

## **Youth Officer: Owen Sheppard - 2022 Season Report**

### **The start of the Season**

In a similar way to the start of the 2021 season, we really didn't know what our youth side was going to look like for 2022. We knew we had around 9 under 13 players but obviously couldn't run a team with only that. Technically we didn't have a Youth Officer although thanks to parental involvement and them being on the ground to help, we were able to manage the situation and still provide cricket not just for our youth players but other teams too.

### **The Season itself**

Collingbourne CC joined with Marlborough CC to enter an U13 team into the Wiltshire Youth Cricket League (WYCL) U13 T20 Central Division. Thanks to David Malley and all Collingbourne parents, we were able to run weekly practice sessions meaning players weren't losing interest or going from game to game with no learning. In addition to that, the same support from parents led by Dave and with further assistance from Marlborough parents meant that in general the 10 games played (6 league, 4 friendly) as a combined side went smoothly. It cannot be stressed enough how much work has to go into even running 1 game let alone 10 plus weekly practices so thank you to all involved.

### **Collingbourne/Marlborough Under 13s Fixtures**

The overarching numbers:

- **League:** Played 6, won 2, lost 3, 1 abandoned. Finished 5<sup>th</sup> of 7 teams.
- **Friendlies:** Played 4, won 3, tied 1
- **Players involved:** 23 children
  - o 20 boys, 3 girls
  - o 11 Collingbourne, 12 Marlborough

### **Highlights:**

- 20 not out for Tom Hibberd v Wilcot
- 31 for Bradley Leggott v Burbage
- 21 not out for Tom Hibberd v Avebury
- 20 not out for Henry Knowlson and 4 wickets for Eleanor Malley v Avebury
- 4 wickets for Booby Barnard v Wilcot
- 25\* for Henry Knowlson and 23 for Bradley Leggott v Avebury

### **Overview**

I think it's fair to say this season has been a productive one for our youth. Yes, it was a little different playing with another side but actually that seemed to bring out the best in the players. That peer competitiveness, that learning from others, that realisation of ability and what they need to do to improve. Never were the team out classed, on one notable occasion they didn't play as well as they could but then we all have days like that. Finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in the league doesn't tell the full story, with 2 close defeats against Burbage by 17 runs and Avebury by 3 wickets arguably being the teams' best results. With the friendly games it's been great to see the same attitude all the way through and our thanks go especially to Avebury and Wilcot for playing these games in the same way, long may all 4 clubs continue to succeed. For CCC, the top 3 batters all amassed over 60 runs each with Tom Hibberd leading the way. It has to be said his wicket keeping has also improved leaps and bounds thanks to the number of opportunities and effort he has put in to it. On the bowling front, Bobby's 4 wickets led him to top the leader board for wickets taken but with 4 other bowlers taking over 5

each, this again is an excellent testament to the efforts that all players have made. And finally in the field, 4 dismissals for Henry Knowlson who also led brilliantly as Captain in a mixed club side.

### **Collingbourne CC Youth Awards 2022**

- Batting Award – Tom Hibberd (121 runs)
- Bowling Award – Bobby Barnard (8 wickets)
- Fielding Award – Henry Knowlson (4 catches/run outs)
- Best individual performance (Batting) - Bradley Leggott (31\*) v Burbage
- Best individual performance (Bowling) - Eleanor Malley (4/8) v Avebury

### **Additional**

The youth players from this season have not just been involved in youth matches. 2 have represented the Ladies' team, 4 the Senior team, 5 the Development side. 4 players were invited to Wiltshire County winter trials from which (at the time of writing) I know 1 has been accepted onto the Winter County Coaching program. Many of these youth players will form the nucleus of our newly formed Hampshire League 2<sup>nd</sup> XI plus they will continue to gain further opportunities both indoor and outdoor through Senior, Ladies and Development Cricket.

### **Thank you's**

You cannot do a report without the final thank you's. Thank you to Jim and his team of Grounds People for preparing the wickets, without those we wouldn't be able to play. Thank you to the Committee for supporting us once again and pretty much letting us do whatever we want without asking too many questions. Thank you to the players for giving it your all and always trying to improve. The biggest thank you this season has to go to the parents. If you didn't make the time, drive the players around, confirm availability, turn up to games and practice, and especially this year, run the games and practice, then nothing would happen. I especially have to thank David Malley for being the spear head of this and for putting up with my weekly emails of plans for games and practices which I believe he ignored most of the time 😊. This season wouldn't have happened without all of your support.

### **The Future – Youth**

Unfortunately, this is now it for the Youth of Collingbourne CC. Whereas we managed to keep a team going in 2022 (and I'm glad we did) currently we don't have enough players or support to maintain a side at any age group, even if we did join with another club. We don't have a Youth Officer who can give the time and commitment to the Youth side to make it viable and push for new players. For these reasons, we will not be entering a team into the WYCL for 2023 and we won't be planning or organising any youth fixtures for the foreseeable future unless any of the above changes. It has to be noted though that Collingbourne has seen youth sides come and go since it was formed in 1983. This latest incumbent has lasted 11 years, has seen over 100 children come through the club, has seen almost half of those go on to represent Collingbourne senior sides as well as over 20 go on to represent County sides, it is a legacy we can be proud of and should not be taken lightly and I believe it is safe to say, this won't be the last incumbent. I'd see it more as a hiatus than an ending. I would also stress that all youth players from this season will flourish as they move up the echelons of Collingbourne Cricket Club and beyond, 2023 is going to be an exciting year.

I can only finish this report by repeating my statement at the end of the 2021 season. "It has been an honour to see what was started 10 years ago (11) to be the success that it has and I'm very proud of how many youth players have come through the club during that time." Thank you.