

## **Report on the Youth Leagues and Performance Development Group 2023**

All Youth Leagues within the County, an overview of the Boys County Performance Age Groups, together with Youth work in the Community and Schools, come within the Group's remit. We comprise representatives of each of the six Youth Leagues (Gloucestershire Youth Cricket League, Bristol, Cheltenham & Gloucester, Cotswold, Leaden Vale and Stroud). The GCF is represented by Scott Tremain, Gareth Dawson, and Chris Munden. We have oversight of the Gloucestershire Youth League, County Rounds of the Boys Vitality National U13 & U15 KO Cups, the Gloucestershire Leagues U10 Festival, 'Zonal' Squads, and the NatWest U16 & U19 T/20 Gloucestershire Competitions.

Thank you to everyone involved with the Group including the GCF Staff, who work tirelessly across the County with excellent results. This past year saw Jeanette Tate step back from her Stroud role, as well as overseeing the County elements of the National Cups, and we thank Jeanette for her contributions over the years. So we welcomed Vicky Culver and John Higgs as Stroud representatives. Thank you also to everyone involved in so many areas with youth cricket across the County, where hundreds of matches and training sessions take place safely through the summer and often at other times, week in, week out, largely through the commitment of (often unsung) volunteers.

2023 was a season where the weather dominated, sadly often for the wrong reason. 'Pre-season' activities were generally a serious casualty, as was early May. Fortunately, there was an improvement through the remainder of that month and into June. Then, as the School Holidays approached, we entered a period of unpredictable showers, storms, and sun, often mixed together on the same day. The various Cup Competitions ran successfully, and the Leagues generally reported numbers of teams holding up well, with a good majority of matches played despite the weather.

The Under 10 Leagues Festival, again kindly hosted by Beaudesert School and sponsored by Martin Berrill Sports, was an 'on-off' affair, twice interrupted by poor weather. However, once again the volume of cricket played provided ample opportunities for the promising young players to gain more experience, and to show their potential. And a big 'thank you' to GACO, who provided experienced Umpires, and again created the opportunity for inexperienced Umpires to stand alongside them for a really helpful learning experience. It is also very interesting and rewarding to recall the names of some of the young players who have appeared in this Festival over the years, and watch for their names then appearing regularly in the Performance Age Groups, and then, now into Senior Cricket in later years.

Jim Donaldson

Chair