**Newport U11 Girls Cricket Club Tantalisingly Close to UK Success**

Having recently become U11 Lady Taverner’s Welsh Champions, the Newport U11 Girls Cricket Team travelled to Weoley Hill Cricket Club in Birmingham, to take part in the UK Midland Regional Finals. Several magnificent performances on the day saw them heart breakingly pipped for the title on run rate to eventual champions Walmley Girls.

Six County Champion teams had progressed through to the Midland and South West Finals, each team playing each other in a round robin tournament, with 8 overs each innings based on pairs cricket, losing 5 runs for each wicket lost.

Newport’s first game of the day was against the eventual tournament winners Walmley Girls (Warwickshire Champions). Having lost the toss the Newport girls were a little apprehensive in their first game, and although scoring 242-5 (net 217), Walmley cautiously passed the Newport total, scoring 248-2 (238) to win by 21 runs. Jess Thornton and Vicky Clarke taking the wickets for Newport.

It was onwards and upwards for the remaining games as in their next game they restricted Narborough & Littlethorpe (Leicestershire Champions), to 256-4 (net 236), with Gabby Mould and Paige Curtis claiming 2 wickets each. Newport in reply scoring a healthy looking 259-2 (net 249), with Charlotte Mould batting very sensibly, to win by 13 runs.

In their third game they faced tough opposition from Meir Heath (Staffordshire Champions), who were unbeaten in the tournament to date. Newport batted first and scored 243-3 (net 228), but the lowish total soon looked a lot better, as Jess Thornton and Amy Harris claimed 3 early wickets. When Gabby Mould claimed another wicket Newport were in the driving seat, with the last pair of Meir Heath batters needing 22 to win in 2 overs. Some lusty blows reduced the target down to 3 runs to win off 3 balls. However, captain Jess Thornton, claimed a wicket off the 4th ball. A four off the 5th ball left Meir Heath needing 4 to win off the last ball. Jess kept her nerve to bowl a dot ball to see Newport home to a thrilling 3 run victory. Meir Heath closing on 250-5 (net 225).

Gaining confidence from every game, the Newport girls were looking a much improved outfit from their first matc. Next up was Chesterfield (Derbyshire Champions), who batted first scoring 248-2 (net 238) with Gabby Mould and Catrin Phillips claiming the wickets. In reply, Newport got off to a great start with Nicol Helkvist scoring 10. Further useful contributions from Amy Harris 10 and Jess Thornton 13 saw Newport score their highest total of the day 264-1 (net 259) to win by 21 runs.

In Newport’s final game they played St George. Newport batted first and scored a very good 257-1 (net 252), Jess Thornton top scoring with 14 while Bethany Proctor and Vicky Clarke played useful innings. St George were never in the hunt against a tight Newport bowling attack and they lost wickets throughout their innings. Jess Thornton again claiming 2 wickets as St George could only muster 236-7 (net 201). Newport winning their final game by 51 runs.

With news that Walmley had lost their final match, the Newport Girls’ had an anxious wait, as the tournament officials worked out the eventual winners. Unfortunately, the heart breaking news came, with Walmley being declared champions by virtue of scoring more runs throughout the tournament. Newport Girls’ ending a very close Runners Up, which was a magnificent achievement.

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| **Team** | **Played** | **Won** | **Lost** | **Points** |
| Walmley | 5 | 4 | 1 | 13 |
| Newport Girls | 5 | 4 | 1 | 13 |
| Chesterfield | 5 | 3 | 2 | 11 |
| Meir Heath | 5 | 3 | 2 | 11 |
| Narborough & L | 5 | 1 | 4 | 7 |
| St. George | 5 | 0 | 5 | 5 |

Team

Jess Thornton (Capt) Amy Harris Nicol Helkvist Charlotte Mould Gabby Mould Paige Curtis Vicky Clarke Bethany Proctor Catrin Phillips