

## **Benwell Hill Under 11s – 2025 Season Review – James Walder**

We welcomed a number of new players to the club in 2025 – Freddie, Will, Rayan, Jonah, Jasper – as well as several players coming up from the u9s – Mussa, JJ, Walter, Yaksh and Josh - to add to our seasoned players.

We managed to play 16 league matches – winning 12 and losing 4. Frustratingly we lost by 1 run at Ponteland, 2 runs at South North as well as two defeats to Backworth. In the cup we ran a good Hetton Lyons team close in an 8 run defeat.

We had to send some players up to the u13s and had three players miss some of the season with non-cricket related injuries but this meant some of our younger players gained some good experience which will benefit them next year.

Our first match was a derby away at South North and it was comfortably one of the coldest and windiest cricket matches ever played. For good measure we also had some rain/hail but the team stuck to the task well in an 18 run win.

Our batting (and running) improved during the season but was still a bit inconsistent with straight balls being the nemesis for a number of players. We had five players get more than 100 runs with Freddie scoring 211 runs and Josh hit one of the biggest u11 sixes I have seen (good decision to ignore my coaching to play straight as he whacked it over mid-wicket).

Apart from the odd game our fielding was good during the season with some great catching and managing to get 6 run outs in three separate games. One of the things some of the team need to work on is concentrating for the hour you are in the field – it is a long time but you need to learn to enjoy fielding as you will spend a lot of time doing it!

For most of the season our catching was pretty good with several players taking great catches – despite that we still managed to have 8 of our team of 10 drop a catch in the last game of the season! We had two good keepers – Jospeh and Austin – which makes a big difference at this level with them both taking catches.

We were a strong bowling team led by our pace attack of Ted and Thomas ably supported by Freddie and Will. We also had a couple of spinners – Jasper and Yaksh – who developed really nicely during the season. All our of bowlers took at least one wicket with several managing to take wickets with their first ball for the club. They also learned the value of bowling straight and not having to rely on your team mates to take a catch!

Some of the highlights from the season were:

- Freddie's figures of 4 for 3 from three overs; Vihaan's figures of 3 for 9 from three overs
- Great catches from Austin, Thomas, Josh and Will

- JJ and Rayan scoring 51 runs off their four overs against Morpeth and Mussa and Yaksh scoring 34 in the same game

Overall it was another good season for the u11s with 18 players representing the club and all those players improving over the season – batting, bowling and fielding – which bodes well for the 2026 u11s and the u13 team.

Thanks to all the parents, friends and grandparents for getting the kids to training and matches and supporting the team. Special thanks to Ian Wardle who helped with the coaching and looked after the team when I was away. We have had some windy and cold matches this year and we have always had a good turnout supporting the team. I know the players get a lot from taking wickets, a catch or hitting a four and having you there to watch them.

### **Player of the season**

Lots of candidates for this award with players getting wickets and runs and contributing in the field with catches and run outs.

This player got off to a hard start to the season – getting out three times away at Backworth but showed his true qualities as a batsmen in the cup match scoring 41 not out and almost leading us to victory. He has the longest run up and he will pick up a lot of LBWs next season for the u13s with his straight, quick bowling.

It was his first season for the club and looking forward to seeing him develop as a player – our top run scorer and he became a talisman for the team. U11 player of the season is Freddie Wardle.

Our U9 player of the season is Yaksh Baksh