

U13 Div 1 SPX Gold – Grand Final Match Report

The SPX U13 Div1 boys finished off a rather solid first season together by securing the Minor premiership a couple of weeks ago. A low scoring thriller was played on a cow paddock at Narrabeen, against the highly credentialed Peninsula team. The Pius boys backed themselves, bowling tight lines and taking some spectacular catches. The win was ours and with it came top spot on the ladder. The value of “rain insurance” by finishing minor premiers was obvious to all as the wet weather set in.

The first week of the finals had the Pius team hosting Wakehurst on the hallowed turf of The Bottom Oval. With torrential rain causing all games to be abandoned, it was time to congratulate the Wakehurst boys on a solid season and prepare for the grand final.

Plateau Park at Collaroy was in excellent condition, a spectacular setting with views up through the Pittwater and straight out to sea. The outfield was damp from a heavy dew, but the pitch firm, with an even covering of green grass! Captain Rohan Chang called correctly at the coin toss and chose to bowl first. Riley Meares was given the new ball duties, and upset the furniture in his second over. Luc Opie was proving to be very economical from the other end and after six overs they had Peninsular 1-7.

With a change of bowlers came a flurry of wickets and it was no great surprise to see Toby Moran (1-9) and Rory McCallum (2-6) helping themselves to a few poles just as they had done in our previous clash with Peninsular. After 12 overs we had them 4-20, but the Peninsular bats were starting to look dangerous as the Pius bowling dropped short and the runs started to flow. The left arm spin of Lucas Gleeson (1-10 off 4 overs) slowed things down while Dan Carroll continued his recent good form (1-12 off 4 overs). Sharp work in the field from Captain Chang had the ball in the keepers gloves and Oliver Giles Hercules Freeman did the rest. The batsman was well short of his ground, 7-87. The return of the retired Peninsular bats looked ominous as they cracked the ton. Meares had the ball in hand for what was shaping to be an exciting finish to the Peninsular innings. Proving to be just as dangerous with the old ball, his first delivery sent the middle stump cartwheeling past the keeper. Peninsular all out for 100, (Meares 2-4 off 3.1 overs) I must point out that the Pius bowling has been a real highlight this season, with six bowlers taking ten or more wickets for the season. This is even more impressive when you realise that under modified playing conditions there are only eight wickets available each Saturday morning. Great work gentlemen!

McCallum was joined at the top of the order by James Patchett, and as expected they got us off to a solid start before McCallum fell, 1-20. Freeman made his way to the crease and as usual was looking very good until a poor shot turned into a simple catch and he found himself wandering to the sheds, 2-36. Captain Chang and Patchett set about upping the run rate. Patchett retired but rather confidently took his pads off as a sign of faith in his team mates. Dan Carroll's value to the team this season can not just be measured in runs and wickets. His time at the crease was not as long as he would have liked, but when he departed at 3-67, we were in good shape. Moran joined his skipper in the middle and as always looked in control. Chang was the next to depart after a solid captains knock, 4-79. Josh Baker joined Moran in the centre, two more reliable types you would struggle to find. They went about their task with a minimum of fuss, until a crisp drive from Baker bought up the winning runs.

A rather solid effort from all the boys once again this week. Every member of the group has taken their opportunity throughout season to contribute.

The success the boys have enjoyed on the field would not have been possible without the help and support we receive from people such as Anthony and Tania Moran who have handled the scoring duties and coached some of the other parents in using the scoring app. Peter McCallum who has run Friday night training sessions, and Jason Chang who found himself on the end of a broom most weeks and on the end of a scorers pencil occasionally!

For Matt Freeman and myself the time spent watching these cricketers develop into talented young men both on and off the field has proved to be a most rewarding season.

Thanks for letting me tag along for the ride!

Gerard Meares