



● INTER CRICKET IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Over the past eight weeks Norwich Union have supported 24 Inter Cricket festivals in 22 First Class and minor counties. With over 300 schools taking part from all over the country both girls and boys have been battling it out to become Inter Cricket Champions of their county.

From Perth in Scotland to Hampshire, County Development Officers have for the first time been coaching Inter Cricket, a scheme launched last summer by the ECB to help children develop their cricket skills.

■ WHAT IS INTER CRICKET?

Inter Cricket has been designed to bridge the gap between Kwik Cricket and the hard ball game. Aimed at children aged between 11-16 years of age the festivals have



Kent Spitfires wicketkeeper Paul Nixon and Sussex Sharks skipper Chris Adams in the indoor school at The Oval.

proved popular with both boys and girls. Inter Cricket is fun and fast moving, much like the Norwich Union League,



Martyn Ball (left) of the Gloucestershire Gladiators and Kent Spitfires wicket-keeper Paul Nixon pictured at the launch of Inter Cricket

and allows all of the team to participate. It also gives the chance for children to build an innings and for the captain to make tactical decisions - just like the real thing.

The festivals have seen children from all backgrounds and skill levels join in the fun and learn a new sport. The scheme is especially important to inner city schools where outdoor space is often a problem and schools don't have access to all the equipment needed to play hard ball cricket. As Inter Cricket is so flexible Counties were able to choose to either play indoors or out, though as usual the English weather often had a say!

Former Nottinghamshire CCC cricketer Chris Tolley, now Director of Development at Notts CCC said: "The enthusiasm for Inter Cricket was obvious to see. The game is simple and fast moving and gives youngsters a chance to play cricket in a fun environment

and the coloured clothing really appeals to them as well - It's just like the Norwich Union League

"Though probably the best thing about Inter Cricket is that it is portable and it can be played on most surfaces either indoors or out."

Bill Reynolds, Norwich Union Sponsorship Manager commented: "Norwich Union have been delighted to see such interest in Inter Cricket from schools from all over the country. Our sponsorship at grassroots level underlines our commitment to cricket in raising the standard of our national summer sport. This commitment is ongoing as we are planning a number of summer festivals - our aim is to encourage today's kids to become tomorrow's cricketers."

With the help of the Counties, Norwich Union are planning a number of summer festivals taking Inter Cricket to more children from all over the country.

Inter Cricket will also be demonstrated at many of the Norwich Union League matches and also during the Test series against Pakistan and Australia. So look out for Inter Cricket demonstrations during the interval as you could be watching the future of English cricket.

■ HOW IS IT PLAYED?

Inter Cricket has a minimum of eight players a side, four bowlers must be used and although batsmen must retire after 15 runs (you can hit a six on 14 to take you to 20) they are allowed back



Essex Eagles skipper Ronnie Irani passes on some batting tips

when the last batter remains. This format gives all players a chance to bat, bowl and experience cricket but also incorporates 'real cricket' tactics linked to the senior game.

■ FIND OUT MORE ABOUT INTER CRICKET?

If you want more information about Inter Cricket simply contact your County's development officer.