

A Starr is born (at Sentinel)

By Jamie Dowley

An exciting full day of cricket in the SCCL with two games vying for the headlines in the final game of Win Draw Lose ...for now

A fantastic game at **Sentinel** that ultimately gave the hosts a much needed win against a **St Georges** side who gave it everything but still ended up on the losing side. Tom Griffiths, a player now established at this level opened up for Sentinel with 41, and a quality 75 from veteran Aussie Mal Serplet set the innings up for 16 year old Jacob Binnerley to launch an outstanding 91 ball unbeaten century in front of league chairman Gordon Smith whose own son Kevin is the all time youngest Premier Division centurion at 15. Young Binnerley a player who we will no doubt hear a lot of in the future was supported by captain Ed Ashlin who ended on 29no as the Engines finished on 271-3. An imposing total for the Dragons to chase, but thanks to a brilliant 142 from Faizan Khan they came pretty close before running out of steam at 244ao. Rico Fourie took 3-53, with Matty Cliffe and Tom Griffiths taking 2 each themselves, but despite the knock from Faizan, it was Binnerley about whom all the talk post game was, Ed Ashlin paying a fulsome tribute to his young star . “We are delighted with the win, really pleased, we had to work hard, and St Georges chased very well but we are delighted for Jacob, it was an outstanding innings at such a young age it’s a credit to him to play that well at 16, he has a very bright future ahead of him”

Something had to give as the top 2 went head to head at **Quatt** in an eagerly anticipated showdown with both teams coming in off a combined 16 wins on the bounce. Perhaps surprisingly the visitors **Whitchurch** elected to bat first and at 29-4 they may have been regretting that decision, especially with talisman Maz Hasnain back in the pavilion for 23, a wicket that provoked exuberant celebrations when he was clean bowled during an outstanding spell of 3-31 by Alex Biddle. The visitors recovered well and an excellent partnership between ex first class cricketer Saad Wasim (26) and Adan Hussain (49), got the score up to 132-6 before Kuldeep Diwan, who wasn’t quite at his absolute best this week, mopped up the tail and still finished on 4-35! A total of 141 for Whitchurch was still just about competitive especially with their bowling attack at full strength and they wasted no time in getting stuck into the Quatt line up. Dan Bowen and Kashif Hussain both struck twice to leave the hosts 52-4 and when Shabbir Khan quickly took a brace of his own it left the leaders struggling at 75-6. Shabbir then turned an ankle, replaced in the field by Whitchurch chairman Iain Marsh, but with the experienced Stuart Walters joined by Alex Starr the game took a fresh twist. Walters playing the supporting role to Starr, a player who has taken his time to establish himself in the Premier Division after his winter move from Chelmarsh, but who now played an outstanding match winning knock under huge pressure. He ended on 45no while Walters made a controlled unbeaten 20, a win

that means Quatt extend their lead at the top of the league and make it odds on that they bring the league title back to South Shropshire.



Olly Plank clips one off his legs off the bowling of Alex Heath with Umpire Alan Kynaston watching on from the bowlers end

It was a bad day at the office for **Allscott** as they succumbed to **Ludlow** in quick time, a total of 85no proving a straightforward target for the hosts. Batting first Max Ferrington and Jack Case were going along nicely at 44-1, but once they departed for 23 and 21 respectively, the middle and lower order soon succumbed to a Luke Miles led attack. Miles who is enjoying an outstanding season with the ball took 5-35 while there was also a brace for Zach White. In reply, despite losing Miles for 0, Jason Oakes at last came into some form seeing his side home with 60no to a 7 wicket success. It will be interesting to see if Oakes can hit the ground running in his preferred White Ball format, if he can then don't be surprised to see Ludlow climb the table...

Wem will be delighted to leave Morda Rd after a 43 run victory that looked unlikely at various points during the afternoon. Batting first they were in big trouble at 16-4 before Harry Astley (41) and Muhammed Irfan (35) joined forces for a 75 run partnership that ultimately proved to be the difference between the sides. Once they departed there was only token resistance from the usually reliable Wem lower order and a score of 132 would have been eyed up favourably by the **Oswestry** batsmen. Joe Monk (2-43) and Shak Marshall (3-41) led the home attack with Henry Walker (3-17) wrapping the innings up. In reply Oswestry put 34 on the board for the first wicket, but that was as good as it got once Irfan got to work bowling his usual exemplary spell. 5-18 off 15 overs yet again the proving why he is one of the best in club cricket in the country. With Tom Astley leading the seam attack with 3-39, the game was closed out with Oswestry dismissed for 89. Wem another team who favour the White Ball format as they proved in the Birmingham League in 2021 and 2022 and they will no doubt look to reduce the gap to Quatt and Whitchurch.

Shelton enjoyed a comfortable win on the road at inconsistent **Madeley**. Once again the away top order were all in the runs despite being without Professional Nathan Sealy who has returned to Barbados. Saleh Ahmed with 61 top scored, and received support from Viv John and Pabel Saha (both 26). Mithun Jayawickrema the pick of the home bowlers with 4-37, while Hamza Bhatti contributed 3-39. At 50-2 the run chase was finely balanced , but in form skipper Simon Jones and Ross Griffiths then combined to rip through the Madeley line up as they lost 8 wickets for 18 runs. Jones finishing with 5-34 while the unsung Griffiths yet again showed his worth with 3-7.

The final game of the day saw **Frankton** secure a narrow 3 wicket win at **Shrewsbury**, a result that pushes the county town side into the relegation zone for the first time this season while ending a bad run of results for the men from Hardwicke Park. Captain Tom Welti and Scott Hale took 4 wickets each as Shrews were dismissed for 131, with the visitors in a hurry in reaching their target for the loss of 7 wickets inside 22 overs, with Tom Wilkie and George Dickin both making 30 before Ryan Kruger got them over the line with 22no.