



## **SOMERSET CRICKET LEAGUE**

### **Honorary Secretary's Report 2016**

**Prepared by Ray Hancock  
November 2016**

The Somerset Cricket League grew by one additional division in 2016. This increase was a result of the re-structuring of the WEPL and the fact that 80 teams returned to the 4 feeder leagues that comprise the lower echelons of the pyramid structure. In the Somerset Cricket League an overall number of 13 teams returned and the season started off with 118 teams in 12 divisions. The disappointing feature in 2016 was the gradual loss of teams throughout the season as they found it impossible to raise a viable number of players to fulfil the fixtures. On the positive side, the favourable climatic conditions throughout the summer meant that very few matches were cancelled due to the weather or pitch conditions!

Minehead Cricket Club 1<sup>st</sup> XI, which was a team that had dropped down from WEPL at the end of the 2015 season, won the newly named Premier Division of the SCL and with it the J C Bail Trophy. The West Somerset side had a convincing 58-point margin over Temple Cloud. Both teams were promoted to Tier 3 of WEPL (Somerset Division) because of their successful SCL season. The Brian Stockhill Trophy for the winners of Division 2 was taken for the second year running by Westlands Sports 1<sup>st</sup> XI with 558 points, a comfortable 21-point margin over Taunton St. Andrews 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. Again, for the second year running, Long Sutton 1<sup>st</sup> XI took the Bryan Lobb Memorial Trophy by winning Division 3 with 473 points from a reduced fixture list due to the withdrawal of Bishops Lydeard CC from the SCL. This total was 34 points clear of Taunton 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. Broadway & Horton won Division 4 from another reduced fixture list and took the Terry Mockridge Memorial Trophy with 479 points, while Frome 2<sup>nd</sup> XI was 31 points adrift. Trull CC with 482 points from only 16 games won the Shrubbery Hotel Trophy in Division 5 with a 25 points margin over Wellington 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. Crewkerne 1<sup>st</sup> XI won Divisions 6 for the second year running and had a comfortable points difference of 48 over second placed Hardington & West Coker.

East Huntspill CC totalled 525 points and won Division 7 North with the second highest winning margin of 63 points over Winscombe 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. In the Southern version of Division 7, Taunton Deane Cavaliers recorded 489 points and this team was 12 points clear of Sparkford 1<sup>st</sup> XI. Wembdon Wyverns with 498 points had the smallest winning margin of all divisions when the Bridgwater team won by 4 points over Kilmington & Stourton 2<sup>nd</sup> XI in the Northern section of Division 8. In the Southern version, Division 8 was won by Trull 2<sup>nd</sup> XI with 563 points and this club had the largest

winning margin of 93 points and the highest aggregate in all 12 divisions. There were only 7 teams in Division 9 North where Horrington CC upon its return to the SCL recorded a 51-point advantage over Taunton St. Andrews B. North Perrott Academy finished 20 points clear of Long Sutton 2<sup>nd</sup> XI in Division 9 South where only 8 teams completed the season.

The Sunday Independent Cup, which is awarded for the highest points' aggregate of all 12 divisions was won by Trull 2<sup>nd</sup> XI with 563 points. Trull Cricket Club also won the Ladbrokes Trophy for the 'Club of the Year' due to both teams winning their respective divisions. The Don Crouch Trophy, which is awarded for sportsmanship based on the scores recorded by the opponents, was won by Taunton Deane Crusaders with an average of 99.38% points from 18 matches. The AVCO Trust Young Player of the Year and the Glastonbury Mowers Cup for the best All Rounder will be awarded at the AGM.

The Team of the Month prizes were won by three clubs as Trull 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> XIs won June and August respectively, while Minehead 1<sup>st</sup> XI was drawn 'out of the hat' as together with Trull 2<sup>nd</sup> XI the teams had maximum average 35 points per game for July. The third club to benefit was East Huntspill with a win in May.

The individual performances for the season have been accurately catalogued in the various statistical pages on the website and those interested in this aspect of the game should consult the website ([www.somerset-cricket.org.uk](http://www.somerset-cricket.org.uk)) for this detailed information.

In a repeat of the 2015 season, several teams struggled to raise a team on some weeks and were forced into cancelling matches. East Coker and Bishops Lydeard 1<sup>st</sup> XI withdrew before the season started and immediately Divisions 3 & 4 were reduced to 9 teams. Further withdrawals by Wincanton 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> XIs, Evercreech, Leigh on Mendip 2<sup>nd</sup> XI, Shapwick and Polden 4<sup>th</sup> XI meant that the SCL had lost 7 teams since the fixtures for 2016 had been made. Some club representatives have expressed their concerns over regular cancellations and thus a proposal has been put forward to the AGM that following the third cancellation a further one will result in expulsion. I am not convinced that this is the correct course of action, so it will be interesting to listen to the debate at the Rules Meeting on November 21.

The Management Committee introduced a different structure for dealing with proposals for rule changes and additions at the EGM in April. The system, which proved to be both more efficient and popular, involved ballot slips with the details of the proposals being issued with the official notice of the AGM meeting. Club committees and/or the full club membership were then encouraged to discuss the proposal, record the club's vote on the ballot sheet and deposit the voting slip into the ballot box just prior to the EGM or AGM starting. Votes would be counted from 7.30 pm and the results announced towards the end of the meeting. Several club representatives had expressed the view that this system had produced a more accurate view from the membership. The Management Committee's initiative of 2015 regarding the loan scheme continued to prosper and it continues to receive much interest in cricketing circles.

The 2016 season was the first one since the WEPL re-structure. The effect on the SCL meant that several quality teams re-joined the League and clear promotion and relegation between the SCL and WEPL was established. Under the new rules, two teams being promoted and two teams being relegated became the norm. This change, which had been long overdue, will stimulate and encourage the teams in the upper echelons of the SCL and the lower ones of WEPL. With the removal of Tier 4 of WEPL at the end of season 2015, it was hoped that travelling distances would be less for the teams that have been absorbed into the upper divisions of the SCL. This assumption has proved to be true in most cases in 2016.

The Dinner and Presentation Evening at the Shrubbery Hotel was once again a very successful and enjoyable event. Most teams that won a trophy or prize were represented and 131 members, partners and guests sat down to a fine meal provided by the league's sponsor the Best Western, Shrubbery Hotel. James Hildreth from Somerset County Cricket Club was the principal guest and he joined Richard Walsh (Somerset County Gazette and Sunday Independent) in a 'question and answer' session before presenting the trophies to the various winning recipients.

The Management Committee investigated the establishment of a 'Flexi League' for next season for teams that struggled to commit to a full fixture list. The first two Saturdays and the last two Saturdays of the season, together with the Bank Holiday weekends and "Glastonbury Weekend" were deemed to be the 'problem' Saturdays. The rules for play in the Flexi League are still to be discussed, but a lesser number of overs, tea break, start & finish times, number of bowlers are aspects that will figure in the discussions. Stuart Roberts of Weston super Mare CC has kindly volunteered to get the reps of the five interested clubs together and sort out a programme. I have anticipated that the Flexi League will start on May 20 and fixtures have been made to reflect the 'free' Saturdays and give teams 10 or 11 matches next season.

The League's Welfare Officer, Amanda Counsell worked diligently to ensure that all clubs conformed with the requirements set down by ECB for a qualified Club Welfare Officer. In 2016, all clubs commenced the season with a CWO who had attained the ECB standards. However, as people leave and others take over, together with those who reach the end of a 3-year cycle, there is a need to ensure that Safe Hands/ Safe Hands Refresher and DBS are all in place for next season. Those requiring these qualifications should contact Amanda or the Somerset Cricket Board's Office at the County Ground.

Some miscellaneous items include the cricket ball contract which has been extended for another year, although there will be a price increase due to Brexit and the falling value of the £. The Grounds Committee reported that, in general, standards at some of the school/college grounds had improved. The Disciplinary Secretary, Ed Martin reported that disciplinary issues were at a minimum level and any concern over the use/misuse of social media had not materialised.

I conclude my remarks with thanks to the members of the Management Committee for the contributions they make towards the successful and efficient running of the business of the Somerset Cricket League.

Ray Hancock,  
Hon. Secretary SCL,  
November 2016.