

2026 SCCL Premier Division Round Up Week 18

By Jamie Dowley

Laird magic gives Wellington title favouritism

Smith last over heroics edge thriller with Quatt

In what was billed as the biggest game of the season so far, leaders **Quatt** faced off against Champions **Wellington** at the QCG, a win for the home side would put one hand on the trophy, and defeat for Wellington would all but eliminate them, however a win for Dan Vaughan's side with that crucial Bank Holiday game in hand would put them in the box seat with a favourable fixture run in. With Quatt always choosing to bat first and Wellington bowl, the toss was largely immaterial, but the leaders lost Tom Whitney early to a Dave Laird return run out, but with Alex Biddle in at 3 looking in good touch they recovered slightly. The game then shifted dramatically in the space of 15 balls, as Laird produced the spell of the season. Starting with bowling overseas pro Nipun for 18, he went WW..WW..W, all either bowled or LBW as the home middle order resorted to binary, as they were reduced to 45-6, with Biddle watching on from the other end. He did receive some support to mount a recovery to 82-6 but when he departed for 36, Wellington looked to close the innings out in short order. They weren't able to do that as Quatt tail wagged with Scott Furber (26) and Dan Handley (20no) getting the score up to 134ao, Laird finished with 5-41 while Matt Simmonds took the last 3 wickets to end on 3-17.

Quatt skipper Jamie Lunn is having a great season personally and here he took the bull by the horns to try and defend that total in tandem with another in form bowler Gareth Jones. After Dan Vaughan had made 21, Jones dismissed him and the out of form Matt Simmonds for 0, and when Lunn had Jason Oakes trapped LBW for 5, the visitors were 46-4. It was then back to Laird to rebuild the chase, he kept the scoreboard ticking but when he fell for 33 they still needed 35 to win with 4 wickets left. The Morris brothers, Hugh and Matthew both very capable with the bat edged the score to within 8 of victory, Lunn then took his 5th (5-34), and when Scott Furber got Ben Pilkington, Quatt were in with a chance. Out strode Olle Smith at No 11, not renowned for his batting but no mug either and with the field up he struck a 2 and a 4, raised his arms aloft in triumph to give Wellington a famous win. To illustrate the value of the win, the last over had potentially a 38 point swing, a result that means if Wellington win their last 5 games they are champions.

Dan Vaughan "That's a huge 24 points, the pitch offered a bit for the bowlers, but Lairdy was outstanding up top (again). We just about got over the line, Quatt made it difficult for us and showed why they are a top side, but we bat very deep. It's the sort of game where you need character and our young lads have that, Smithy at the end deservedly celebrated after showing real guts to see us home."

Mithuns century show before Reddy has the last laugh

Those 'Park Street' fighters **Madeley** made 2nd place **Wem** sweat with an excellent performance before the visitors class ultimately shone through to keep their title challenge alive. Batting first the hosts played steadily with Alex Ollerenshaw keeping things tight, and while Imran Yousef (33) and Salim Ahmed (39) were proving tough to knock over, the innings at 87-3 off 33 overs was going nowhere fast. That put the pressure onto Mithun and the Sri Lankan started to cut loose as his side added 100 in the last 11 overs, with the pro doing all the damage as he reached a magnificent 103no with a six in the last over. Ollerenshaw ended with 14-4-2-62, hard lines on the pacemen whose last 3 overs went for 38 after his superb opening spell. Wem's stacked batting line up went well early, Harry Chandler and Sam Peate made 45 and 47 respectively and at 176-3 with Abhishek Reddy going well the game looked up for Madeley. Salim then turned the contest on its head as the away side lost 5 quick wickets, his 4-59 reduced Wem to 204-8, still requiring 20 to win. However that's when you need your pro to see you home and the Indian maestro (81no) flicked a switch and hit 4 consecutive boundaries to give his side a crucial win they made very heavy weather of. Wem are now just 2 points off the lead.

Decent Newtown display isn't enough as Faisal's Dragons march on

Newtown are now over 40 points from safety after they came off 2nd best as expected to **St Georges** who are still very much in the title hunt. Batting first the hosts were struggling at 18-3 with pace bowler Ali Mustafa taking all 3, before Jordan Baijnath (34) and Ben Price (38) made the scorecard more respectable with a useful 72 run partnership. Babar Khan then entered proceedings and his 4-25 helped bowl Newtown out for 141 with Mustafa returning to take the final pair of wickets ending with 5-35. Mohammed Aqeeb then led from the front with 33, and at 72-3, it was over to Faisal Khan and Amritpal Singh to join forces, the latter hitting 32 no while Faisal takes the plaudits finishing on exactly 50 no and the Dragons 8th 24 point haul in this format.

Bateup's timely ton pushes Sentinel towards safety

Sentinel made it back to back 24 point wins, with a dominant home display over **Shrewsbury 2nds**, a result that leaves them on the verge of survival, but for out-of-form Shrewsbury, they are one step closer to an immediate return to Division 1 after this defeat. Batting first, Sentinel overseas Nick Bateup chose an opportune moment to record his first century of the season and with Tom Griffiths, together the pair added 140 for the first wicket before Griffiths departed for 70. Bateup was next to go for exactly 100, but the runs continued to flow, Muhammad Zaheer chipped in with 36, Jacob Binnersley struck 27 and then some fantastic late striking from Connor Cheshire who made 66 no including 5 sixes, all meant a mammoth score of 338-4 off 50. With Will Parton making his first appearance at this level for 12 years, the visitors had plenty of quality in the line up, and at 105-2 were still in the hunt, but once Kieran Gill (23) and Parton (57) departed, just like last week it was over to the spinners Alex Johnson and Matt Cliffe to bowl Sentinel to victory. Johnson now up to 34 league wickets once again impressed with 4-36, and Cliffe showing what a dangerous red ball bowler he is cleaned up with 3-20, as Shrewsbury were dismissed for 187, with captain Rob Foster last man out for battling 51. The Engines have three tough fixtures to come so the 48 points from these two home derbies against Shelton and Shrewsbury could prove vital in their survival hunt.

Carl rolls back the years in powerhouse display

Ludlow welcomed back Jack Edwards after 15 years in the Birmingham League with Shifnal but his timely addition in the absence of overseas Nathan Engelbrecht who has now gone home, failed to change the dial as the South Shropshire outfit were very much second best at **Allscott Heath**. With Callum Starling still injured, Brad Thornton took the armband and the new ball, striking twice (2-30) alongside younger brother Luke who bowled a tidy spell also. Despite 31 from the consistent Sam Edwards, 33 from Joe Williams and 30 from Ben Griffiths, scoring was tricky in the face of an outstanding spell from Kuldeep Devatwal who ended with figures of 14-2-36-4, as Ludlow were dismissed for 178, Matt Hutchings picking up 2 late wickets. The home reply was a clinical one, with Carl Starling, seemingly back from retirement again, showing he has lost none of his ability as the Ludlow bowlers were placed under siege. Such a shame the Shropshire League all time leading run scorer missed out on his century, he departed for 91 after Jason Summers struck 36, but the home side still cruised home by 7 wickets with over 20 overs remaining.

Shabbir and "Iffy" shine at Shelton

Finally, it's over to **Shelton** where the hosts still have work to do to retain their Premier status for 2027. The visitors **Whitchurch** have no such worries in 6th place and made early inroads into the home batting with Alex Heath impressing with the new ball after his omission for the last 2 weeks. Here he helped reduce Shelton to 24-4, and while there was something of a recovery for the hosts to reach 111-5, Shabbir Khan weaved more of his leg spin magic to derail the lower middle order. Overseas pro Navindu Vithanage kept going and his 79 no enabled a score of 150 ao to be posted, but Shabbir with outstanding figures of 12-3-29-4 stole the show, with Kash Hussain (3-38) and Heath (2-38) excellent support acts. The run chase wasn't without issues, but Iftikhar Khan played a fine hand and his 66 no saw the visitors home after they had looked vulnerable at 108-5, with Ross Griffiths (3-38) and Simon Jones (2-48) getting on the scoresheet in a 4 wicket win for Mike Robinson's side.