

England Cricket Captain Alastair Cook makes surprise visit to blind young cricketers in Croydon

Thursday 13 June, 2013

The England Cricket Captain, Alastair Cook, took time out on Monday to play cricket with twenty blind young Londoners from the Royal London Society for Blind People.

The Captain delighted the young cricket fans with an hour long session at the Cricket4Change ground in Wallington.

Tutored by Mark Bond, who plays for England's Blind Cricket Team, Cook was taught how to bat, field and bowl whilst wearing special glasses that limited his vision, giving him a sense of what it would be like to be sight impaired.

Cook said "The kids here are clearly as mad about cricket as I was at their age. It's great that RLSB run this group so they can excel at a sport they love playing, regardless of their sight impairment."

Fresh from England's recent ICC win, Cook then gave a batting master class to the group, followed by a presentation of signed bats. The visit was part of Yorkshire Bank's 'Giving Bat to You' campaign which rewards fans for supporting cricket and aims to get more people picking up a bat and playing the sport in their communities this summer.

Mark Bond, who also coaches the RLSB Cricket4Change team, said of today "The kids couldn't believe that they were stood on the pitch they play on nearly every week with the England Captain. Alastair was fantastic with them. I know they will remember this day forever."

Cricket along with other sports is a great way for blind young people to build confidence in mobility, communication and trusting others. It also brings about long lasting friendships which breaks down isolation and exclusion which many blind young Londoners experience.

Despite the benefits, there is currently a very low participation rate in sport amongst blind young people. This year RLSB will be launching a campaign "Game on, London." which aims to get hundreds of young people into sport through a series of events across the capital.

More coverage of the day can be found at www.facebook.com/YorkshireBankCricket
ENDS

Notes to Editors:

RLSB Version

RLSB partners with Cricket4Change to deliver specialist cricket training sessions for vision impaired young people. Our full schedule of sport events please go to rlsb.org.uk/sport

RLSB (Royal London Society for Blind People) exists to empower blind and partially sighted young people to live life without limits. Through an expert blend of education, sport, creative and developmental services, we help the people we work with live and learn for the life they want.

For further information please call RLSB Press Office. Emma Thompson 0207 808 6172/07884 493476/emma.thompson@rlsb.org.uk

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