

# SCCL Premier Division Round Up Week 9

Week 9 review by Jamie Dowley

## WDL starts with a bang as Shrewsbury stun Allscott.

## Whilst Wem bowlers grab victory from the jaws of defeat.

Bottom placed **Shrewsbury 2nds** produced one of the performances of the season at home to **Allscott Heath** and gain their first win, as Kieran Gill and Rob Foster put together a match winning unbroken partnership of 205 as they totalled 270-4. Allscott, missing captain Callum Starling, lost Brad Thornton after 4.1 overs due to injury after he had struck twice and after George Hughes had made 39, Gill and Foster combined to score centuries. Gill with his 2<sup>nd</sup> of the season making exactly 100no, while Foster was more free scoring with 109no. Allscott would have still been confident of the chase, but with Ryan Fernando striking in the first over and then following it up with the big wicket of Jason Summers, that heaped the pressure on Kuldeep Devatwal. Jason Allen made 39 before being run out, and when Gill had the Indian pro caught for 41 only stand-in captain Luke Thornton with 28 got to double figures as the Allscott lower order was blown away by overseas player Gill who completed an incredible day ending with 5-31. A massive 24 points for Shrewsbury as they close the gap to the teams above them, while for Allscott it's been a miserable 14 days.

**Wem** would have been smarting from their 1 wicket defeat to Ludlow last week, and the visit of in-form **Shelton** produced something of a déjà vu at the interval after being bowled out for 129, just 5 more than they made last week. Again, Jim Astley shuffled the order but at 32-4 he was reliant on Steve Blenkinsop (44) to grind out a semi respectable score as Simon Jones (2-28), Sam Griffiths (3-22), Navindu Vithanage (2-21) and the recalled Ross Griffiths (3-25) all showed their class in a solid bowling display. With 55 overs to knock off the runs, Shelton took the cautious approach in the face of an outstanding spell from Alex Ollerenshaw who bowled unchanged for 15-9-14-2. With Tom Astley also bowling well it was left to Saleh Ahmed and Vithanage to see it home and with the score at 104-3 they needed 26 off 13 overs and the win was surely in the bag. A crucial run out of Vithanage for 43 by 15 year old Bobby Langton opened the window, and when Harry Astley dismissed Ahmed for 33 off 102 balls it was over to Langton's school mate Ralph Davies, the Worcester academy off spinner then produced a match winning spell as he rattled through the Shelton line up in short order ending with 4-35 and give his side victory in a game they were behind the curve for 95% of. A win for the ages for Wem, but Shelton will still be wondering how on earth they lost this one

It was **Ludlow's** annual Presidents Day for the visit of **Whitchurch** and a large crowd enjoyed fine hospitality in the sunshine (we managed to get an invite this year, thanks Phil!!), in a match that lasted 1 ball shy of 100 overs and produced a dramatic conclusion. Away captain Mike Robinson was in excellent form coming in, but had a huge stroke of fortune in the 2<sup>nd</sup> over as he was bowled shouldering arms to a Sam Bowen no ball (one of only 2 in the whole match!) The classy left hander made Ludlow pay in no uncertain terms, as from that moment he produced an outstanding century with crisp shots all around the ground ending with 125 off 119 balls. Other contributions from Raheel Khattak (47), Kunal Dabas (67) and a late flurry from Muhammad Fahim (24) ensured a mammoth total of 318-5 off the full 50 overs. All the home bowlers took some punishment although the aforementioned Bowen did recover to pick up 2-61. Ludlow raced out of the blocks in reply, with Nathan Engelbrecht impressing with an array of boundaries against an attack that was inconsistent with lines and lengths. However when Shabbir Khan bowled Engelbrecht for 59 and followed it up with 2 more (ending with 3-58), home captain Luke Miles dropped anchor and understandably played for the draw target of 223. This would have been comfortably achieved, in part due to 12 penalty runs (slow over rate), but when Azaad Rafiq (2-30) and Alex Heath nipped out some lower order wickets, Miles was unable to farm the strike and number 11 Kate Brazier was left to bat out the last over against Heath. The tall pace bowler found his line off the 5th ball and trapped Brazier LBW for a 6<sup>th</sup> straight win in the league, and 8<sup>th</sup> in all competition, with 24 points (would have been 14 but for the last wicket).



(Nathan Engelbrecht drives Alex Heath for 4, *photo Eliza Dowley*)

Another club hosting a Sponsors Day were league leaders **Quatt** who entertained a struggling **Sentinel**. I use the word “entertained “ in its loosest possible sense as this was a game that perhaps won’t live long in the memory bank of the watching clientele, which included SCCL President Gordon Smith, and League Administrator Liam O’Neill. Electing to bat first the visitors were soon in trouble at 17-3, with Jamie Lunn and Todd Henderson again leading the attack for Quatt with aplomb. Alex Johnson then dug in for 24, a score matched by Shane Gwilt as the Engines failed to get out of first gear albeit against an attack that looks as good as anything we have seen in the SCCL for some time. Henderson with 3-28 off 15 overs was the pick of the bowlers, Lunn took 2-21, while Scott Furber controlled an end with 2-11 off 10 as Sentinel batted the full 50 overs making 112-9. In reply, Ed Ashlin opened up with James Shaw and the former Shropshire all-rounder clean bowled both Quatt openers cheaply, before Nipun Karunanayake found some form with 36 while Alex Biddle saw it home with 52no to give the league leaders a maximum 24 points.

**St Georges** dominated their Telford derby against **Madeley** emerging as 180 run winners after declaring on 294-4. New signing Amritpal Singh top scored with 79no while Charitha Kumarasinghe (55), Waqas Ahmed (39), Ashish (32) and Zab Safi (47no) all made good contributions against an attack led by captain Mithun who bowled 15 overs for just 52 runs. The Dragons are blessed with a strong pace attack and after Shah Fiaz (2-44) had knocked over both openers cheaply, Ashish (3-49) and Ali Mustafa (4-19) went through the Madeley middle and lower order. Despite some resistance from Joe Buttery who made 29 the visitors were dismissed for 114 in a 24-2 points split win for the hosts.

Finally to Orleton Park, where despite cruising to the easiest of 9 wicket victories **Wellington** lost ground to the leaders after perhaps surprisingly electing to bowl first against **Newtown** therefore ensuring only a 20 point win was available. The away batting has had a certain vulnerability about it in recent weeks and the young Wellington bowling line up showed no mercy dismissing Ben Price’s side for 95. Ollie Smith with 3-23, Hugh Morris taking 4-25 and Matt Smmonds, 3-19 all meant an easy day for Dan Vaughans side, the captain leading from the front in the run chase with 56no while Simmonds completed a good afternoon's work, unbeaten on 25.

*Next week we see the North Shropshire derby as Whitchurch host Wem in a game that is always a competitive, spicy affair, while things don’t get any easier for Allscott as they try and arrest their slide at home to St Georges.*