

# 2021 Roundup

**I**t was most encouraging to see how well entries held up for the 2021 season after the absence of almost all youth competition the previous summer. Despite an early rash of withdrawals, the relatively large leagues in most age groups were still able to provide plenty of competition for all. We also removed all fixture windows for most leagues leaving it to the clubs themselves to arrange their own programmes. We'll see how this was received in the end of season survey.



Mulbarton CC - second in the U15 Blue League

In the small U9 groups Gt.Melton collected the League One title losing only to Horsford while in League Two the salver went to Hethersett & Tas Valley. Appropriately the U9 best bowling performance came from Melton's Francesca Bailey who bagged 3 for 5 in her team's game against Sprowston.

The U11 groups were closely contested particularly the Barnard League with only two points separating the top three teams. Brooke emerged champions losing only once to A&B Wanderers who finished third behind runners up Norwich.

In the U11 Tungate League Old Buckenham topped the table winning all of their fixtures with Gt.Ellingham close behind. There were several great bowling performances but it was the impressive spell of 4 for 4 From Sprowston's Saraavanamuttu Sami v Horsford that topped the list.

Another two teams in the U13 leagues that sailed gracefully through the season without defeat were Topcroft and Gt.Melton; Topcroft in the Whetman League followed on by Brooke and A&B Wanderers while in the S.Breckland league Gt.Melton finished the year unbeaten in all competitions. Dereham, who had a great run, were second with Old

Buckenham third. Topcroft's Jack Lark's 4 for 3 against Norwich was good enough to eclipse many other excellent bowling performances.

Gt.Melton again performed flawlessly in the U15 Blue League brushing aside all of their opponents over the summer. Runners up Mulbarton (pictured) were in the mix for a while but their challenge faded and they had to be content with second place. Old Buckenham were third.

Our eastern contingent filled the top two places in the U15 Green League with Lowestoft Town champions losing only once to second placed Acle.

Five wicket hauls are extremely rare, achieved only by eleven players in The League's fifteen year history. Melton's Fraser Evans became the twelfth as his 5 for 7 blew away Mulbarton's batting. Well done Fraser.

In the U17 League Melton claimed the trophy ahead of Norwich, Tas Valley and Brooke. Harry Ryan of Gt.Melton returned the best bowling figures of 4 for 16 v Ashmanagh & Barton Wanderers. You can see all of the best bowling figures from the season on our Roll of Honour page.

After the early success of the first girls' season in 2019, this was a difficult year for their competitions with only a limited number of completed games. In light of this The League rescinded all subscriptions and there will be no medals or salvers commissioned for these two groups. Of those fixtures that were completed, Brooke performed strongest. Let's hope for better luck next summer.



## 2021 - 2022

Whilst all sports halls in the area are accepting bookings again, our current venue, Notre Dame High School is not, and their facilities remain unavailable. We have trawled through almost all of the alternatives without any luck so far. We still have a few possibilities and if space can be found we shall run the competition. This may mean starting later in the year or possibly a more fragmented programme. Neither of these options are ideal but we will do our very best to deliver the U14 winter league.



**We shall be circulating our end of season survey shortly.**

This will give all clubs the chance to provide valuable feedback on the past season and our new initiatives. This exercise

is a valuable tool in ensuring that our youth competitions remain relevant and provide appropriate opportunities for our young cricketers.

## Where to now?

**Cleaning up some old files** on my ageing desktop I stumbled across the initial 2006 development plan for the SNCL; the principal objectives being more equitable competition, fixtures in the school summer holidays, games on the same days of the week for each age group and the inauguration of a winter indoor competition. On the plus side successes have been plenty of youth cricket played over the school holidays and the indoor zipleague competition, constrained only by the availability of hall space. But on the other two little progress has been made. The inequality between sides has actually widened and the chaotic fixture calendar for youth games still prevails.

**Where to now?** Solutions to these difficult issues still remain elusive and although The League has attempted to provide some answers; for instance the county player rules and the attempt to play at least some games on fixed days, these challenging problems still remain largely unresolved.

**The large, well organised and highly motivated clubs** quite rightly continue to dominate the youth game. Our national administrators might be minded to take a leaf out of their books rather than the imposition of an endless stream of new initiatives. Insisting too that clubs provide youth development as a condition of their league entry when they neither have the resources nor inclination to do so is a sure recipe for an outcome that benefits absolutely no one.

**The One League is nearly upon us** and no doubt the youth competitions will see some changes although as I write this I have no idea what those will be. But we still intend to be around next summer continuing to provide an independent and flexible alternative for whoever wishes to join us.