

# R66T TO HARDBALL STATE SCHOOLS COMPETITION REPORT 2023

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YORKSHIRE  
CRICKET BOARD





### **R66T to Hardball – State School Y7 Competition**

The Yorkshire Cricket Board (YCB) and The R66T Academy have been discussing the opportunity of running a hardball cricket competition in state schools in Yorkshire for some time. Early in 2023 these discussions turned to reality and after some lengthy discussions the 'YCB R66T to Hardball U12 Cricket Competition' was brought to life.

The initial aim of the competition was to support secondary schools in encouraging new players to play hardball cricket and to create a logical pathway into the current YCB Chance to Compete U13 and U15 events. This is still very much the aim however it became apparent that there is a huge opportunity for it to become greater than that. The introduction of the competition has opened multiple avenues, including more cricket in schools, the opportunity for young people to have a pathway to their local cricket club and for them to experience cricket as a spectator.

### **So, what is the 'YCB R66T to Hardball' U12 Cricket Competition**

It is a state school cricket competition which was designed to enhance the cricket offer already in schools. The 'R66T to Hardball' competition is for Y7 children and operates regionally with schools participating from North, South, East and West Yorkshire forming regional leagues. Each regional league consisted of 5 schools with the winners of each league being invited to a central finals day run by the YCB and R66T. All games would be 10 a-side, playing in a pairs format and in order to make it as inclusive as possible teams were encouraged to be mixed gender and to have a minimum of 2 non cricket club players. The original flyer with the details can be seen at the end of the report as appendix 1

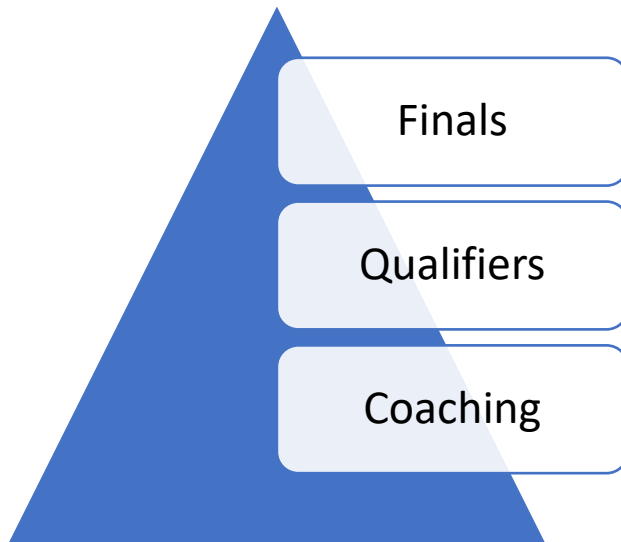




There were some challenges faced along the way which was expected especially when you run something for the very first time. That is why it was a pilot so we could learn along the way and see if this was something that had longevity and could it be successful. Well, it didn't disappoint and the results and feedback speak for themselves and any challenges were certainly outweighed by the most amazing stories and successes that came out of running this state school competition. Absolutely proving why, it is so important to get more cricket into state schools.

The journey didn't end with just the competition, all participating schools were invited to Headingley for the England vs Ireland game in September. Yorkshire Cricket Club partnered with the YCB and created a bespoke Yorkshire Cricket offer which was just £10 per child ticket and for every 8 child tickets purchased a free adult ticket was awarded. We saw 25% of the schools from the competition take up this offer with over 200 children attending Headingley. Now, let's not mention the weather on the day.....I do know that despite the disappointment of no cricket being played the kids, we are told had a thoroughly enjoyable day away from school. Many purchasing bats and hunting down the players for signatures. One of the participating schools 'Snaith School' even managed to meet with Joe Root himself (see below) definitely a day they won't forget. Another success story coming out of giving young people an opportunity to not just play cricket but to experience being a spectator, so the pathway extends even beyond the cricket pitch.





Words that the state schools used to describe what the school and children got out of participating in the competition were:





Pathway to  
Cricket Clubs



Understanding  
Cricket in Schools







Feeling Inclusive  
and that cricket  
could be a game  
for everyone



**Summarised below in no order are areas where we faced challenges, what we learnt from it and suggestions on how to make it even better.**

<p><b>Kit/Equipment</b></p>	<p>The concept was that this programme would offer a transition from softball to hardball cricket for those children coming from Primary into Secondary Schools.</p> <p>What was evident is that several schools didn't have an extensive hardball kit bag. For one school where we identified a complete lack of kit, we were able to work with our Yorkshire Cricket Foundation and provide a kit bag including helmets, bats, pads, gloves and wicket keeper gloves/pads, this was done via the <b>Crick Kit Programme</b>. The kit didn't need to be returned; the school was able to keep it.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given to how many schools this will impact and affect their participation.</p> <p>Schools that had club cricket players found this less of an issue and some children even were happy to share equipment with friends and other players.</p> <p>In some instances, we were made aware that parents had gone out and brought their children equipment as they had enjoyed the sessions so much. However, this wouldn't be an option for all children as circumstances vary and not everyone can afford to buy new kit or be in the position to do this.</p>
<p><b>County Size</b></p>	<p>Yorkshire is a huge county covering a vast area. During the registration period what was obvious is that this did impact the willingness for schools to take part.</p> <p>In North Yorkshire we only had 2 schools register and they were so far apart in terms of distance it made it impossible to run any form of competition for them.</p> <p>South Yorkshire was slow in gaining schools to participate, varying reasons were given, this included, taking part in other competitions run by their Academies, or participating in other programmes. There are many secondary schools across South Yorkshire and on speaking to schools after they are keen to participate and join future competitions.</p> <p>East and West Yorkshire were very different we had a lot of interest to the point we couldn't accommodate everyone and had to turn some schools away.</p>
<p><b>Travel</b></p>	<p>Leading on from the size of the County and the logistical issues faced this also became apparent when asking schools to travel during the qualifying rounds and the finals day.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start earlier in the year to allow time to play all games against other schools in the league table</li> <li>- Encourage game days, where all schools come together and play the games on one day.</li> <li>- Smaller league groups</li> <li>- Play a knockout format rather than a league format</li> </ul> <p>Future planning should consider schools being grouped within a specified distance to allow for ease of travel and games to take place.</p> <p>Finals day to be held centrally in the County which for 2023 the venue was <b>Woodhouse Grove School</b>. This did mean that some of the participating schools did have a 2-hour journey to reach the finals. This wasn't a deterrent in fact the teachers said that it was an absolute honor for the kids to play at such a location and worth the journey. The only thing which could make it better, would for it to be held at Headingley for future years.</p>

<p><b>Game Days</b></p>	<p>The original plan was for all schools to play each other by a set date and the planning and organisation of this was left with the schools.</p> <p>Interestingly as we ran two league tables in East Yorkshire due to the high uptake of schools wanting to participate, our East team came up with the idea of playing a schools games day and it was a huge success.</p> <p>Rather than travel weekly to play each other in the qualifying games, a central location with 2 pitches was sourced and all the schools came together and played all the qualifying games on one day. This saw a sea of multicoloured R66T shirts and some amazing cricket played all on the same day. Due to time constraints this then set the bar for the South and West schools who followed suit and completed their games in a similar format.</p> <p>One game day included using the facilities of a local cricket club which is located next to the school (Barnsley Cricket Club) and they were happy for the games to be played and their facilities used free of charge. This also would be something we would look to encourage especially for schools wanting to participate but maybe don't have a cricket pitch. It provides a good pathway for those children who show an interest in cricket and a route to their local cricket club.</p>
<p><b>Girls Participation</b></p>	<p>The R66T to Hardball competition was open to both boys and girls. However, it only became apparent after the qualifying games there was a distinct lack of girls participating. There was no real reason identified for this and further consideration should be given to how to increase girls participation. Ideas included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educating schools / PE Teachers that cricket is a game for all</li> <li>- Add a rule which encourages girls to play by adding minimum number of girls to be in each participating team.</li> <li>- Mirror club rules where girls can play down in age.</li> </ul>
<p><b>School Participation</b></p>	<p>For schools to take part the things to consider are:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Equipment</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Facilities</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Ability/Levels</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Logistics/Travel</p> </div> </div> <p>Year 7 was identified as a good age to capture and encourage students to play cricket. For a number of reasons including, opportunity to try something new without any peer pressure, no concerns over image, still wanting to be part of a team game with friends, and capturing the move from Primary to Secondary and still having the enthusiasm to try and learn something new.</p>

<p><b>Coaching</b></p>	<p>The competition included 3 hours of coaching in each participating school. This provides a great opportunity for the coaches to deliver a Cricket PE lesson or extra-curriculum class.</p> <p>It is important to develop and structure the coaching framework for future programmes so that the coaches can use this given the short hours they have in each school. These need to be drills and activities which will give the children the best experience and introduction to hardball cricket. It is important that the sessions are worthwhile for both the children and the teachers.</p> <p>The travel as mentioned earlier in the report also impacts the coaches as they have a number of schools to attend across a vast area. This could be a challenge in some areas.</p> <p>Some schools mentioned that with advice from the coaches they could deliver the cricket PE lessons and that the funding for coaching could be better spent in helping schools buy equipment.</p> <p>In some instances schools said they would be happy to take part in just the competition side of the programme without the coaching. This could be a real benefit as it would mean more schools could participate and the coaching element could be focused on those schools identified as needing greater support.</p>
<p><b>R66T Shirts</b></p>	<p>Each school that participated were given 12 x R66T Academy T-Shirts with each school in the leagues having a different colour. The schools and kids loved this and it was fantastic to see a sea of colours and R66T all over the playing field. The only thing to consider here was the sizes and in a couple of instances the T-Shirts were too small, so not one size fits all and need to think about how we can avoid this to ensure all kids feel included.</p>
<p><b>Ambassadors / Experienced Cricketers</b></p>	<p>It has been great to watch those children who are experienced cricketers helping and supporting the non-cricketers. Encouraging, advising, and providing their knowledge and experience. Seeing them motivate and cheer others on and advise them when something doesn't go right is a pleasure to watch.</p> <p>We would encourage for the next competition that we introduce an ambassador role to promote cricket, motivate and inspire friends and other young people to get involved. Have an influence within the school to encourage cricket in both PE and extra-curricular sport.</p> <p>Listening to children is so important and this will give them a platform to share ideas and get feedback from the children in the teams and those who don't have the access to cricket. We can learn so much by listening to the children and feeding this back.</p>
<p><b>The great British WEATHER</b></p>	<p>Well what can we say.... We definitely can't rely on the English weather. Of course it impacted the finals day, resulting in it being postponed and due to time constraints it was pushed back from July to September which was in the following school year. It did also impact the qualifying games for some where they didn't manage to play all of the scheduled games but enough to make the qualifying fair.</p> <p>A couple of suggestions were made; one was to choose a venue which had an indoor hall as back up or to have a backup/reserve date in the event of postponement.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to starting the competition earlier as soon as the cricket season starts and to have the finals day date not so close to the end of the school year.</p>





<b>Rules</b>	<p>The same rules were applied for both the qualifying games and the finals day. These were shared with all participating schools and very clear from the offset. This allowed schools to follow and play with ease and all the PE teachers doing their own scoring.</p> <p>On the finals day some observations by the R66T and YCB staff were made on how the rules were working. It was suggested that rules should be reviewed with the potential to amend them slightly, observations were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage more running between wickets</li> <li>- Consider a 10 yard circle with 2 runs for a run when the ball is inside this ring.</li> <li>- Ensure both batters in the pair face 9 balls each so really inclusive.</li> <li>- Strongest/best batters to face the strongest/best bowlers.</li> <li>- Change penalty of losing 5 runs to 3 runs</li> </ul> <p>All of these ideas need to be considered and thought through to see if the changes would encourage more runs and bravery from the children partaking.</p>
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<b>Rules Applied</b>
Games will be 10 aside - a minimum of two players should not be members of a cricket club at the start of the term.
Each innings will consist of 15 x 5 ball overs - pupils will bat in pairs for 3 overs per pair - 15 balls. This may be reduced by agreement between schools should weather or time pressures intervene
Pitch Length - 19 yards
5 balls in an over. No bowler may bowl more than 2 overs and no player can bowl consecutive overs. Everyone apart from the wicket keeper must bowl.
You may bowl all overs from one end to speed up the game.
Normal cricket scoring with 4's and 6's.
No-balls & wides are scored as 2 runs to the batting team and no extra delivery to be bowled- except for on the last ball of the innings which will be repeated.
Every time a wicket is lost 5 runs will be added to the opponents score.
Teams will gain 3 pts for a win and 1 pt for a defeat or an abandoned game.
In any one match if the scores are equal the team with the least number of dismissals will be declared the winners. If scores are still equal then the team with the most boundaries hit from the bat (4's and 6's) will win. If the teams are still equal the result will be decided by a coin toss.
If the highest placed teams are equal on points at the end of the league then the winners of the game between the two teams who are equal will go through to the finals day.





### **What did the participating schools say**

It was really important for us to understand how the participating schools felt and to do this we approached the teachers and this is what they had to say:

**Roundhay School** – “Overall it was a well communicated and organised event, we had a couple of success stories with kids taking part in the competition that hadn’t played cricket before. We had one who hit runs in the final and one who bowled really well throughout the competition taking 4 wickets.” “Possible improvements – could the final’s day be held at Headingley? And could there be a contact for each area that will organise games – I would be happy to organise the west Yorkshire one”.

“In addition to what Tom mentioned, I can say that we will be encouraging schools in the Year 7 and 8 competitions to adopt this format for matches next year. Speaking with colleagues we also wondered about using a seeding system for the pairs so that the best batters face the best bowlers. Secondly, maybe reducing the loss of wicket penalty to 3 runs, might encourage batters to take more singles, play more shots without fear of undoing their good work.”

**Snaith School** – “ All positives for us regarding feedback. The competition is a great idea and we feel the inclusivity of the non-playing squad member requirements means more and more people have the opportunity to experience hardball cricket which is something you don’t have time for in PE lesson time. We have had one non-playing member of our squad who has joined their local club side. This is our biggest success story. Regarding things to improve: An appearance by Joe would be fabulous at finals day. That would certainly increase the excitement further. Thanks for all the hard work with it.”

**Beverley Grammar School** – “ We thought that the programme was very beneficial for the development of hardball cricket, it allowed both competent players and non-club cricketers to play together, which we felt allowed the non-club player to learn more about the hardball game for those who play. The full day qualifying format worked really well and enabled the students to play numerous games on one day. The finals day was really exciting, held at a venue with really good facilities and the students enjoyed this. Speaking to another teacher on the final’s day, possibly ranking batters and bowlers might allow the players who have played more face each other. eg best batter vs the best bowler. The rest of the rules and formats worked really well. As for success stories, our two non-club cricketers went down to the cricket club over summer and are looking to get involved in playing at the club next summer.”

**Kirk Balk Academy** – A small group of those who played in the finals day have started cricket on lunch times for anyone, new kids have been asked to play and start a team for next summer.

Before the finals day a great break down of the competition was shared, read here [The Final Four](#)



**Social Media**

**BevGrammar PE** @BevGrammarPE · Jun 29 ...  
 Well done to our year 7 cricket team who qualified for the  
[@TheRootAcademy](#) 'R66T to Hardball' finals day, after todays qualifying  
 round [@BeverleyTCC](#) 🏏



**WolfretonSport** @WolfretonSport · Jun 28 ...  
 Our Y7 cricketers were in action today [@CottinghamCC](#) taking part in the  
[@TheRootAcademy](#) [@Yorkshirecb](#) competition!  
 The lads placed 2nd just missing out on the opportunity to qualify for the  
 next round, but a great day was had by all! 🏏  
[#cricketsthewinner](#)  
[#Ashes23](#)





**Crawshaw PE Dept** @CrawshawPE · Jul 4

Yesterday our Y7 students had a fantastic day at the 'R66T to Hardball' cricket competition. Students performed amazingly well as a team and thoroughly enjoyed the competition. Thanks to @RSch\_PE for hosting! 🏏

#strive #cricket #ambition

@TheRootAcademy

@Yorkshirecb

@RKLTPeople



**The Snaith School PE**

@TSS\_PE

Congratulations to Kirk Balk who take 3rd place. We have had a great run in this competition and the team have enjoyed their successes.

A special mention to KB who was selected as player of the day by the @TheRootAcademy coaches for his outstanding fielding.



**The Snaith School PE**

@TSS\_PE

A proud day for the school as our Y8's compete in the rearranged @TheRootAcademy Yorkshire County Finals Day. Our semi final gets underway at 10AM against Roundhay School from Leeds. Good luck lads 🏏🏏



9:29 AM · Sep 14, 2023 · 1,843 Views



HorizonPE @horizon\_cc\_PE · Jun 28

Well done to our yr 7 boys who participated in the R66T Cricket tournament today. Some great performances from all teams. Thanks to Barnsley CC for hosting.



Joe Root

KBA PE & Performing Arts @PE\_KB · Jun 28

Congratulations to our Y7 Cricketers who overcame good competition to win the SY schools hardball cricket competition in partnership with the r66t academy. 🏏 We look forward to progressing to the Yorkshire finals in July. 🌟🌟 #teamkba



The Snaith School PE @TSS\_PE · Jun 28

We have won our second game and qualify as East Yorkshire champions and we are through to Yorkshire finals day in Leeds next month where we will compete against the champions from South, North and West Yorkshire. Well done boys. A superb achievement. 🏏🏏🏏





## The YCB “R66T to Hardball” U12 Cricket Competition

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### Background

The R66T Academy is an organisation created by the Root family to support the playing and coaching of cricket at all levels. The R66T Foundation is the charitable arm of The R66T Academy and one of its aims is to support state school cricket. We consider it vital that cricket has a profile in the schools that educate 93% of the school population in this country.

### The Competition

As Yorkshire is Joe’s home county, we are working with the Yorkshire Cricket Board, and the existing bodies developing state school cricket, to enhance the offer to schools already in place. The “R66T to Hardball” competition aims to support secondary schools in encouraging new players to play hardball cricket and to create a logical pathway into the current Yorkshire Cricket Board Chance to Compete U13 and U15 hardball events. The rules are highly inclusive and build on existing softball initiatives running in many primary schools.



The R66T Academy therefore welcomes invitations from state schools to enter our new Y7 event. This will operate on a regional basis with a North, West, South and East league. As a year one pilot, we have five places available in each regional league and these will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Winners of each league will be invited to a finals day run by The R66T Academy in July, giving you plenty of time to complete four fixtures.

The matches will be 10-a-side pairs games to ensure full involvement and we are asking schools to include two non club players in every match as part of the initiative. The home side will be responsible for submitting a scorecard centrally. If you have an issue with a venue for matches we will work with clubs in your region to offer venues for matches and ensure that there are clear links to local junior cricket programmes.

All schools entering the R66T to Hardball League will receive;

- 4 hours coaching from a fully qualified ECB coach to help you prepare for the matches
- Match balls for your 4 league games
- A set of 12 R66T Academy t-shirts to wear in the matches
- 15% discount on any training aids or team clothing required by the school from our shop [Shop | The Root Academy R66T](#)



In addition the four finalists will receive a £250 travel grant to help them get to the finals day and R66T Caps for all participants and staff.

Submit your league entry application to Donna Staniland of the YCB at [d.staniland@yorkshirecb.com](mailto:d.staniland@yorkshirecb.com). Applications will be accepted on a first come first served basis. Please address any questions you have regarding the event to Nick Gaywood at The R66T Academy 07793558132 [nick@r66t.co.uk](mailto:nick@r66t.co.uk)