



SOMERSET CRICKET LEAGUE

Honorary Secretary's Report 2018

**Prepared by Ray Hancock
November 2018**

The Somerset Cricket League again lost several teams including Glastonbury, Bridgwater Sports and Ashbrittle during the playing season. The two former clubs went out of existence at adult level, while the West Somerset team decided to concentrate its resources by participating in the WSCL with its two remaining teams. At the time of writing this report it looks as though the SCL will comprise 104 teams in 2019 unless there are further withdrawals during the close season. However, on the brighter side, Taunton Deane CC has entered a fifth team and Ilminster CC a fourth XI. 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!

Taunton Deane's 2nd XI became one of only six 2nd XIs that will play in Tier 3 of WEPL in 2019 when the team won J C Bail Trophy for the winners of the Premier Division of the SCL. The Taunton team had a comfortable 16-point margin over Street 1st XI which in turn had a convincing 40-point margin over 3rd placed Wellington. Instead of the usual promotion of two teams, 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 'knock-on' effect with the loss of Ashbrittle was that our Premier Division needed two additional teams even before promotion and relegation issues could take place!

The Brian Stockhill Trophy for the winners of Division 2 was taken by Wells 1st XI with 525 points, a comfortable 34-point margin over Butleigh 1st XI. Trull 1st XI took the Bryan Lobb Memorial Trophy by winning Division 3 with a massive accumulation of 610 points and in the process recorded the greatest number of wins of any team in the season with 17 wins in 18 games. Ilminster 2nd XI finished in second place in this division. At the end of the season, North Perrott 2nd XI was 10 points clear of Uphill Castle 2nd XI and took the Terry Mockridge Memorial Trophy with 510 points. Castle Cary 1st XI with 515 points won the Shrubbery Hotel Trophy in Division 5 with the narrowest of points margin in any division when the team was just 3 points clear of Yeovil 2nd XI.

The Division 6s were the first of the regionalised divisions and the Southern version was won by Taunton Deane 3rd XI with 548 points from Trull 2nd XI in second place. In the North, Wedmore 1st XI won a depleted division of only 9 teams with 483 points and this was achieved by creating a large margin of 45 points over second placed Horrington CC.

Butleigh 2nd XI totalled 562 points and won Division 7 North with the largest winning margin in any division in 2018 of 77 points over Frome 3rd XI., a team that only joined the League at the start of the 2018 season. Another new team in 2018, Fitzhead Crusaders won Division 7 South with 540 points and had a 14-point margin over second placed Taunton St. Andrews 'B' XI (4th XI).

In Division 8 South, Ilminster 3rd XI, won the division with 531 points, while local rivals South Petherton 2nd XI finished the season 17 behind them. In the North, Cranmore 2nd XI won the division over Churchill 2nd XI where teams played only 14 other teams due to a limited number in the division and a further team withdrawal during the season.

The Sunday Independent Cup, which is awarded for the highest points' aggregate of all 11 divisions was won by Trull 1st XI with a massive total of 610 points. The Ladbrokes Trophy for the 'Club of the Year' was also won by Trull CC as the 2nd XI finished second in Division 6 South. In recent years the Trull club has become one of the more progressive clubs in the League's area. Well done Trull! The Don Crouch Trophy, which is awarded for sportsmanship based on the scores recorded by their opponents, was won by Middlezoy 2nd XI. The Committee determines the Young Player of the Year and the best All Rounder. In 2018, it found difficulty in splitting the qualities of Oliver Beale (Wellington) and Dan Parsons (Taunton Deane) so the two young cricketers shared the AVCO Trust Young Player Trophy. Damian Price of Ilton CC 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 Ilton (May); Taunton St. Andrews 2nd XI (June); Cheddar 1st XI (July); Taunton Deane 4th 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'hôte 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 ECB website and those interested in this aspect of the game should consult the website (<https://somcl.play-cricket.com/>) for this detailed information.

Play-Cricket.com was adopted by the League after many years of using its own dedicated website, which in the early days, was well ahead of its time. This website had been developed by John Squirrell and the Committee was delighted when John agreed to stay on as Website Manager using his unique skills to meet the challenges offered by the ECB's play-cricket website. Major changes in the administration and the results service of the league were also changed using play-cricket and the scope offered by this new system was 'worldwide'.

The recently conceived concept of a ‘Rules Meeting’ took place in 2017, but there were so few proposals this year that the meeting was cancelled and the very few proposals went straight to the AGM for a decision.

Drawing up the fixtures list continues to be a difficult job. Matching home & aways coupled with ground unavailability on some Saturdays has made it a time-consuming task. Furthermore, the low numbers of teams in divisions 8 N&S has meant that imagination is required to give all 14 teams 18 fixtures!

The management committees of all cricket clubs must appoint properly qualified Club Welfare Officers who in turn should sit on the main club committee. These appointments have become a necessity in this age of safeguarding and protecting children. Clubs are responsible for all safeguarding issues in cricket and are very well supported by a team of experts based at Lords, Edgbaston and Loughborough University. 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 Counsell, SCL’s League Welfare Officer or the Somerset Cricket Board’s Office at the County Ground.

This year has seen an increase in the number of disciplinary issues that the Committee has had to deal with. Bad language, dissent aimed at the officials and opponents, mis-use of social media sites, together with bad behaviour often witnessed by the spectators, have raised concerns amongst the committee members. The Committee has resolved to take the strongest possible action against individuals and clubs that exhibit bad behaviour in future seasons.

The League’s Dinner and Presentation Evening at the Shrubbery Hotel was another very successful and enjoyable event. This year the principal guests, Craig and Jamie Overton, 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 2018.