

New Forest crowned Hampshire U16 indoor cricket league champions at the Ageas Bowl

New Forest U16s came through tough tests against excellent South Wilts and Havant sides to deservedly take the title on Finals night.

Semi Final: New Forest 116-2 beat South Wilts 115-3 by 4 wkts

South Wilts won the toss and batted with openers Ed Wade (31 no) and Ben Higton (29 no) building a steady platform in the face of miserly bowling from Joshua Royan (3-0-27-0), Joshua Bailey (3-0-20-1), Sam Presland (3-0-24-0) and Daniel Bailey (2-0-22-0). But South Wilts struggled to push on as first Presland took a sharp catch from the bowling of Toby Mills (1-0-12-1) to dismiss Glover and then Royan fashioned the clever run out of Brewer. Ben Howgrave-Graham (26 no) did well to provide some momentum but Jack Harris pulled off a smart stumping when Joshua Bailey turned one through Montgomery's defences and from a promising start the South Wilts innings rather petered out at 115-3.

The New Forest opened up cautiously through the competition's leading run scorer, Joshua Royan, (26 no) and the powerful Daniel Bailey (20) but they struggled for fluency and were pegged back in particular by Ben Higton (2-0-10-0), the leading wicket taker in the league this season. Joshua Bailey (13) looked as if he would provide the necessary momentum but was

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caught on the boundary off Howgrave-Graham (3-0-35-2) after one of his trademark sixes. At 62-2 in the 8th over the pressure was beginning to build when Sam Presland (24 no) and Toby Mills (21 no) came together to form what would turn out to be the match-winning partnership. Both boys played with impressive freedom, initially finding the gaps and running well between the wickets before Presland opened up as they took 21 off the penultimate over finishing the match before Highton had the opportunity to bowl at the death.

Final: New Forest 115-4 beat Havant 112-3 by 2 wkts

Havant, the only team to register a victory against the New Forest this season in the cup play-off, elected to bat opening with the impressive Charlie Dean (30 no). But wickets fell early with the run outs of Ollie Perkins with sharp reactions from Harris and Freddie Gadd by a superb direct throw from Royan, buttressed by Joshua Bailey (3-0-22-1) bowling Jonty Oliver. At 36-3 Havant looked in trouble but Morgan Cripps (25 no) and Alfie Taw (21 no) worked hard to post a total in the face of dependable bowling from Joshua Royan (3-0-24-0), Sam Presland (3-0-31-0) and Daniel Bailey (2-0-16-0).

In response New Forest opened positively, keen not to get behind the moderate rate required, with Joshua Royan (26 no) again retiring and Joshua Bailey (19) ensuring there was no danger of scoreboard pressure whilst he was at the crease. However, when Daniel Bailey (8) joined his brother both out caught the score was 67-2 and New Forest still needed to get over the line. For a while it appeared that Sam Presland (22) and Toby Mills (11) would guide the team to a comfortable victory, especially after Presland hit back to back sixes off Oliver. However, a mini wobble saw Mills unfortunate to be run out and Presland bowled by a good slower ball from Alfie Taw leaving New Forest at 102-4. Jack Harris (9 no) then came to the crease for the first time in the evening with the returning Royan. If there were any nerves Harris made light of them bringing up victory with a glorious straight six in the penultimate over and bringing the title back to the New Forest.

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So the junior indoor cricketing odyssey of this group of players, who came together as New Forest District u10s from three local clubs, Bashley, Lymington & Sway, has come to a fitting finale as county champs. They decided to form an indoor team together as U11s and have since chalked up four age group league wins in the Dorset Indoor Cricket league and now both cup and league victories in the Hampshire u16 competitions at Ageas Bowl.

Photo caption: New Forest u16s. Back row: Daniel Bailey, Joshua Royan, Joshua Bailey. Front row: Sam Presland, Jack Harris, Toby Mills

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