

The shocks keep coming as relegation threatened teams pack a punch...

By Jamie Dowley

As we approach the business end of the season, a huge double header weekend opened up both opportunities and threats for those teams at the foot of the Premier Division table with an enlarged trap door likely to be on offer at the end of the season..

Result of the day contender 1.

It looked a difficult set of fixtures for bottom side **Oswestry**, but at least they were at home for both weekend matches, the first of them against **Shelton** who have no such relegation worries. Missing key man Josh Darley meant that others had to step and none did so more than Henry Walker whose fine 74, assisted by 29 and 26 from Matthew Davies and Josh Coleridge helped set a reasonable total of 184. Ross Griffiths was back among the wickets taking 4-38 while Simon Jones continues to impress with 3-32. The visitors were missing overseas pro Nathan Sealy but Ben Matthews and Antonio Morris set up the run chase pretty well and at 143-5 it looked odds on an away win. Matthews then departed for 38 and the Shelton lower order somewhat capitulated, Henry Walker impressing with 2-15 after Joe Monk had taken 4-37. It all meant a 19 run win for the Bordermen, a huge win that lifts them off the bottom.

Result of the day contender 2

Joining in on the act were **Shrewsbury 2nds** who pulled off a big upset against **Wem**, a result that is all the more impressive without Zane Beattie who has now departed for home. That meant more pressure on Rob Foster but the experienced former Minor Counties player is really enjoying his first season back in the SCCL for over 20 years, and he struck his highest score since 2018 in making 85 as the county towners amassed 251, a score that Finn Jones (29) and Thomas Richards (44) also helped reach. Muhammed Irfan took 4-57, but in truth the Wem Pro has not been at his usual best for a few weeks now, either with bat or ball, and a dogged 47 from Sam Peate was the highlight of the Wem reply of 189ao, as Ed Prideaux closed out the game with 4-43.

Result of the day contender 3

St Georges travelled to the Burway to face **Ludlow** who were hot off the back of their best result of the season and welcomed back Luke Miles to a full strength team. Miles was quick off the blocks with a rapid 33 off 19 balls while Deon Patel hit the same score, with Will Sparrow going a little better with 42. That said a home total of 176 ao in 39 overs was rather short, in large measure due to an outstanding 5-18 from Faisal Khan. The Dragons roared (!), in reply a superb 75 off just 52 balls from Mo Khattak, set it up for pro Faizan Khan (40no) and an unbeaten 27 from captain Sam Morgan to see the visitors home in 33 overs. There is no team in the league who have more fight and competitive spirit in them than St Georges, can they defy gravity again this season? You wouldn't bet against it.

Not quite contenders for result of the day are **Allscott** but nevertheless they had a great trip to Park Street where they emerged as 64 runners in a high scoring affair versus **Madeley**. In recent weeks the visitors have been in something of a "doom spiral", but they broke out of it as Jason Summers and Kuldeep Devatwal both struck outstanding centuries as they smashed through the

300 barrier for the first time this season in making 310. A score of that ilk always looked formidable and so it proved although Madeley gave it a good shot, Shahzaib Shahzaib top scoring from number 7 with 62, while Oli Davis hit 42 as the hosts mustered a credible but insufficient 246. From seeming relatively safe just last week, Martin Boyle's team are again looking over their shoulder, while Allscott will be delighted to stop the rot of six straight losses.

For the first time this season **Frankton** are in bottom spot, as they became the 4th team in as many weeks to occupy last place. They were unable to prevent **Quatt** from getting back to winning ways after recent struggles, Scott Hale, Ryan Kruger and Jack Hutchinson all getting into the twenties but no further as the visitors to the Q Oval were shot out for 115, the ever reliable Alex Biddle the pick of the home attack with 4-10. The league leaders got the job done fairly comfortably for the loss of 4 wickets , Ryan Wheldon doing the most damage with 57.

Quatt still lead by 7pts from **Whitchurch** a lead that at most stages of the afternoon looked set in stone , but the north Shropshire side made heavy work of defending 271 against an understrength but very spirited **Sentinel** side who came 11 runs short of pulling off a remarkable run chase. Earlier in the day the away openers had put on a huge 176 for the opening partnership, Muhammed Fahim with 89 while the "magic man" Mas Hasnain compiled yet another superb hundred, carrying his bat for 126no. The rest of the Whitchurch batsmen didn't really kick on and it was only a late cameo from Elliott Bowen that got the total up. The key to the run chase was keeping wickets in hand as despite 2 early wickets for Alex Heath, in form overseas pro Rico Fourie (69), and then Ed Ashlin with assistance from Marc Lovelock kept the total just about within reach. When the latter departed for 36, Ashlin stepped on the gas and got the Engines closer but he then fell for an excellent 79, the last over started with 26 needed and although Dom Hanna hit the first 2 balls for 6, Shabir Khan was able to close out the game. Another big 20 for Dan Bowen's men as they keep the pressure up on Quatt.

So onto Monday and its back to Red Ball, Win Draw Lose cricket for one last hurrah. 24 points up for grabs for all sides and who could attempt to predict any outcome right now with 4 weeks to go. What a season this is.