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## U13 championships see Venezia lift tournament trophy in Italy

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Submitted by Richard O'Sullivan  
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As now would appear to be the norm, the annual U13 FCrI championships once again recorded its highest ever number of entrants. Played over the weekend of 26th & 27th September 2009 the championships saw representation from 12 clubs across Serie A, B & C. The venue was the vastly improved Punto Verde about 30 minutes outside central Rome. Three years ago Punto Verde was one rough junior football field along with a large unploughed field. It is great credit to Howzat Director of Cricket Manlio DeAmicis that all his hard work has resulted in a venue where three junior games can be played simultaneously, a first in Italy. Perhaps even more amazingly with the summer climate in Rome we were all greeted by well grassed outfields!

The 12 teams were formed into two round robin groups of six leading to semi finals and finals on the Sunday afternoon. By the time the semi-finals were played between Venezia and Pianoro and Bologna C.C. and Casteller (from Paese near Treviso) it had become evident that Venezia were the feared team in the competition and there was little that Pianoro could do in the first semi-final to change this perception. The second semi-final saw a thrilling match where the traditionally strong Bologna side were taken to the last two balls to secure victory by a well drilled Casteller side who chased the large total of 114 in 10 overs in vain but admirably.

So the final was arrived at, with Bologna not only having to compete with the fact that the draw had meant this was their third straight match in the heat of a late September Roman day but with the knowledge they had already lost to Venezia in the group stages. Predictably the combination of these two facts and the overwhelming all round strength of the Venezia outfit meant that they, Venezia, recorded a comfortable 60 run victory. The Venezia President and his wife were present to witness the victory which must have seemed a distant dream when he formed the club following his intrigue as to 'this game of cricket' played by Venetian Bangladeshies in the park next to his house!

With an ECB Level 1 Coaching Assistant course running in December it is hoped that next year's teams will be even better coached and prepared and Italy may see even more green shoots!



Venezia and Castellar teams celebrate



Practising in between games



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