

ESCA U11 HARDBALL COMPETITION – 2025

Chris Twort, Competition Organiser writes...

My first four years as National Organiser saw a Surrey winner but this time it was the Blue Coat School from Birmingham – very close to the Edgbaston ground – who triumphed over Moultsford Prep School from Oxfordshire in a very tense final. Batting first, Blue Coat scored a below par 245 but, as it turned out, scoreboard pressure told and Moultsford finished 15 runs short.

This year, twenty-four County winners competed in six Area Tournaments to produce eight schools to come to Oakham School for Finals Day on Thursday 10th July. As ever, I am most grateful to Giles Ashman, Phil Everest, Steve Aston, Chris Reville, Mike Spinks, Phil Evans and Bill Sillett for arranging and running these tournaments in June. Also to Dennis Houghton and Steve Wilks for their superb help and support on Finals Day.

At Finals Day the eight competing schools are put in two Leagues of four, the Cooper League and the Hemingway League. Cyril Cooper and Tony Hemingway were both ESCA officials of the past, giving years of devoted, voluntary service to schools cricket.

Results in the Cooper League were –

- Whitgift School beat Millfield Prep by 40 runs
- Blue Coat School beat The Perse Prep on fewer wickets lost (248 runs each)
- Blue Coat School beat Millfield Prep by 24 runs
- Whitgift School beat The Perse Prep by 15 runs
- Blue Coat School beat Whitgift School by 5 runs
- The Perse Prep beat Millfield Prep by 7 runs
- Results in the Hemingway League were –
- Town Close School beat Bolton School by 46 runs
- Moultsford Prep beat Ratcliffe College by 97 runs
- Moultsford Prep beat Bolton School by 55 runs
- Town Close School beat Ratcliffe College by 27 runs
- Moultsford Prep beat Town Close School by 91 runs
- Ratcliffe College beat Bolton School by 19 runs

The final group of four fixtures saw, in each League – 1st v 1st, 2nd v 2nd, 3rd v 3rd, 4th v 4th:

- Blue Coat School beat Moultsford Prep by 15 runs
- Whitgift School beat Town Close School by 39 runs
- The Perse Prep beat Ratcliffe College by 41 runs
- Millfield Prep beat Bolton School by 11 runs

This produced a final league table of –

1. Blue Coat School
2. Moultsford Prep
3. Whitgift School
4. Town Close School

5. The Perse Prep
6. Ratcliffe College
7. Millfield Prep
8. Bolton School

At the end of a long but very rewarding day, ESCA Chairman Giles Ashman conducted a Presentation Event in his usual excellent manner. Blue Coat School received the winner's trophy, along with gold medals for each of their squad. The Moultsford Prep squad members each received a silver medal. The Whitgift School squad members each received a bronze medal. All members of the eight squads received a certificate and a team photograph. Julie Morton has been taking and printing the team photographs on Finals Day for many years and ESCA is very grateful to Julie for her continued support. Sadly, for the very first time, ESCA General Secretary Ken Lake was unable to be with us this year, but we know he was there in spirit, wishing us all well. Many thanks also to Angie Elm for all the administrative work she continues to do on Ken's behalf.