

## No change at the top as Quatt and Whitchurch both take 20pts 5pts!

While at the bottom St Georges are the big winners as 19 pts now separate 5 teams

By Jamie Dowley

**Quatt** would have travelled to **Wem** slightly apprehensively on the back of recent performances and a home opening partnership of 86 would have done little for their nerves. Harry Chandler with a patient 48, and Sam Peate with 37 paved the way for a big score but from 130-2 with 20 overs remaining it failed to really materialise. That was in part due to some quality bowling from Kuldeep Diwan (3-19), while Craig Jones (2-43) and Alex Biddle (3-46) also pegged back the Wem batsmen so much so that a score of 203, while decent, did not look as formidable as it may have done. However, the Quatt top order (once again missing Tom Whitney) were "Astleyed", Jim with 3 wickets, Harry 2 and Tom taking the big scalp of Oliver Plank first ball. There was no way back from 56-6 despite Diwan (27) receiving some support from Scott Furber (20) as Quatt were dismissed for 135, Jim Astley ending with figures of 4-33 to give Wem their best win of the season.

News of Quatt's struggles no doubt travelled up the A49 where **Whitchurch** were in a battle of their own against **Ludlow**, who were keen to improve on their abysmal recent record at Heath Rd. It was a fairly inauspicious start by the Burway side with home quick Alex Heath, fresh from bowling to England Lions at Worcester this week, taking an early scalp along with a brace from Dan Bowen that left the visitors on 18-3. That brought captain Jason Oakes to the crease who finally got off the mark on his 4<sup>th</sup> league appearance at the ground. His 36, together with 46 from Sam Edwards and 28 from Chris Edenborough rebuilt an innings to the extent a competitive but not excessive score of 152 was achieved. Kash Hussain was the pick of the Whitchurch attack with 3-36 with a brace apiece for Shafiq and Shabir. Whitchurch's batting this season has relied heavily on Maz Hasnain, and when he was caught at slip by Oakes for 0, the chase looked in trouble. A solid 45 from Fahim Muhammed was useful as was 21 from Shafiq but wickets were tumbling at regular intervals, as first Louis Watkins (3-30), then Oakes (3-7), got into the home batting. Oakes then took a 2<sup>nd</sup> outstanding catch, and Joe Williams finished the job off in a match that contained a season high 9 lbws. A fine result for Ludlow who are playing a great hand in the Win Lose while major disappointment for Dan Bowen's side but no damage done in the title race as they matched Quatt's points haul on the day

**Madeley** had one of their best performances and results of the season at **Oswestry**, a result that gives them a comfortable cushion to the relegation places (potentially up to 4 teams may go down), but one that does nothing for the Morda Road side's survival chances. The home side managed a competitive 204 off the back of contributions from Josh Coleridge (39) and Henry Walker (29), while there was an excellent new ball spell from Martin Boyle, the Madeley captain finishing with 4-31. The visitors made a steady start putting 40 on for the first wicket, but when a cluster of wickets fell, they were indebted to a season best knock from Oli Davis. Batting at number 6, Davis received fine support from Mithun (29), and was then joined by younger brother Sam, the two Davis brothers seeing the job through with 5 overs to spare, Oli ending unbeaten on 67. A result that gives Madeley a 24 point cushion to the bottom 5, and seemingly looking fairly safe now.

Talking of crucial wins, they don't come much bigger than **St Georges** who are back among the pack fighting for their Premier lives after taking 20pts against **Allscott Heath**, who now have very little breathing room towards the bottom themselves. Once again it was overseas pro Faizan Khan

who impressed with a vital 79 , Khan receiving support from Cameron Watson and Azaad Rafiq who both struck 25. Jason Summers shone with 4-37, while Kuldeep Devatwal took 3-23 in a Dragons score of 192-9. Watson followed up his batting efforts with a fine five wicket haul, taking out the entire Allscott top order Watson finished with 5-52, while his new ball partner Faisal Khan went wicketless but nevertheless produced an excellent spell of control going for just 14 runs from 10 overs. Calum Starling did his best with 35 to keep the visitors in contention, but the innings ended at 157ao.

**Sentinel** stunned **Frankton** with a rapid run chase, knocking off 228 with 25 overs to spare in a brutal display of hitting by their teenage talents. Earlier the crowd at Hardwick Park were treated to some fine home batting with in form Jordan Parry top scoring with 65, while Tom Welty and Ian Whitticase added 45 and 40 respectively. Tom Griffiths and Rico Fourie, who are enjoying excellent White Ball seasons, took 6 home wickets between them while Jacob Binnersley also struck twice. It was Fourie and Binnersley who shone with the bat too, the overseas 18 year old Fourie striking a maiden century off just 81 balls, while Binnersley hit another quick 50 on his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday weekend to add to his ever growing reputation, as the Engines romped home by 8 wickets and look to have pretty much secured their Premier Division survival from being in a dicey position just 6 weeks ago.

**Shelton** inflicted a brutal defeat in short order on **Shrewsbury 2nds** as the visitors were shot out in 20 overs, captain Simon Jones showing the way with an outstanding new ball spell of 5-35 alongside Sam Griffiths who bowled equally well in taking 3-16. Shrewsbury who put on 18 for the first wicket promptly lost 8 wickets for 26 runs in a performance they will want to put behind them quickly. Nathan Sealy with 26 and Greg Smith 16no saw Shelton home by 8 wickets in 8 overs, a result that gets them over the 200 point mark and guarantees them premier division cricket for 2025.

Into Division One where a big win for **Newtown** ensured back to back defeats for **Bomere Heath** and put real distance between the sides with 6 games to go. David Laird with 84, 61 from Marco Malan, and 52no from Tom Anderson helped the Mid Wales side to a formidable 310. Despite 64 from Ryan Lockley, Bomere were dismissed for 178. There were also wins for Cound and Newport but right now it looks like the Welshmens title to lose..

*It's a huge Premier Division weekend next as we see the remaining WDL game take place on Bank Holiday Monday after another round of WL cricket on Saturday. 44 points up for grabs at the top and bottom of the table, with everything to play for in this most exciting of renewals. The 2024 season is really delivering...*