington needed 8 an over. The last three overs were to be bowled by Alexander Dale, James and Freddie Scutt – my 3 most reliable bowlers (to be fair Hadley has bowled well all season and I could have gone for him and Luke Jupp was unwell). There was no way they would get 8 an over off these 3...or so I thought. Alexander then bowled an over

I'm sure he'll want to forget and then James couldn't get the wicket we needed and to be fair the game was over before Freddie bowled the final over.

So the game was lost and Islington progress to the Final. The score will show that an 8 wicket victory was had but the game was never as easy as the score would suggest. We didn't field well and we bowled poorly at times – and to be honest we were probably 15-20 runs short with the bat. That said we would have won the game if we hadn't given away 25 extras – this is far too many for a side of this calibre.

It's our first loss and I have asked the boys to remember how they feel after losing this game – the changing room was a very different place to our normal jovial retreat. The boys tried to encourage each other through thick and thin but the 'too many chiefs' came out as soon as the pressure was applied and there were instructions coming from all angles, including me.

A special mention to Robert Poth who, after an initial fielding mistake, patrolled the cover boundary expertly and showed probably the best throwing arm in the league for a keeper!!

Never mind lads, we're still top of the league and as any Arsenal supporter will tell you – it's the league that people measure you by!

Thanks to Gary Jupp for scoring and keeping us all abreast of the situation.

Potters Bar 101-6
Islington 102-2

Ilott 25 not out
Jupp 21
Palmer 20

Sprigens 1-6 off 2
Richards 1-13 off 4