

Cricket Hall of Fame donates trophy for youth competition

A relationship which developed between two youth cricket programs following a visit to New Jersey by young Hartford cricketer Brian Ajodhi to participate in trials for the US. Under-13 National Team, has blossomed into a competition in which they will play for a trophy donated by the Cricket Hall of Fame. In its effort to continue to help foster the development and growth of the sport of cricket in the region, Hartford's Cricket Hall of Fame donated the trophy to be contested between the youth teams of New Jersey and Hartford, over a three-year period.

The relationship between the Hartford and New Jersey programs gained momentum, when Ajodhi, who impressed the selectors, was selected as a member of the team. His participation in the trials resulted in a visit by the Hartford team to Old Bridge, New Jersey, to play a match against the New Jersey youngsters. Of course the more experienced New Jersey team won, but the organizers were so pleased by the performance of the Hartford-based team, which had only been introduced to the hard ball and regular cricket gears this season, that they decided to hosts a return match in Hartford.

The match, the first to be played for the trophy, took place Saturday, August 10, in Keney, before an enthusiastic crowd which included Hartford's mayor, Eddie Perez and a number of parents. The mayor who was invited by the West Indian Foundation, sponsors of the Hartford program to come out and help cheer on the youngsters, said that he was impressed with what he saw and believes that the program has a bright future in the city. He was given the honor to bowl the first ball to start the match.

The 25-over match began under good cricketing weather with the New Jersey team taking to the wicket first. Finding the bowling much to their liking, they got good scores from Dhiven Patel, 27, Dhrov Mehra, 23 (both retired), and Dhaval Patel, 11, to rack up the respectable total of 134 for the loss of six wickets.

Leading wicket-taker for the Hartford squad was pint-sized Andrew Ajodhi, Brian's younger brother, with four wickets for 21 runs.

Hartford put up some resistance in the early part of their innings. However, the New Jersey bowlers made the break through and when the allotted time at the wicket had completed, Hartford had only managed to score 108 for eight wickets. Captain Brian Ajodhi, who went in at the fall of the first wicket was the top scorer with 32 not out. Giving assistance was T. Lawrence, 16, and C. Quake 12. Ajodhi delighted the crowd with an array of shots all around the wicket, a clear explanation of why he was selected as member of the national Under-13 team.

Dhriden Patel with two wickets for 31 runs was the leading wicket taker for the New Jersey team.

Prior to the presentation, which followed the

conclusion of the game, both coaches Roland Sampath of Hartford and Ashok Patel of New Jersey expressed their delight in seeing the programs developing to this stage. Sampath said at the staging of these games augurs well for the relationship between the youngsters, while Patel said that he saw it as new era for the development of the sport in the U.S.

Keith L. Carr, Sr., Executive Director of the West Indian Foundation and the man behind the Hartford program, which began eight years ago, said that he was proud to announce that the game has now been introduced to the

school system here. Plans are in place for a number of in-service sessions to present basic information about the game to physical education teachers in the Hartford school system, he said.

Presently, 45 youngsters are enrolled in the program which is held in Keney Park each summer, he stated.