Cricket Tour 2014 - Manchester

In order to further promote the social and cultural development of our young cricketers alongside their sporting talent, Castle View Cricket Academy embarked on a tour of the North West of England from 27th to the 30th of June 2014. This tour witnessed 12 dedicated students visiting Manchester and its surrounding area, not only to play cricket, but also to partake in several wider activities. Following a very picturesque drive across the Pennine Hill, Castle View arrived at Chapel-en-le-Frith and despite the four-hour journey, the Cricket Academy students restricted the opposition to a mere 82 from their 30 overs. A potent spell from opening bowlers Elliott Campbell and Adam Newton, followed up by a stellar bowling performance from Aaron Mitchell, essentially won the game. Captain Elliott Campbell then also starred with the bat scoring 37 before David Cheverton hit the winning runs to see Castle View Cricket Academy win with three overs to spare.

Day two provided the players with a rest day and saw them test their mental strength on a high ropes course which served as an excellent team-building exercise. Following the morning activity, Castle View visited Old Trafford to support the England Cricket team in their battle with Sri Lanka. Thankfully the weather remained dry and the students witnessed a clinical and destructive performance from the home side.

Unfortunately, the weather took a turn for the worse come day three and the proposed fixture against Ashley Cricket Club was washed out. Thankfully the coaching team hastily arranged more team-bonding exercises in the form of ten-pin bowling and Golf which followed the morning training session. All students clearly enjoyed the relaxed yet competitive nature of these spectacles. As evening approached, the party travelled into the centre of Manchester and frequented Annie's Restaurant, owned by the actress Jennie McAlpine, more commonly known as "Fizz" from Coronation Street. The cricketers were fortunate enough to meet "Fizz"; she was extremely personable and held discussion with several of the boys. Having the opportunity to have a formal team meal with the group was a priceless social experience and one that will not be forgotten.

The final day of the tour remained dry and enabled the playing of cricket to commence following the two-day break. Castle View travelled to the south of the city to play Whalley Range in an evenly-matched 30-over clash. Castle View won the toss and asked the home side to bat in what appeared to be difficult batting conditions, brought about by the damp wicket following the deluge of previous days. Again, opening bowlers Campbell and Newton created several wicket-taking chances. Unfortunately, a below-par fielding performance saw the tourists drop several chances. These mistakes allowed the opening batsmen to build a steady start to the innings and ultimately these errors cost us the game, despite another mature and consistent bowling spell from the understated and ever-improving Mitchell, who ended with figures of one for 24 from his six overs. The Cricket Academy youngsters were set a challenging total of 110. The conscientious and serious-natured Campbell failed with the bat for the first time this season and, whilst this severally hampered the team's chances of victory, it did allow others the chance to take up the mantle of responsibility. Luke Walmsley delivered with a thundering innings of 40. Unfortunately, his effort was in vain as the loss of regular wickets restricted the capacity to build partnerships and Castle View Cricket Academy fell short by three runs. The tour was an extremely positive experience for all, both in terms of cricket and the continuing personal development of players, and the long-term progression of the Cricket Academy.