

It was down to our coach Keith that this match even went ahead. Barnstaple knew that it was going to be difficult for them to raise a team and eventually they confirmed they only had 7 players. The rules say that the minimum players for an U15 league match is 8 players, so Barnstaple agreed to forfeit. However, Keith believed that the 7 players would still have wanted to play a match, so we asked as many of our U15s/U14s to play to make up both sides for an eleven-a-side match.

With Damon, Elliott, Egan and Annabel randomly selected to join the visitors, Sam Beckley was elevated to Captain for this match. Barnstaple's Reuben Chugg won the toss and they chose to bat. Damon offered to open the batting with Reuben but the opposing coach said only Barnstaple players were to bat first.

Scoring was very slow to start after the first ball went away to the boundary for 4 byes. Our first bowlers, Arlo Sherborne and Sam Robinson bowled calmly and well. It took until the fourth over when Sam bowled their captain out. Fortunately, he had only scored 6 runs by that time.

Riley Hornby started bowling from over 7 and kept his bowling tidy too. One of only two bowlers who bowled a maiden in the match. Next to bowl was Holly Stone who was very nervous playing up into this age group but she took on the task brilliantly and only bowled 2 extras in her 2 overs.

Although they had originally been chosen to assist the other side, Annabel and Egan were the next to bowl as this match was a good opportunity for them to get the experience to bowl. Annabel started with a maiden over and Egan kept it tight with a couple of wides and a single. All the bowling was helped by the nervous batting. Eventually, the opening batsman hit his first boundary from the second ball in Annabel's next over. Bad move . . . she bowled him on the next ball. It was the thirteenth over and the score was only 48 for 2.

The third and fourth batsmen were in and were better at scoring more readily. Egan was the only other bowler to get a wicket. Egan Ross got Ernest Ross out, caught Riley Hornby. At the end of the first innings Barnstaple had scored 106 runs.

This match was a good opportunity for all Bideford players who had not had much time at the crease so far this season to bat higher up the order. Harrison Booth and Henry Callaghan were Bideford's opening batters.

Harrison was bowled by Barnstaple's captain and before the second over was done Bideford were 1 for 2. Riley came in and stood his ground. He saw the going of Henry, Otis and Sam Beckley before the end of the seventh over when the score was still only 19. Oh dear! A score that we thought was quite achievable was looking extremely remote.

In came Jack to bat at number 6, an unfamiliar position for the U15s. Riley and Jack worked together well to speed up the run rate by hitting boundaries whenever possible. Riley reached 11 runs when he got caught. Adam came in next but was bowled out after three balls. Not his day. In came Arlo to support Jack. With five overs still to go they had reached 89 runs when Jack was caught by Adam who was fielding for the other side. Good catch! One over later Adam again took a catch and that was Arlo gone.

Now the game had swung back to Barnstaple for them to lose. Sam Robinson came in to bat and then Holly Stone realised it was her turn to bat too. Only 18 runs needed but only 3 overs left. Without seemingly any nerves Sam attacked every ball that came to him. He hit three boundaries, one of which scored the winning runs. However, I must mention the brilliant support he got from Holly who ran whenever she needed when Sam scored his 1 and 2. A brilliant batting pair. There was every reason to think that Bideford had let the match get away from them but Sam wasn't having that. Well done Sam Robinson for getting those winning runs. Man of the Match!

It felt good that Bideford had won the match even though it had already been forfeited. This group of players play well together! Well done Bideford. Finally, thank you to Damon and Elliott who missed out on batting or bowling having turned up to play. Nothing like having such a strong squad from which to pick from.