

National Table Cricket

As The Lord's Taverners is steeped in a rich cricketing heritage and dedicated to providing children with disabilities a sporting chance, the annual National Table Cricket Competition has become one of the charity's core activities.



WHAT IS TABLE CRICKET?

Table Cricket is an indoor miniature version of the sport played on a table surface, which allows players with severe physical or learning disabilities an opportunity to play and enjoy cricket.

Two teams of at least six players compete against each other, with the objective being to score the most runs. Every player on the team must play at least 1 over (6 balls) and the game can be played by people of all abilities.

The Lords Taverners National Table Cricket Competition is an annual tournament, consisting of regional heats which take place across the country, with the winners from each region taking part in the Finals Day at Lord's. Eastenders actor, Ricky Groves is the tournament's official ambassador.

A SPORT WITH NATIONAL APPEAL

Martin Mansell, National Coordinator of the Lord's Taverners Table Cricket Competition:

"In 1999, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) wanted to host a cricket event for disabled youngsters at Lord's Cricket Ground

to tie-in with the World Cup. I was invited down to watch the final by Ken Black, from the Youth Sport Trust. I was so impressed by what I saw and how much joy Table Cricket gave the children, when I was asked to get involved, I jumped at the chance. When The Lord's Taverners got involved in 2001, via an application for funding from the Youth Sport Trust, they made a huge difference to the sport, helping us with funding, resources and support.

"Table Cricket sets were given out to 1500 schools across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland in conjunction with the Sports Ability Programme. Although some of these schools use Table Cricket simply on a recreational level, many schools play competitively and every year we are inundated with applications from schools who want to take part in the National Table Cricket Competition.

"Having started with 37 schools who took part in the regional heats in the first year we now have as many as 80 schools signing up for the tournament. The regional finals take place at premier cricket grounds across the country, including Old Trafford and The Rose Bowl, which is so exciting for the children and

Leading edge

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Martin Mansell, National Coordinator of The Lord's Taverners Table Cricket Competition

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is so special for them to visit places with such huge sporting history. For the children who don't get through to the finals, they've still had such a special day. They get huge enjoyment from the sport and Table Cricket forms such an integral part of the children's physical education which they may not have got elsewhere.

“It is paramount that the children have these opportunities of sporting achievement as it is a means of self development. Table Cricket increases self confidence, self esteem and gives them a competency that can be translated to other subject areas. The children can take part in a competitive team sport which they may never have had the opportunity to otherwise. Without funding and support from The Lord's Taverners it would have been difficult for the Table Cricket Competition to have reached so many schools and individual children, who have found such joy in the sport over the years.”

THAT WINNING FEELING

The winner of the 2008 Lord's Taverners National Table Cricket Competition was The Portland College from Mansfield in Nottingham, who overcame the Oxclose Community School in a thrilling final played out in front of Ricky Groves, former England cricket captain Mike Gatting and television presenter Judith Chalmers.

Maxine Walton, Learning Support Assistant in Sports and Enrichment at Portland College:

“The college has taken part in The Lord's Taverners Table Cricket Competition for the past 8 years and the kids absolutely adore the opportunity to play it at a competitive level, as this is the only competition of its kind. It's great to see the kids get so excited about the competition and we have an affectionate rivalry between ourselves and

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The Fountaindale School, who we play against in the regionals every year. Everyone gets very competitive.

“A lot of the students didn't know about Table Cricket before they came to the college, but it has become a hugely popular sport amongst them. Unfortunately our sports centre isn't large enough to have the Table Cricket set up permanently. The students would definitely love this to be the case.

“When we got through to the final, it was such an exciting day. We left Nottingham at 5am and when we arrived at Lord's it was absolutely unreal. We were all so privileged to be at such an iconic sporting arena. When we got through to the play-offs, we couldn't believe it, this was the furthest the college had ever got.

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Winning the competition was phenomenal, we came to the finals with no expectations. There were tears and screaming, and laughter all the way home. The students couldn't wait to tell their friends and families about their fantastic day. In July we had our annual Sports Awards Ceremony at the school, when the children received their trophies. There wasn't a dry eye in the house. It was an incredible moment for everyone.

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Gareth, student at Portland College and captain of the Table Cricket team said:

“I was a bit wary of Table Cricket when I was asked to play in the competition last year because I didn’t know what it was and had never heard of it before, but now I love it and to get to play for the college for a second year was such a privilege.

“Going down to London and seeing Lord’s was brilliant and it was really cool to meet the kids from the other schools all over the country who were taking part. We also got to meet Gary from Eastenders which was ace. We didn’t believe our teachers when they said he would be there.”



The Lord’s Taverners is one of the UK’s leading youth sports and disability charities and cricket’s official recreational charity.

The Lord’s Taverners believes that sport and recreation are essential for children and young people to help them build their self-esteem, health, well-being and future social, personal and educational potential.

Our mission is to give a ‘sporting chance’ to young people in need; those who through physical, mental, social, environmental or economic disadvantage, not of their own making, would otherwise miss out.

We achieve this by encouraging participation in youth cricket, particularly in disadvantaged areas – providing grants towards non-turf pitches, funding for youth cricket competitions and donating hundreds of cricket bags to clubs and school teams across the UK.

Also, supporting recreational and sporting activities for youngsters with special needs – donating specially adapted minibuses and sports wheelchairs giving young people vital transportation and access to sport, and providing grants for play and sports equipment.

This year The Lord’s Taverners will help tens of thousands of young people of all abilities and backgrounds participate in cricket and other sporting and recreational activities.

Our strongest sporting relationships are with the cricketing family, but we also work with other sports including tennis, basketball and rugby.

The Lord’s Taverners benefits hugely from the support of The Lady Taverners, Young Lord’s Taverners, our regions and 5,000 members, many of them drawn from the world of sport and entertainment.

For more information
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