

Tarporley and Brine Leas crowned Cheshire Champions

SECONDARY School cricket is buzzing again in Cheshire after a thrilling conclusion to the annual Chance to Compete hard ball competition.

The exciting eight-a-side format, reintroduced to secondary schools in 2013 by Chance to Shine, has had a major impact across the county, with some schools playing in excess of 20 fixtures throughout the calendar year.

Schools compete at local level in the U13 and U15 age groups, with the respective winners invited to represent their Borough at the Cheshire County Finals.

Everyone plays a full part in the game, with all players (except the wicketkeeper) bowling one over to comprise a seven over innings. All bowling takes place from the same end and wides and no balls (which count for two runs) are not bowled again in an effort to complete all matches within an hour.

The result is an adrenaline-charged, boundary-hitting frenzy which rewards clean ball striking, accurate bowling and athletic fielding. It is an enormously fun afternoon for all involved.

Six schools qualified for the 2014 outdoor finals, which were held at Brooklands CC (U13) and Chester Boughton Hall CC (U15) respectively.

Nantwich-based Brine Leas School were crowned champions of the U13 event following a narrow win over Sale Grammar in the final.



Tarporley High School (left) celebrated victory in the U15 competition, denying Brine Leas (below right) a second title with a well-paced run chase in an excellent final at Chester.

The standard of cricket across both age groups was excellent, with many players involved in finals day graduates of the Cheshire Youth Cricket player pathway.

Staff and pupils were so enthused by the new format that they cannot wait for the 2015 competition to come around.

Mike Tomlinson, PE teacher at Wellington High School who played in the Trafford finals, encouraged more schools to take part on a regular basis.

He explained: "Chance to Shine has been brilliant for us, both in terms of the coaching we have received from Cheshire Cricket, and the opportunity to get involved in local competitions.

"In 2013 we only managed to complete three fixtures for various reasons, but it was a really disappointing summer with hardly any cricket played.

"This year we have played around 18 games across the various age groups, and we've had a core of around 20 lads attending after school sessions on a regular basis.



“I really like the new seven over format, because it holds the attention and gets everyone involved. Nobody can dominate the game, and it gives lads a chance to apply the skills they have practiced.”

He added: “I hear there’s talk of a new indoor competition in Trafford next year too, so that will be another event on the sporting calendar to look forward to.”

The winners of the Chance to Compete County Finals each received a hard-ball kit bag courtesy of Chance to Shine, ensuring cricket will become sustainable in the school in future years.



Cheshire Cricket Board Performance and Participation Manager Gavin Colebourn (left) was delighted with the response of schools to the 2014 competition and is looking to expand the event next summer.

He said: “It was encouraging to see so many schools get on board with this and play some regular fixtures at both the U13 and U15 age groups.

“We all appreciate the challenges of running school cricket teams in a bust summer term, particularly at the older age group where exams can impact on availability.

“This new seven over format seems to have captured the imagination, and importantly there is now no real time pressure when it comes to arranging a fixture.

“I hope the publicity generated by this year’s successful competition will encourage even more schools to get on board in 2015 as we look to further expand our secondary schools project.

“Finally I would like to thank all the clubs who hosted matches this summer, in particular Brooklands and Chester Boughton Hall who did an excellent job of staging the finals.”

U15s finalists: Tarporley, Caldby, Brine Leas, Tytherington, Lymm, Hartford

U13s finalists: Brine Leas, Sale Grammar, West Hill, Lymm, St Nicks (Northwich), Bishops Heber