

## ***Under 16s Blues 2012-13 Major League Premiers!***

### ***5-4 win over Waverley***



The under 16 Major League Rustlers are premiers after defeating the Waverley Wildcats 5-4 in a classic Grand Final match at Waverley.

The game, the third of 3 cracking matches between these two junior heavyweights this season, lived up to its status as a 'Grande Finale' by ending somewhat appropriately in a 1-run result, fortunately to Chelt, who looked home and hosed by 4 runs at 10.53am. But, true to their form as a club that puts out great fight-to-the-death squads, the Wildcats came back and put hearts in mouths with a big finish.

Getting out of the blocks early, Chelt had a runner on straight away when **Koki Fukusaku** drew a leadoff walk then promptly stole second to put himself in scoring position; **Koji Campitelli** duly obliged with a ground rule RBI double to bring Koki in to make it 1-0 and first blood to Chelt. A **Mitch Holding** RBI single scored Koji to make it 2-0 getting the Rustlers off to a great start. A double play to Waverley ended the first with no further addition to the score, but the Rustlers were already looking ominous sending a clear message that they were there to play.

Taking the hill for Chelt, ace **Max Barrett**, despite allowing a leadoff hit and a walk, shut down the Waverley first dig at 0 with a regulation 6-3 play.



The Chelt 2nd dig again looked threatening as with a combination of hits and walks the Rustlers loaded the bases up on 2 outs only to leave them that way with a 3rd out and no addition to the score. Max settled into work with 2 opening K's of the Waverley dig to set the tone, and a couple of batters later a third K to keep the Wildcats scoreless.

The two teams again traded zeroes in the third as the starting pitchers, both top shelf, settled down to work. 3-0 bottom 3rd.

However, it was the fourth innings that proved to be the game decider and the breakout dig for the Rustlers. **Max Barrett** got himself on with a single to Right, then getting to 2nd on a wild throw. This brought a change of pitcher to the hill for the Wildcats and it proved just what the Rustler ordered as **Declan Chittenden** swapped spots with Max on a huge RBI double to Right. Up to the plate steps **Koki Fukusaku** as the next batter, playing in his last game for the club before jetting back to Japan this week, and duly lifts a 2-1 pitch into deep centrefield for a massive 2-run bomb making it 5-0 to the good guys (and dad got it on video!); a safe match winning lead, or so we thought!

The Wildcats answered back straight away with a solo HR shot to make it 5-1 and that was Max Barrett's very effective morning's work done at 3.1 quality innings, as **Ron Carothers** handed the ball to **Jack Enciando** in the 4th to take the game through to completion.

Both teams put up zeroes in the 5th with the Wildcats innings going agonisingly close to the 5 minute cutoff point closing their innings at 10.53. Sheesh, another 2 measly minutes and we would have avoided the heart-attack-inducing 6th innings! Well it wouldn't have been as good a grand final otherwise.

Chelt, almost as if eager to get the game over with, put up a quick 3 up-3 down 6th, leaving only 3 Waverley outs to finish the game and secure the flag. If only it were that straightforward.

A huge leadoff fly to deep Centre field was caught spectacularly running backwards with an over-the-shoulder catch by **Sam Michael**, who, in light of how the innings played out, may have caught the flag as well! 1 out.

Next batter singles to right then advances on a walk to batter 8. With 2 on, batter 9 doubles to Right scoring one; 5-2. Back to the top of the order, batter 1 then doubles to Centre scoring two runners to make it a now-nerve-wracking 5-4 with a runner in scoring position at 2nd. As the Waverley bench took great pains to (rightly) remind the Rustlers, the pressure was now very squarely on Jack as pitcher and the Chelt defence. Cometh the hour, cometh the Man, and Jack pulls out a huge K looking on dangerous batter 2 for the Wildcats; 2 out, 5-4, 1 on, heart of the Waverley order up and a crowd of a couple of hundred watching as, by now, other games had finished. Geez Louise!!

Batter 3 up and, after a 7-pitch battle, draws a walk which, in the opinion of this writer, might have gone the other way for a called 3rd K, but hey, it didn't. Two runners on, Waverley cleanup hitter up to bat; doesn't get much more tense than this – classic Hollywood finish set up for one team or the other.

The count goes to 2-2, tension could be cut with a knife. The batter fouls the next one off. Jack sets and delivers his next pitch – a perfect outside corner strike; umpire stands back and starts the chainsaw for strike 3. Batter out, time and game!! Chelt premiers of Major League!!!!!!

What a game, what a finish. The games between these two teams this season were just brilliant: a 1-0 walkoff result to Chelt; a 3-1 Semi-final win to Waverley where Josh Lean (a Winter Rustler!) killed us with one huge shot; and now this cracking Grannie. That last innings was a corker (one grade up from 'cracker'); I'm not doing it justice here, but full credit to Waverley; when they had every reason to lay down, they did the exact opposite, as you'd expect really. Full respect to a well-coached, great bunch of players – well done Smoke and the lads.

But full and complete credit to the Rustlers as well, with special mention to **Sam "Willie Mays" Michael's** huge catch at Centre to get that first out, and to **Jack "Ice Cold" Enciondo's** last dig – that is as high pressure in a junior game, or any game really, as it gets – with two massive strikeouts, both looking. Special mention also to **George Callil** who came to the game and suited up on the bench. George has had a long recovery from illness so it was great to see him there.

Special good bye to **Koki Fukusaku** and dad **Tadaki** going back to Japan with the family this week; it's been a great few years having you at Cheltenham.

Thanks to **Dave Holland** who did a live scoring internet hookup of the game on iScorecast - well done mate.

Special mention also to a special lady, **Gabby Taranto**; the boys were thinking of you Gab. Go Rustlers.

### **Stats:**

**Hits Chelt 6:** Koki Fukusaku 2-run Home run; Max Barrett two singles; Koji Campitelli RBI double; Mitch Holding RBI single; and Declan Chittenden RBI double

Waverley: 6

**Pitching:** Max Barrett 3.1 innings, 2 hits, 5 K, 4 BB, 17 batters faced, 1 earned run

Jack Enciondo 2.1 innings, 4 hits, 4 K, 2 BB, 14 batters faced, 3 runs-2 earned

**Game MVP: Max Barrett**

**Season record:** Played 19 games, won 18 lost 1

## PREMIERS UNDER MAJOR LEAGUE CHELTENHAM RUSTLERS



**Back Row:** Coach Ronnie Carothers, Sam Michael, Max Barrett, Naoki Liu, Jack Enciondo, George Callil, Declan Chittenden, Assistant Coach Paul Barrett

**Front Row:** Sam Trend-Beacom, Koki Fukusaku, Koji Campitelli, Yuta Sekino, Mitch Holding, Scorer Steve Campitelli

The pics on the next pages were taken by **Steve Culbert** from Waverley and also by **Tony Preston** from Cheltenham - thanks guys, great pics!

























