



U-Turn on U17 League

The closure of The Junior Carter Cup has resulted in a greater number of entries at U17 level for 2014. Whilst The League originally intended reverting to a single group for this competition, the intention now is to promote this as the premier U17 tournament in Norfolk with a two group system remaining. This will enable more clubs to be accommodated and also allow teams geographically distant from our core catchment area to be included without excessive travelling.

U9 League ready to go in 2014

The League is delighted that the inaugural season of the U9 competition will launch in 2014. After a couple of false dawns, five teams have committed to taking part in the first year. The timetabling and format of these games is still to be finalised after consultation with the competing clubs but the pairs games will be played as 8 a side 16 overs and it is expected that the matches will take place on Sunday mornings.



Comments or suggestions?

[E-mail us here](#)

**Happy
Christmas**



Time to banish fixture chaos?

Cricket must be almost alone in its approach to youth fixture arrangements in stark contrast to those of the adult game. It is no secret that The League believes this chaotic and disordered approach at junior level provides a real barrier to player availability with games scheduled throughout the season wherever they can be squeezed in. This presents real problems for parents with their busy diaries which would, in The League's opinion, be greatly eased by programmes of matches played on fixed days at regular intervals throughout the summer. Resistance to the implementation of this format by youth managers has softened over recent years and The League feels that it's time must surely be near.



Cancellations still exercising managers' minds



One of the primary issues of concern to managers over recent seasons has been the failure of some clubs to complete their fixture programmes. Understandably, this can be incredibly frustrating when teams, and in many cases transport, have already been organised well ahead of the date. Of course the sport is well used to the perennial postponements of matches, often at extremely short notice, owing to inclement weather, but there is less support for teams that pull out at the very last minute for other reasons - too late for an already assembled squad to seek alternative opposition.

Part of The South Norfolk Community League's primary objectives is to promote the indigenous youth game within the county. Less concerned with elite development, its primary focus is to provide the opportunity for youth players to experience the game within an organised and accessible format. Young children, particularly boys, with their insatiable appetite for competitive sport, soon tire of training sessions unless there is the prospect of credible challenges at the end of these.

The suggestion then from a few isolated quarters that teams unable to fulfil their full fixture programme should be expelled from The League therefore cuts no ice at all. Surely it is preferable that a team struggling with numbers should be able to offer their youth players the opportunity to play at least some cricket rather than the alternative of no games at all and the dissolution of junior cricket at that club, depleting our cricketing pool even further. The current points system of The League is designed expressly to accommodate this scenario.

However, there is a case for some clubs being rather more organised regarding their player availability and if it is likely they are to have insufficient team members to honour a particular fixture, to let the opposing manager know well in advance. It is also worth remembering that even if only six players can be mustered, opposing managers would almost always prefer the option of playing and donating fielders rather than cancelling the game altogether.

Entry closing date

The entry closing date for the 2014 season is earlier this year; Sunday January 19th to allow extra time to arrange fixtures.



Clubs are reminded that they need to complete an [online entry form](#) for each team they are entering. League fees will remain the same for the coming summer at £15 per team.

It is hoped to accommodate all clubs that wish to enter next summer and although some of you might throw your hands up at this prospect, eleven games or so spread over an eighteen week season is not an unreasonable programme particularly bearing in mind that some fixtures will be cancelled (without an obligation to rearrange) because of inclement weather and others curtailed owing to player unavailability.

The League does appreciate the pressure created for teams entering both The Junior Alliance and the SNCL and some clubs may like to consider which competition best suits their requirements.



Half way through the preliminary games and with the Christmas break upon us only one team remains unbeaten, such is the closeness of the competition this season. In group A Topcroft, undefeated, and Gt.Melton, despite their surprise loss to Saxlingham, still look favourites to progress to the second round. In group B both seeds Mulbarton and Gt.Ellingham have looked shaky with debutants Hethersett & Tas Valley particularly impressive and Rocklands performing solidly in their opening games. The new format of the competition will see the top two teams from each group progressing to a single winners' league with three matches each; the title to be decided with the final round of matches on March 3rd.