

## Madeley win last ball thriller!

By Jamie Dowley

One of the games of the season took place at **Allscott Heath** where **Madeley** arrived off the back of some inconsistent performances, but produced a stunning one wicket win off the last ball of the 100 overs. Batting first the hosts were in trouble at 24-3, but Kuldeep Devatwal showed his class with a fine 95 as they eventually totalled a decent 229ao. Nadeem Ahmed with 3-40 was the pick of the bowlers for Madeley but Ahmed would have an even bigger part to play in the second innings. Solid contributions in the run chase from Andrew Laycock (28), Salim Ahmed (27) and a fine 61 for debutant Shahzaib Shazaib, set the game up, but with wickets falling at regular intervals it was impossible to call a winner. Devatwal enjoyed a fine all round game with 4- 29, and with 2 overs remaining and Madeley needing 7 to win, he somehow produced a wicket maiden. That left Callum Starling to bowl the last over to Nadeem, the first 5 balls yielding 4 runs but a final ball boundary gave the win to Martin Boyles men, "it's a much needed win after losing last week to George's , a real team effort with the top and middle order setting up the chase perfectly ", a happy skipper said afterwards.

It was also an incredible game of cricket at Church Rd as **St Georges** and **Ludlow** ended tied on 181 apiece after another 100 overs of competitive cricket. Thanks to 44 from Muhammad Zaheer and an unbeaten 55 from Muhammad Kattak, the Dragons were able to post 181, their second highest score of the season, this against a Ludlow side missing some key performers. Brendan Brady up from the 2nds and Jason Oakes shared 6 wickets for the visitors but it would have been a nervy away changing room when they lost 2 wickets early in the chase including captain Oakes who continues to endure a difficult time with the bat. Sam Edwards with 28 got them back in the game but at 113-6, it was left to the efforts of Sam Roberts with 75no to make the game close after Faisal Khan had taken 4-25 for the hosts. At the start of the last over, 8 wickets down 8 to win but with Joe Williams bowled off the first ball it was Roberts who got the tie hitting twos of both the last 2 balls. Ludlow Chair Phil Parker was happy with the result, "it was hell of a game and credit to Georges who fought all the way although I'm not sure our batsmen realised they could have tried for a 3rd run with fielders on the floor as the tie was already achieved anyway!. Still it was a great advert for the Shropshire League and we are happy with 14 points."

**Wem** at last went big with the bat and claimed a winning draw at home to **Shrewsbury 2nds**, with overseas pro Muhammed Irfan putting his recent troubles behind him with an outstanding day at the office. Firstly by scrambling an unbeaten 108, the last 4 overs yielding 60 , 48 of which were scored by the Pakistani, aided by Josh Gough, a player who always impresses in his fleeting appearances, striking a rapid 62no. Earlier in the innings there were contributions from Harry Chandler (43) and Steve Blenkinsop (36), while Zane Beattie with 3 wickets was the chief performer with the ball for Shrewsbury. It was also Beattie with the bat as he carried it for an excellent 73no off 130 balls, watching at the other end as superb performances from Tom Astley 3-22 and Irfan 5-44 both bowling the full 15 overs, took Wem within a wicket of victory before overs ran out. A great effort from Shrewsbury who still only took 4 points to Wems 18.

**Shelton** also impressed with the bat once again on the hybrids as they racked up an impressive 290-4 at home to **Oswestry**. All their top order made decent contributions, Pabel Saha (62), Viv John (43), Saleh Ahmed (74no) and Ben Matthews top scoring with 78. It was a tough day in the field for the bordermen, but they will be pleased with their batting reply, captain Josh Darley leading with 73, and Josh Coleridge making 59 as they comfortably avoided defeat and claimed a 7 point losing draw, Shelton take 14 to add to their healthy first half of season total.

For leaders **Quatt** it was business as usual as they made a quick dash to the north of the county and bagged all 24 points at **Frankton** in a game that only lasted 35 overs. Electing to bat first the hosts were soon in trouble as overseas professional Kuldeep Diwan once again ran riot proving unplayable in an opening burst of 7-13 and took his tally of league wickets to 38 league wickets at 6 apiece. Jed Edwards chipped in with 3-10 in a Frankton total of 63, an amount the visitors soon knocked off inside 10 overs with Tom Whitney 36no and Ryan Wheldon unbeaten on 21.

Quatt remain 18 points ahead of **Whitchurch** who warmed up for next weeks big head to head with a comfortable win at home to a **Sentinel** side , who always seem to find Heath Rd a daunting venue and will be starting to look over their shoulder in the league table. Both teams were missing key players but at 61-1 and 84-3 the game was evenly poised. The loss of a well set Niall Salisbury for 35 then sparked a huge collapse, once again legs pinner Shabbir Khan leading the home attack with a stunning 5-7, as the Engines ran out of gas at 108ao. Maz Hasnain (a player many locals believe with some justification is the greatest batsman in the history of Shropshire cricket), then cut loose, racing to 76no in a 9 wicket win, their 7th on the spin.

Talking of spin , all roads next week lead to the Quatt Oval, where the two outstanding bowlers in the SCCL go head to head. Its Kuldeep v Shabbir, and that mini battle could go a long way to deciding the destiny of the SCCL title for 2024.