

Benwell Hill Under 11s Season Review – James Walder

We managed to fit in a total of 15 games with 6 of those games against South North! We won 9 and lost 6 games with 5 of those defeats coming against South North and are only other defeat was a 1 run loss to Newcastle. We used a total of 18 players across the season and had several players make their debut for the Hill this year.

In total we took 122 wickets with our bowling with our strike rate running at around 13 balls. Four players reached double figures for wickets 10 for Freddie and Sukhveer 12 for Hector and 15 for Sai only nine games. There were also saw some great spells from Seb and Daniel. Key was bowling straight and as we all know you can't always rely on your team mates to take all the catches, so it was great that 17 of our 18 players all got a wicket. Several of the players also put on a yard of pace and it was great to have our spin twins of Vihaan and Oliver.

Apart from a couple of games our fielding was good all year and we managed to get a total of 22 run outs across the season – mostly from direct hits but we also had some missed opportunities. This was backed up by our wicket keepers – Hector and Oliver shared this for most of the season and we had some caught behinds and stumpings which are both quite rare at u11 level.

The batting was the area that improved most during the season as people realised the value of getting bat on ball as well as putting away the bad balls for four. We managed to reach a net score of 100 in two of the games and there were some good relationships (and some not so successful ones) that developed during the year. We had three batsmen reach 100 runs – Nicholas, Hector and Oliver with Seb and Sai both reaching the 90s.

A few individual highlights for me:

- Harshil taking a wicket in the final game of the year – in his first game he asked not to bowl as he was too nervous, so it was great to see him get his first wicket
- Winning against Newcastle when we needed 7 off the last over and getting a single off the last ball
- Hector taking on the short ball against South North and hitting a brilliant hook shot for 4
- Freddie taking a stunning one-handed catch against Tynedale
- Getting close to defending a net score of 207 against South North where we took 11 wickets and took the game to the last over

We almost reached cricketing nirvana in our final game of the year where we could have won with a wicket on the final ball of the season, but it wasn't to be with a tough caught and bowled chance put down.

Overall, it was a good season, and it was great to see every player improve over the summer with their cricket skills and confidence.

A huge thanks to the parents, grandparents, friends for coming to the games or training and supporting the team. Thanks to the other coaches for helping during the year at training and for Barry for stepping in when I was away in July.

The Under 11 Player of the Season award went to Oliver Smalley.



Team photo from the final game of the year