

## **Ludlow stun leaders Wem in 10 wicket trouncing.**

After maximum points from the opening 2 games, **Wem** made the long trip to **Ludlow** and were comprehensively outplayed in a one sided encounter. Electing to bat first the visitors soon lost both openers cheaply and things failed to improve with the outstanding Luke Miles and Joe Williams turning the screw on the middle order. Miles with 2-17 and Williams 4-39, both bowling their full 15 over allocation. Harry Chandler was the one shining light with the bat, a gritty 123 ball 46, ensured the innings lasted until the 45<sup>th</sup> over. Wem opened up with Irfan but even last years OPOTY (overseas player of the year) couldn't make a breakthrough and Ludlow wrapped up the win inside 30 overs, man of the match Miles with 55no and Sam Alford an unbeaten 37. Ludlow chairman Phil Parker praised the contribution of Miles "Luke is very good cricketer and his bowling spell was exceptional in its control. After a tough opening week against Quatt things are now looking much brighter".

Speaking of Chairmen, it was good to see **Allscott Heath** chair Carl Starling back playing again as they welcomed old rivals **Frankton** to the ACG. It remains to be seen if this is a one off, but he will no doubt have been absolutely delighted with his sides thumping 242 run win, a result that lifts them into the top half of the table. Jason Summers again made a big contribution with 65, but star of the show with the bat was Kuldeep Devatwal who hit a stunning 129 off 122 balls including 7 sixes. Franktons bowlers wilted a little although Scott Hale stuck at the task with 3-79, but a chase of 296 was always going to be difficult. And so it proved as they were absolutely blown away by Callum Starling who took career best figures of 7-23 from 8.5 overs in a stunning display of seam bowling that is an early contender for Performance of the Season. Frankton departed for 54 all out and will be keen to lick their wounds in time for next weekends home double header.

It was a similar type of game at **Quatt** where the home juggernaut rolls on as they made it 3 from 3 and are now the new leaders, with a big win against **Oswestry**. Much like last week against Shrewsbury they hit the ground running and while there were no major contributions this time, Kuldeep Diwan (60), Alex Biddle (56), Oliver Plank (48), and Ryan Wheldon (40), all scored freely on there way to a big total of 274. Oswestry's chances of chasing it down probably rested on Josh Darley's shoulders but when he went cheaply at the hands of Diwan, it was left to Matty Richards (29), Thavisha Ranasinghe (25), and Keenan Oakley (25) to try and get somewhere near, but with Diwan in imperious form with the ball taking 5-33 off 14 overs, the North Shropshire side were shot out for 132 and left to ponder a heavy defeat on the long trip back north.

**Madeley** are up to second in the table after a thrilling last over win against **Shrewsbury 2nds**, who gave a much better account of themselves than in last weeks heavy loss to Quatt. After losing early wickets to leave them 40-3, with Martin Boyle (2-27) bowling well, Zane Beattie (32) found a willing partner in Harry Wassell (56), and a partnership of 81 went a long way to helping the visitors reach 181. Once again Mithun Jayawickrema earned his corn with 5-42. In reply, as like last week, Salim Ahmed batted through the innings, an obdurate 77no off 134 balls an excellent platform, but at 61-5 with dangerman Mithun back in the pavilion, Shrewsbury would have fancied their chances. With Wassell having a fine all round game taking 4-49 off 15 overs the game was in the balance, but Madeley took their time and didn't panic, Tahir Ahmed with 58 and Basim Ahmed a steady 20 off 42 both took their lead from Salim who saw them home by 4 wickets with 3 balls remaining to give Martin Boyle a dream start as captain.

There was real drama at Church Street in what was an early basement battle between **St Georges** and **Whitchurch** who have both made difficult starts in 2024. The bowlers were on top from ball one as the visitors found themselves in deep trouble at 8-4, Cameron Watson snaring three of the top order. The innings became a turgid affair, a period of 25 overs in the middle realising only 20 runs, but new captain Dan Bowen who has taken over from Mas Hasnain, will at least have been pleased to reach a semblance of a score in 91, knowing he had a very useful attack at his own disposal. Alex Johnson with 3-15 the pick of the home bowlers along with Watson who ended on 3-12. St Georges were out of the traps fast, determined to get the game over quickly and at 35-0 a home win seemed a certainty. But the introduction of off spinner Shafiq Ahmed and leggie Shabir Khan had a dramatic effect on the game as the ball started to fizz on a surface that was now “doing a bit”. 35-0 suddenly became 49-5 and wickets continued to fall at regular intervals. Captain Sam Morgans brave 56 ball innings, mostly with the aid of a runner was the last to fall with the score at 84. Shabir with a stunning performance taking 6-24 and Shafiq playing the junior role with 3-30. Whitchurch the victors by 7 runs, a much needed 24 points and one that left a relieved Chairman Iain Marsh to declare “our season starts here”.



Whitchurch Adan Hussain with a solid forward defence

The final game of the day was the much anticipated Shrewsbury derby with **Sentinel** hosting **Shelton**, a game that was beautifully poised until torrential rain ruined the contest. Steady contributions from Steve Gray (42), Rico Fourie (44) and James Shaw (47) helped the Sundorne men up to a competitive if not unchasable 207-7 off 50 overs. Spin was the main driver for Shelton with once again Ross Griffiths (surely one of the first names on the teamsheet every week?) 3-67, and Nathan Sealy 3-56, churning through 29 overs between them. At 54-2 with Ben Matthews bowled by quickie Oliver Wilson for 26, it could have gone either way until nature intervened. Both teams take 8 points.

Next week sees not only rearranged KO games on Thursday, but also our first double header of the season, Saturday's highlight is the big North Shropshire derby between Wem and Whitchurch, whereas Monday its another local game with Frankton entertaining Oswestry for the first time in many years.