

2022 November Strategy meeting of UAJCA member clubs

2022 REPORT

2022 heralded a return to 'normality'.

And what a return it turned out to be. The number of teams operating within the Association had previously fallen to a record low of 47 but in 2022 clubs were able to increase that number to 65. This arose principally in three sectors. A small but quality revival in the under-18s League [formerly under-17s] unfolded, the Softball Development Programme captured parental attention and membership mushroomed to 17 teams [12 in 2021] and finally four member clubs bravely took the challenge to create a first ever Girls League of four teams, bringing in over 60 new recruits. The out-turns in all three sectors have been phenomenal. The creation of the Girls' League fulfilled a key objective set by the Executive back in 2003. But there was to be one further objective ticked off from that list. That was the tremendous performance of our under-13 Representative team in winning the 2022 under-13 Yorkshire Festival competition, defeating the York District in the final at Southowram. It was a fabulous moment in our 68-years history, a first ever Festival [Taverners] win. Managers Mark Stoneman and Tony Fordham have worked wonders in honing and moulding the team to one that dominated the age group across the County. Derek Hurren would be beaming. On the individual player scene all UAJCA were delighted at the progress made by the brilliant former Steeton junior Will Luxton, who starred in the u-19 World Cup Final and later made his senior debut for the White Rose County. In addition to the tremendous success for the under-13 UAJCA squad, our other representative teams had excellent results with the under-11s particularly unfortunate not to reach the semi-finals.

The League & Cup programmes all out-turned completion rates above 90% due to the incredibly warm, dry weather throughout the summer. Great Horton Church equalled the record of three Championships in a season, set by Oxenhope in 2005. The Bradford club also retained the two Cups they lifted in 2021 and their squads continue to set the bar high for all our clubs to match. The delayed Spencer Cup for u18s finally took place in September and proved a classic Final between winners Oakworth and Great Horton Church. It was a great finale for the season, and many have suggested the match should be the regular finale to the junior season very year. The Annual Presentation Night was held at the Bradford & Bingley RUFC for the first time and was graced by a huge attendance and support from Katie Stewart from the YCB. Crossflatts were awarded the Development Club of the Year accolade for their impressive progress with softball and girls' squads.

Well into the Autumn we belatedly learned of the fundamental changes that had taken place in March when responsibilities for Pathways and Regional cricket had been transferred to YCCC from YCB. It was yet further demonstration of YCB and YCCCC inability to *fully* communicate with the grass roots game.

I sincerely believe that UAJCA is now on the brink of an exciting sea-change within local society. The game is beginning to capture the imagination of new audiences and participation levels are on the up. The challenge now is for our clubs [and perhaps others] to build yet stronger family-based clubs offering cricket to all sectors of society to men, women, boys, girls and the disabled. Together we have already shown what we can do, now is the time to step up yet again.

November 2022 Meeting

UAJCA members enthusiastically demonstrated their commitment to our 'Stage Not Age' approach to recruitment and retention of players for the Softball Development Programme [SDP] which has also included provision of Girls' cricket. The creation of our softball Pairs league for girls in 2022 was greeted with a desire to progress the clearly successful development yet further. We cannot thank enough the four clubs [Crossflatts, Gt Horton Church, Settle & Skipton] which pioneered the Girls' league, they have shown the way and built on earlier initiatives to provide a service sadly lacking for decades.

UAJCA now has an extended set of Aims & Objectives designed to rapidly move towards creation of a coherent Pathway to Women's Cricket. UAJCA members have agreed to develop offers for both hardball and softball

competitions covering the age range 7-15, most likely in three sub-units. Our intention too is to further reflect the approach in our 'mixed-gender' Softball Development Programme. There was strong belief that "If we build it, they will come" to quote the famous film!

In terms of support from YCB, the offer of financial assistance via small grants is understood and will be availed should individual clubs so wish. YCB have offered to help promotion of the expansion through potential new members. UAJCA is most willing to welcome and administer new members of the Girls competitions subject of course to consideration of travelling distances and fixture scheduling arrangements. YCB have submitted a list of organisations considering Girls' cricket for 2023 and a few do seem suitable candidates for inclusion within *our* initiative. Additionally, there is already suggestion of a further 'Hub' club to fit geographically twixt our two northern Hubs and two southern Hubs. There are possibilities of at least three more teams from within existing UAJCA membership.

Our next meeting is our Annual General Meeting when initial team entries surface. It is scheduled for Thursday 19th January 2023, 7:30pm at Sutton-in-Craven CC.

Thank you.