

Quatt taste defeat for first time as Premier title race blown wide open!

...While in Division One Newtown see off Coumd as joint leaders clash

By Jamie Dowley

On a day where all six home teams won for the first time in the Premier Division it was Oswestry who claimed top honours with a nervy one wicket win against Quatt, a result that lifts them out of the bottom two and cuts down the visitors lead over Whitchurch to just 7 points.

Quatt travelled north missing a few key performers but would have still been confident of another 20 against **Oswestry** who are not the most consistent of sides. Tom Whitney opened up with a fine 67 but Kuldeep Diwan was becalmed for his 67 ball 32 and it all meant Oswestry were able to keep the runs down. The local supporters would have been delighted to see long time favourite Mark Robinson bowling again and he used all his experience to claim 2-14 while West Indian Shak Marshall also starred with 3-18 as did Joe Monk with 2-31. A total of 153 did look short on a ground known for high scoring but Quatt's 80% spin attack would no doubt be difficult to get away on a pitch that was proving tough to score freely. The home side dug in for the chase and at 140-5 with Josh Coleridge on 49, the game looked over. With 9 balls of Diwan's spell left he somehow enticed Coleridge to play a loose shot and when he quickly followed up with the wicket of ex Cae Glas star Ruchira Bandarage for 36, Oswestry still needed 9 runs. 145-7 soon became 146-9 when Robinson and Davies both went for 0, and with numbers 10 and 11 at the crease Quatt went in for the kill. All credit to tail enders Monk and Francis-Jones as they played sensibly and didn't recklessly swing the bat. For 4 overs they saw off Craig Jones and Jed Edwards before they were able to sneak a 2 for a superb victory one that left Quatt Chairman Howard Sanders breathless but not too downbeat. "We were probably a few runs short but it wasn't easy scoring for either side. All credit to Oswestry they were brilliant all day. We will dust ourselves down after this one and go again, we have 7 cup finals left now and it's still in our own hands"

St Georges will be disappointed not to have been more competitive on their trip north to Heath Rd, as despite pro Faizan Khan scoring another half century, no other batsman could stay with him. At 77-3 they looked in fairly good shape after an early Dan Bowen (3-31) triple strike but when Adan Hussain was introduced, he quickly ripped through the Dragons lower order. Hussain, who is enjoying an excellent all round season took 5-11 while Shabbir Khan also chipped in with 2-22 as Georges succumbed to 102ao. That was meat and drink to Maz Hasnain whose, unbeaten 53no allied to 36 from Fahim Muhammad saw **Whitchurch** over the line inside 19 overs and give them a 12th win in 13 matches.

Madeley have been on a poor run of form recently and it didn't get any better for them during a tough afternoon at **Shrewsbury 2nds**. Dan Walker narrowly missed out on a century but his 97 was the bedrock of a home score of 280-9, which was achieved through additional contributions from Rob Foster (59), Finn Jones (29), Zane Beattie (24) and Oscar Cooke (22). Madeley re-signed Ian Walker in the week and he did his best to peg the hosts back with 3 stumpings but a total of

280 always looked a tough chase and with none of the away batters able to make it out of the 20s, the final outcome was 152ao. Gabe Downs and Finn Jones shared 6 wickets equally in a result that lifts Shrewsbury off bottom spot in an ever-changing relegation battle.

Across the town **Shelton** bounced back from consecutive defeats to gain local bragging rights against **Sentinel** in a game that could have gone either way. A score of 163 ao must have been slightly frustrating for the visitors whose top order had set the game up at 91-2, but no one was able to get that big score. Rico Fourie with 36 and Jacob Binnersley with 31 were the main contributors while for Shelton the wickets were shared, Antonio Morris (3-35) the returning Nathan Sealy (2-17) and Saleh Ahmed (2-32). Ex County pro Greg Smith got the reply off to a flyer with a rapid 34 at number 3, but when he was dismissed by Dom Hanna , Sentinel were in the game. Wickets kept falling but the scoring rate was maintained by Sealy whose 60no eventually saw his team over the line by 2 wickets with an astonishing 22 overs still remaining. Certainly a contest that was an advert for the more modern style of cricket!

Frankton are battling for their Premier Division lives and produced a gutsy win over **Allscott** who themselves are slowly getting dragged into the bottom half shake up. It was a day when the overseas pros shone and it was Ryan Kruger who had first dibs, his 66 which included 52 in boundaries was the mainstay of a score of 191. As is the way in WL format wickets were shared with Josh Allen (3-29), Callum Starling (2-33) and Kuldeep Devatwal (2-19) all impressive. The Allscott reply got off to a bad start with both openers back inside with just 3 on the board but that brought Devatwal to the crease and he set about the home bowlers with aplomb. While wickets were falling at the other end thanks to some good bowling by Tom Welti, Richard Parry Jones and Jordan Parry it was Wrexham fan Parry who produced the Hollywood moment dismissing Devatwal two runs short of a century with the score on just 140. More importantly Frankton were then able to wrap up the Allscott innings at 168 and gain a crucial 20 pts.

It was a pretty straightforward afternoon for **Wem** who ran out 7 wicket winners against a **Ludlow** side who were missing several key players. That said Wem were also without both Tom Astley and captain Danny Cohen the latter appears likely to be out for the rest of the season with a serious leg injury. The south Shropshire outfit were going along quite nicely until Luke Miles was bowled by Ed Carver for 36, and a big collapse followed as Harry Astley (3-24) added to Carver's 4-27, while Irfan chipped in with 2-8. In reply at 14-2 perhaps Ludlow had a sniff but this was quickly extinguished by that man Carver who completed a fine game with 43no to ensure 20pts for his side.

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Arguably the biggest game in the SCCL this weekend was in division one where joint leaders **Newtown** and **Cound** faced off at the DPD Recreation Ground with League Chairman Gordon Smith present in mid Wales where he always receives a good welcome. It was not such a welcome for the Cound top order who quickly found themselves in massive trouble at 44-5. That brought Andy Harrison to the crease and he produced a fine skippers innings at a time when his side needed it most. Harrison received good support from Craig Kinsey and latterly Owen Brayne (30), but it was the much travelled skipper whose career best 120 including seven sixes, which enabled an away total of 215 ao. Tom Anderson did his best to stop the carnage with 4-55, while David Laird and Marco Malan kept it tight also. For the Welshmen, John Anthony got off to his customary rapid start and his quick 25 set it up for David Laird to enter the arena and produce a fine innings of 84no. Laird like Harrison has many previous clubs but is back where it all started and is undoubtedly a stellar player at this level. Despite 3 wickets for Brayne he was able to close

the game out with the assistance of Tom Foulkes who was unbeaten on 41. A great win for Newtown but with Bomere Heath also breathing down their necks there is a long way to go yet in the promotion battle.

Next week in the Premier Quatt will be desperate to bounce back at home to Shelton while it's a huge Telford derby between Madeley and St Georges