The second week of the season saw 5 games played

**FIVE FROM FIVE**

**Preston under 14 vrs HoddesDON**

The under 14's travelled to Hoddesdon on a damp bank holiday Monday, captain Guy again winning the toss and electing to field despite the steady rain. It proved an inspired decision as Hoddesdon were soon in trouble at 2 for 2 from four overs with Adam (2-1-1-2) and Louie (2-1-0-1) bowling miserly opening spells. Hoddesdon's opening batsman Luke (26 retired) steadily accumulated runs at one end while a hard hitting 14 from Mason was ended by a fine diving catch by wicket keeper Rhys from Will's bowling. The Preston fielding was outstanding in the damp conditions with other catches held by Ollie M. and two for Thomas whilst Shaan pulled off excellent diving stops at cover point. Ollie C. and Shaan both picked up wickets until Guy bowled the last batsman and the innings closed at 64 all out.

In reply, Hoddesdon opted to keep their better bowlers in reserve, much to the delight of Adam (26 retired) and Ollie C. (28 retired) who plundered 37 off of the first four overs. With the better bowlers coming on, Shaan (1) was caught behind but Guy (2 n.o.) and Rhys (1 n.o.)saw Preston home to a 9 wicket victory. Well done lads, an excellent all round team performance.

**Preston under 10 vrs Knebworth**

The boys travelled to Knebworth, with Robert and Declan making their hard ball debuts. Harry lost the toss and we were inserted. Xander aand Declan opened up and received a lot of balls that they could not hit as they scored 16 off the first two overs, all in extras. In the final over a couple of mistakes saw them lose two wickets to finish on 214/2

Next up Nid and Toby, they struggled to hit the low balls but did nto get out to take the score to 230/2 at the half way stage.

Harry and Daniel then came to the wicket and scored off 18 of the 24 balls faced to score 29 for one out, Harry 10 and Daniel 5 both hitting boundaries.

Elliot and debutant Robert then posted 28/1 with Elliot hitting some lovely shots to score 14 for one out. Robert played some nice shots to score 6 as the innings finished on 277/4.

In reply Knebworth innings never really got going as the boys bowled tightly to bowl 7 maidens and not concede a boundary. Elliott 3 3 0 1 Harry 3 2 1 1 Toby 3 1 4 2. Knebworths innings finished on 210/6 to give the boys a comprehensive victory.

**Preston Under 10 Softball vrs WGC under 10**

On a usual dull and cold night the 7 men of Preston travelled to WGC. Bowling first lots of good straight bowling particularly Freddie 2/13, Toby 1/8, even our keeper Nathan and of course Harry! Declan also hit the stumps but the bails didn't come off the springer stumps restricted WGC to 281/5. The fielding of Sam and Harry got run outs and a good catch from Toby

Sensible batting and running between the wickets (boys made the most of extras rather than turning wides into dots like Welwyn did and as I suggested at the turnover - wow, they actually listened!!). Harry top scored with 29 and Dec hit a glorious boundary but their partnership 40/2 (30 net) was not quite as valuable as Toby 9 and Freddie's 13 ( 36/0) as suspected. Nathan contributed some escelllent timing to score 11 and James 13 over 2 knocks to take to 309/4 to win by 28 runs.

The boys backed each other up in the field very well, vocally as well as preventing many overthrows.We will work on some aspects of awareness in the field and positions (save 1 or save 4&2?) next time!
CEAT Tyres Man of the Match: Freddie

Vitara Brezza Stylish Player of the Day: Harry

Glam Shot: Nathan's straight drive

**MATCH REPORT Weston vrs Preston under 11**

After the previous week’s aborted effort the U11’s finally got their season underway with a convincing win at Weston on a bitterly cold evening. As the only Under 11 in the squad Jacob was appointed Captain and promptly decided to bowl first on winning the toss.

Jacob and James opened the bowling with good line and length and Jacob claimed the first wicket removing one of their openers cleaned bowled. The opening bowlers were replaced after a couple of overs each by Harry and Daniel who carried on the good work and each claimed a wicket clean bowled meaning the first 3 Weston batsmen had failed to trouble the scorers. The next two Weston batsmen were determined not to get out and managed to see out the rest of the innings despite the best efforts of Sam, Robert, Elliot and the returning opening bowlers. Overall I was very pleased with the effort in the field as despite the very cold and windy conditions the bowling was tidy and the fielding was excellent resulting in only 12 runs off the bat in Weston’s total of 62-3 off 20 overs. I was particularly pleased with the attitude of all the players in the way they supported and encouraged each other and maintained their focus in walking in and backing up throughout the innings.

Despite the slow pitch the team was confident of scoring the required runs. Nid and Declan opened up however Nid was bowled in an eventful first over which also saw Xander bowled the very next ball. Unperturbed by the situation Jacob hit the hattrick ball to the fence for the only 4 of the innings, however he departed soon after in the 4th over as he top edged a sweep that was well caught by the square leg fielder running to his left. Declan was joined by Elliott at the crease and the innings followed a very similar pattern to Weston’s with the batsmen struggling to pierce the field and the majority of runs coming in extras. With some good calling Declan and Elliott picked up the occasional single and with a number of wides the target was reduced to 13 off 9 overs. I gave the instruction to the batsmen to try and be a bit more aggressive to knock off the winning runs as it was very cold and the light was beginning to fade, however despite their best efforts the batsmen couldn’t get the ball away and rather fittingly the game finally came to the end on a no-ball meaning we ran out victors by 7 Wickets with 4.2 overs to spare.

There are a few things to improve on such as reducing the number of extras when bowling and finding the gaps to pick up more runs when batting but considering the weather and that it was our first game I was very happy with the performance and delighted with the win. A great start, especially as the majority of the team are playing up 1 or 2 years above their age group, no doubt we will have sterner tests to come.

Away v Hitchin next Friday (12th May) is the next U11 fixture

**Preston under 13 vrs St Margretsbury**

The talented under 13 side got their season under way on Friday at home to St Margretsbury. Losing the toss Olly was pleased to be inserted. Jack and Luke opened up and made a positive start. Some excellent shot making and positive mind-set saw us go off at 7 a over, Jack was particular impressive off the back foot with some great back foot drives as he hit 6 boundaries in retiring on 31. Olly joined Luke and both hit some boundaries as the score got to 73 in the 10th over, then a bit of a issue, Olly hit the ball to mid off and called for a suicidal single, that saw Luke (17) run out. This must have prayed on Olly mind as the next ball he faced saw him bowled for (6) New batsman Adam and debutant Gabriel then set about the bowling, with quick running and with Adam punishing anything on the leg stump ,as he raced to 30 including 2\*6 and 3\*4. Push (1) then joined Gabriel and looked solid but missed straight one.

With 4 overs to go Jude came to the wicket and found his timing to hit a quick-fire 11 not out and when Gabriel went for a big hit off the last ball of the penultimate over to be bowled for 29 we were 150/4. Alex came in for the last over and finished the innings of in style with a drive through the covers. Innings closed on 161/4

As the clouds darkened the lads needed to get through the overs quickly, Tom and Adam opened up but some wayward bowling and the unpredictable low bounce saw extras start to rack up. After 7 overs St M were on 42/1 with Adam 1/16 with the one wicket. The introduction of the slow bowing of Alex slowed the run rate as he took 2/13 from his four overs thanks to a good high catch from Luke. As it was getting darker only slow bowlers were used, Olly 2/10 found himself on a hatrick as he was helped by another catch from Luke, the hatrick ball was blocked. Fraser 0/7 and Jude 0/1 left the last over to Gabriel who took 2/7 hanks to a third catch from Luke. Well done to Ralph on keeping at Preston for the first time, you will get used to the low bounce

A good start to the season, next up Hoddesdon away on Thursday – there will be a couple of changes due to the size of the squad. Good luck to the 4 lads playing for the adults this weekend.