

November 2024

Good evening, everyone, rather than stand-up more than once when it comes to the Under 18's, under 25's & the Colts, we can give you a three in one report as all three roles are interlinked.

Firstly, we would like to thank the Clubs and their members for the additional capitation fees of which 65p per member will go towards the Colts. This will help when we need to arrange overnight stops, allowance towards England trials, changing of the kit and general running costs etc. We really are grateful for this to help towards building the younger, future bowlers for Devon.

Again, for the second year in a row, we have had no option but the pull out of the under 18's National Competition, this is due to insufficient numbers of young players. Insufficient numbers are going to be a recurring theme in my Groundhog Day report. Our first get together of the season, 6<sup>th</sup> October was very poorly attended. Ten players attended of which we had three new additions to our squad, two of which can play in the Under 25's National double rink, and one older player has returned into the set up. Once again, despite contacting every single club making them aware of when our get together was (& by the way, it's the same weekend every year) the response from the clubs has been nothing short of non-existent. Every year since Heidi and I have been in charge, we have asked for help from the clubs, some clubs are very proactive, others are not so. It should be an honour to play for your County at any level and not a chore, when we hear that clubs have junior players, but don't or won't release them to the Colts for one reason or another, we find this rather strange, but also very infuriating. We thought that the clubs under the DCIBA umbrella would work together not against us to help promote the Devon Colts and the County. We have had to cancel friendly matches against our fellow Somerset Colts due to insufficient squad numbers, this is an embarrassment to our County!

Once again, we urge all clubs, to please support the colts, these players are your Liberty Cup/England players of tomorrow, we must reverse this trend, if we don't, then the production line of young players that has worked so well for many years & produced players like Sam Tolchard, Ryan Whitlock, Natalie Chestney, Cassidy Hampton etc will cease to exist.

On a positive note, for the Devon Colts, Connor Fielder has been selected in the England under 18's international series which we are really proud of and wish him all the best.

I would like to believe that every Club and the delegates that are present here tonight, all want the same thing a successful Devon youth side.

The time has come where we must all work together, it's evolution we are looking for not revolution.