



SOMERSET CRICKET LEAGUE

Honorary Secretary's Report 2017

**Prepared by Ray Hancock
November 2017**

The Somerset Cricket League lost 9 teams at the start and during the season in 2017. This decrease was mainly due to clubs failing to have sufficient personnel resources to regularly field a team. This meant that their management committees had to take the regretful decision to withdraw a team. At the time of writing this report it looks as though the SCL will comprise 106 teams in 2018 unless there are further withdrawals during the close season! 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!

Next season the SCL will be welcoming one new club 'Fitzhead Crusaders', who will be sharing the ground with their West Somerset League hosts in Fitzhead Village. Other new teams will be from three existing clubs with Peasedown St. John 2nds, Weston super Mare 5ths and Yeovil 3rds competing in divisions 7 & 8.

Frome Cricket Club 1st XI, which was a team that had dropped down from WEPL at the end of the 2016 season, took the J C Bail Trophy for the winners of the Premier Division of the SCL. This ensured immediate promotion back to WEPL. The North Somerset side had a convincing 69-point margin over Uphill Castle who in turn were 25 points ahead of 3rd placed Yeovil (ex-Westlands CC). All three teams were promoted to Tier 3 of WEPL (Somerset Division) due to the anomalies in the make up in the WEPL divisions after promotion and relegation had taken place. The Brian Stockhill Trophy for the winners of Division 2 was taken by Shapwick & Polden 2nd XI with 471 points, a comfortable 54-point margin over Winscombe 1st XI. Wells 1st XI took the Bryan Lobb Memorial Trophy by winning Division 3 with 553 points and recorded the greatest number of wins of any team in the season with 15 wins. At the end of the season, Wells CC was 20 points clear of Minehead 2nd XI. Trull 1st XI won Division 4 from another reduced fixture list of 16 games and took the Terry Mockridge Memorial Trophy with 510 points which was 38 points more than Lympsham & Belvedere 1st XI. Peasedown St. John CC with 515 points won the Shrubbery Hotel Trophy in Division 5 with a small 10 points margin over Crewkerne 1st XI.

The Division 6s were the first of the regionalised divisions and the Southern version was won by Yeovil 2nd XI with 543 points from Lydford 1st XI. In the North, Leigh on Mendip won a

competitive division comfortably with 501 points and were clear of Weston super Mare 3rds by 56 points. Spaxton CC totalled 522 points and won Division 7 North with the closest winning margin in 2017 of 8 points over Horrington, a team that will be promoted for the 2nd consecutive year. In the Southern version of Division 7, Long Sutton 2^{nds} were promoted in 2017 and topped the table with 463 points from only 16 games with a margin of 60 points over Trull 2^{nds}. In Division 8S Yeovil 3rd XI, a team that was new to the competition in 2017, won the division at the first attempt with 13 wins from 16 games finishing up with 486 points, a difference of 61 points from Lydford 2nd XI. In the North, Lympsham & Belvedere 2nd XI, another new team which represented the combination of two clubs, recorded a massive 583 points with 14 wins and no losses.

The Sunday Independent Cup, which is awarded for the highest points' aggregate of all 12 divisions was won by Lympsham & Belvedere 2nd XI with 583 points. It is interesting to note that the L & B clubs amalgamated after the 2016 season so 4 teams became 2 teams! A similar situation may be considered by others as the number of participants in the game continues to fall. The Ladbrokes Trophy for the 'Club of the Year' was won by the newly named Yeovil Cricket Club due to the 2^{nds} and 3^{rds} winning divisions 6S & 8S respectively and the 1st XI finishing 3rd in the Premier division and gaining promotion to WEPL. The Don Crouch Trophy, which is awarded for sportsmanship based on the scores recorded by the opponents, was won by Wedmore 1st XI with an average of 97.06 points per game. The Committee determines the Young Player of the Year and the best All Rounder. In 2017, this was judged as Matt Kingdom of Taunton Deane 2nds & 3rds who won the AVCO Trust Young Player Trophy and Reece Croker of Frome CC playing in the Premier Division of the SCL who took the Glastonbury Mowers All Rounders Award.

The Team of the Month prizes were won by four different clubs and were distributed at the start of September to Lympsham & Belvedere 2nd XI (May); Yeovil 2nd XI (June); Wells 1st XI (July); Shapwick & Polden 2nd XI (August). The prize is a Getaway Break at a Best Western Hotel in the UK for two people sharing a twin or double room with en-suite bathroom, plus table d'hote dinner and full English breakfast (bed and breakfast only in London) for two nights between now and the New Year.

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) for this detailed information.

In a repeat of the 2016 season, several teams struggled to raise a team on some weeks and were forced into cancelling matches. Bagborough, Fitzhead and Baltonsborough 1st XIs withdrew before the season started and immediately Divisions 2, 4 & 7S were reduced to 9 teams. Further withdrawals by Huish & Langport 3rd XI and Crewkerne 3rd XI meant that the SCL had lost a further 5 teams since the fixtures for 2017 had been made.

The Management Committee introduced a further modification to the structure for dealing with proposals for rule changes at the AGM. The system, involved a special 'rules meeting' for discussion only and ballot slips would then be issued with the official notice of the AGM meeting. Hopefully, clubs would then discuss the proposal, record the club's vote on the ballot sheet and deposit the voting slip in the ballot box at the AGM. The results will then be announced at the end of the meeting. Several club representatives have expressed the view that this system will produce a more accurate view from the membership. The Management Committee's initiative of 2015 regarding the loan scheme continued to operate, but a system to have a website page with availability needs investigation.

The Management Committee established a 'Flexi League' for 2017 but unfortunately it did not work as was envisaged. Many fixtures were not played, although Weston super Mare 5th XI tried every week to do so, but without a commitment from the other teams even their efforts dwindled. One positive outcome has been that the Weston club has put its team into the SCL proper.

The appointment of Club Welfare Officers is a growing area of concern as cricket addresses the problems recently publicised in other sports. The Committee expects that this aspect of a club organisation is put high on the clubs' regular agendas. The League's Welfare Officer, Amanda Counsell has worked diligently to ensure that all clubs conform with the requirements set down by ECB for a qualified Club Welfare Officer. It is important that as people leave, and others take over, together with those who reach the end of a 3-year cycle, there is a requirement to ensure that Safe Hands/ Safe Hands Refresher, SPC certification and DBS are all in place for the season. Those requiring these qualifications should contact Amanda or the Somerset Cricket Board's Office at the County Ground.

The League's Dinner and Presentation Evening at the Shrubbery Hotel was another very successful and enjoyable event. It was quite remarkable in that both the men's and women's Somerset County Cricket Club captains were the principal guests. Tom Abell and Sophie Luff joined Richard Walsh (Somerset County Gazette and Sunday Independent) in a 'question and answer' session before presenting the trophies to the various winning recipients.

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 2017.