

Henley U11 127 for 4, Hurley U11 76 for 5

It was third time lucky on Wednesday 29th June for the U11 Central division fixture versus Henley first team, as the sun appeared at Shepherds Lane to greet the league leaders against our ten-man team.

The visitors showed no urgency to get proceedings under way after winning the toss and electing to bat first, and with us providing both umpires (contrary to the rules, but thanks Clive and Matt) the game eventually started. Henley also adopted a strange approach to the batting line-up, and one that exists outside the BYCL Handbook, by offering up two pinch hitters to open who they voluntarily retired after 3 overs. Hurley gratefully accepted the offer a sub fielder but he did not make it onto the pitch.

Opening bowlers Oliver Dawkins and Alexander Williams kept the score down with 10 off the first four overs before the aforementioned pinch hitters left the scene to be replaced by some county stars. Wright and Connell played well, the former being well caught by Joe Graham to give Raff Bowler his first Hurley wicket, and the latter retiring on 28 not out. The innings closed on 127 for 4 with 3 run outs, and perhaps there might have been more had we been sharper. The fielding performance lacked some sparkle and the 28 extras conceded was disappointing, especially the 9 wides conceded. Special mention should go to Alexander whose 3 overs only went for 7.

The half time team talk emphasized the requirement to play properly, given the unlikelihood of overtaking the Henley total, and to get some pride back after the 32 all out at Purley. Joe Graham hit a nice boundary behind point but was bowled in the 6th over. Matthew Savage was run out by an excellent direct hit – indeed the Henley fielding was the best I have seen all season and something we could learn from. Christopher Dawkins at four and opener David Morgans then stayed together for 10 overs, with some top shot selection and excellent running taking the total to 60, every run seeming to prompt more loud banter from the opposition captain in an attempt to spur his team on. David was run out on 23 and Christopher retired on 26, hitting five boundaries between them, but the partnership was the best we have seen all season and just what the coach ordered. It was left to Oliver Dawkins with an energetic little cameo and Henry Graham to see out the innings, Henry run out off the last ball to a optimistic call from Oliver for a single that even Usain Bolt would not have made. We closed on 76 for 5, an extremely creditable performance in the circumstances so well done to all of you. Five points from this game is fantastic and you can be proud of yourselves.

Thanks to all parents and club members for helping out, including the umpires, Ross for scoring and Dave Walton for running the bar once Jeff had rescued us by opening said bar.

I am especially grateful for Malcolm for driving to Purley to retrieve the kit bag I left there on Sunday – thank goodness most of our games are at home !!