

Hurley U11s 74 for 7 (20 overs) lost to Reading U11s 78 for 8 (16.3 overs)

After a season of climactic finishes in the U11 Central division of the BYCL, the final chapter taking place at Reading cricket club proved to be no exception. The game was to be noted for the two outstanding spin bowlers who were on display, skipper Tom Holmes bowling leg breaks for Reading, and Oliver Wardell bowling left arm off breaks for the visitors.

In deceptively cold conditions and with spectators clamouring for any spare clothing they had in the car, Hurley were invited to bat by Reading and a slow and steady start by new opening pair David Morgans and Oliver Dawkins took the score to 8 before Oliver was dismissed for 6. Raff Bowler at 3 showed some good durability and he and David advanced the total to 29 before David was bowled for 11. In at four was Chris Dawkins who continued his good form with a mixture of boundaries and aerial shots just out of range of the fielders but the third wicket fell in the 15th over when Chris was bowled for 20, with the score on 64. A quick clatter of wickets as is customary when Hurley bat left the visitors on 74 for 7 after 20 overs, with only 9 runs coming from the last 6 overs including two wicket maidens as Reading showed what a good bowling side they have.

Hurley's strength all year has been bowling as we have a number of very capable guys at this age group. With Louis Skelton taking the gloves from Matthew Savage for this game, Hurley started well as Chris bowled the opener with his sixth ball. Tom Holmes showed he was no mug with the bat either as the short ball was helped on its way to fine leg, and after 6 overs Reading were set at 34 for 1 in the 7th over, with Holmes retired on 25. At this stage the Reading coach asked if we could continue the full 20 over game even after they won, which I refused on three accounts (a) it was cold, (b) it was getting dark, and (c) I had a suspicion we were still in the game.

Oliver Dawkins then picked up 2 wickets in 2 balls and there then followed the finest bowling spell from Oliver Wardell we have seen all season. Bowling with considerable flight and immaculate length, and backed up by some great catching by Oliver D, David Morgans (how did you reach that? left handed high over his head) and keeper Louis (2 in 2 balls, first one sticking behind his pad and knee), Reading were reduced to 65 for 8, 10 runs away but with Tom to come back in.

Fingernails were being nervously chewed amongst the spectators with only Reg's iPad application remaining impartial – which way would it go? Unfortunately fortune favoured the home side. Our slim chance went begging as a catch was spilled, and in the end Tom was not needed as batsmen 9 and 11 scored the runs that were needed with 4 overs left. A very good bowling and fielding effort with extras reflecting only 7 wides and no no-balls.

Oliver Wardell took 5 wickets in 9 balls and ended with 5 wickets for 3 from his 3 over spell.

So defeat in our final game, but yet another close encounter and you can all hold your heads up high. The club should be proud of you, and the progress made over the last fifteen months is incredible. Thanks to all who have played this year, especially those that may have played in some games but not been used as much as they would have liked. It remains a team game and everyone's contribution is invaluable.

Thanks to all the willing helpers and volunteers, not just last night (Jono, Stuart) but over the course of the whole season.