



**THE BEST WESTERN
SHRUBBERY HOTEL
SOMERSET CRICKET LEAGUE**

Honorary Secretary's Report 2014

**Prepared by Ray Hancock
November 2014**



THE BEST WESTERN SHRUBBERY HOTEL

SOMERSET CRICKET LEAGUE

Honorary Secretary's Report 2014

The Somerset Cricket League has enjoyed another successful season and with the favourable climatic conditions this summer, the playing of cricket has again been a winner. Cancellations due to weather/pitch conditions have been few, but a worrying trend of other cancellations, as detailed below, have blighted the copy book. Disciplinary issues have been negligible, while only a few minor technical issues caused the disciplinary group to exercise their responsibilities.

North Perrott Cricket Club won the J C Bail Trophy, which is awarded to the winners of Division 1, with 520 points and the club will play in the Somerset Division of WEPL next season. The club lost only one game, drew one, tied one and had two matches cancelled. Ashbrittle was 56 points behind, but due to the withdrawal of Westlands 1st XI from the Somerset Division of WEPL at the start of the season, this team was also promoted to WEPL after an exciting final match against Temple Cloud that determined the second place. The Brian Stockhill Trophy for the winners of Division 2 with 476 points was taken by Cheddar 1st XI with a comfortable 30 point margin over Watchet. Westlands 1st XI took the Bryan Lobb Memorial Trophy by winning Division 3 with 472 points, this total was 39 points clear of East Coker. Having joined the SCL from the Bristol & District League at the start of the season, Lympsham Cricket Club made an immediate impact by winning Division 4 and taking the Terry Mockridge Memorial Trophy with 524 points, a considerable points margin of 48 over second placed Frome 2nd XI. Banwell & Churchill CC with 521 points won the Shrubbery Hotel Trophy in Division 5 with a huge 75 points margin over Trull 1st XI. This team (B & C) had won Division 6 in the previous season so teams in Division 4 need to be aware of a potential hatrick of wins! In Division 6, the winners with 529 points were Peasedown St. John with a large margin of 60 points over second placed Butleigh 2nd XI. Peasedown is another team on a hatrick of wins as they triumphed in 2013 by winning Division 7.

Winscombe 2nd XI totalled 519 points and won Division 7 with the narrowest of margins in 2014 with a gap of only 2 points over Taunton St. Andrews 'A'. Evercreech with 536 points amassed the largest points total of the season and won the North/East version of Division 8 with an equally high margin of 75 points over second placed Barrington 2nd XI. In the South/West section, Division 8 was won by Middlezoy 2nd XI with 509 points and this club had a modest lead of 12 points over second placed North Petherton 2nd XI. There were only 9

teams in both sections of Division 9 where the Banwell & Churchill club had a second success when the club's 2nd XI won the North/East version with 449 points, a margin of 54 points over the new 2nd XI from Lympsham. The South/East area was won by Trull 2nd XI with 463 points, a difference of 42 over Crewkerne 2nd XI. The Crewkerne club had re-joined the SCL at the start of the 2014 season after an absence of four years.

The Sunday Independent Cup, which is awarded for the highest points' aggregate of all 11 divisions was won by Evercreech with 536 points. Banwell & Churchill Cricket Club won the Ladbrokes Trophy for the 'Club of the Year' due to both teams winning their respective division. The Don Crouch Trophy, which is awarded for sportsmanship based on the scores recorded by the opponents, was won jointly by Broadway and Horton 2nd XI and Taunton St. Andrews 'B'. These teams, both of which played 13 games and recorded 130 points, had matches cancelled by weather/pitch conditions but for no other reason. Three other teams also had 100% marks (Wells 2; Chard 750 and North Perrott 3), but they had played fewer games, did not drop a single sportsmanship point throughout the season, but were guilty of cancelling matches for failure to raise a team. The AVCO Trust Young Player of the Year was awarded to 18 year-old Jack Luff of Lympsham CC. Jack scored 623 runs at an average of 77.9 for the 1st XI and bowled 143 overs and took 36 wickets at an average of 11.89. Mark Tilley of Curry Rivel won the Glastonbury Mowers Cup for the best All Rounder. He scored 605 runs at an average of 75.6 and took 35 wickets for 376 runs at an average of 10.74. The Sub-Committee was impressed with the quality of the other nominations, but finally concluded that these two players were very worthy winners of the 2014 awards.

The Team of the Month prizes were handed out by Stuart Shepherd, the President and sponsor of the prize at the Presentation evening. In the event, the five prizes, each worth about £250, were won by five clubs as nothing could separate Banwell & Churchill 1st XI and Watchet 1st XI for the month of July. Peasedown St. John, Cheddar 1st XI and Evercreech gained the most points in May, June and August respectively. Stuart, in his presentation remarks, suggested that the prizes could be used to raise club funds or reward a club stalwart or be enjoyed by a club member in a local draw.

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.

During the 2014 season, only Ilminster B found it impossible to continue with its fixtures and reluctantly had to withdraw from Division 9 SE. However, a number of other teams struggled to raise a team on some weeks and were forced into cancelling matches. In total, 65 matches were cancelled due to one side being unable to field a team and this represented 6.8% of the scheduled games being unnecessarily lost. North Perrott and Ashbrittle 1st XIs gained promotion to WEPL, while Winscombe 1st XI and Glastonbury 2nd XI returned to the SCL, the latter by special arrangement. The SCL has been delighted to welcome two 3rd XIs from Westlands and Cheddar for season 2015 and consequently the League now comprises 66 clubs with 108 teams. A special additional set of fixtures has been written to give teams in the two Division 9s a full fixture list of 18 matches. The placing of two new clubs in 2014 proved to be correct as Lympsham 1st XI won Division 4 and the 2nd XI were promoted as runners up in Division 9NE. Likewise, Crewkerne's two teams gained promotion from Divisions 7 and 9SE.

The SCL still has a major concern about the facilities that are (or are not) available at some grounds and it will be addressing the problem urgently over the winter period. The minimum acceptable standard should be adjacent toilet provision (within 50 yards of the boundary), proper shelter for players during inclement weather - a portable gazebo is a suggestion - chairs, a scorer's table and a fully stocked 1st aid kit. Failure to achieve these minimal standards could result in teams being suspended from the League until the problem has been addressed successfully or at worst, expelled from it.

The Management Committee has looked at ways of spreading the administrative load, particularly in the light of a constant barrage of emails emanating from club sources and the regular challenging of rules. Individual committee members will be undertaking specific roles in relation to complaints, sportsmanship and other contentious issues. The promotion of club welfare activities and tightening up of the correct certification of Club Welfare Officers has become the responsibility of the League's Welfare Officer. The SCL will strongly support the various ECB initiatives relating to proper qualification of Club Welfare Officers, including attendance at 'Safe Hands' workshops, a SPC qualification and an up to date DBS check

This season there has been an improvement by club officials in carrying out the procedure for inputting and verifying results, but simple avoidable errors still caused some clubs to lose £s and points. Next year, a number of administrative processes will be changing. Firstly, the Club Details Sheets that are required to be submitted no later than January 31st will be replaced by an electronic submission. The full details of all club officers must be registered on the Club Details section on the website instead of the paper copy of the club details sheets. No results pads will be issued and the white top sheet will no longer be needed to be sent to the Results Secretary. However, both clubs will be required to keep a full record of the match statistics for the inputting and verifying stages. This year the Results Service on the SCL website has continued to provide an excellent service and it is the envy of many other similar leagues.

The League's Dinner and Presentation Evening at the Shrubbery Hotel was once again a very successful and enjoyable event. All teams that won a trophy or prize were represented and 175 members, partners and guests sat down to a fine meal provided by our sponsor and host Stuart Shepherd. Steve Kirby from Somerset County Cricket Club was the principal guest. Richard Walsh (Somerset County Gazette and Sunday Independent), our usual interviewer was away, so Matt Counsell, a Somerset Cricket Board Administrator and a member of the Management Committee, took over the role and did a fine job in conversation with Steve. Steve gave an interesting and humorous insight into the life and times of a county cricketer before answering a number of questions posed by the people at the function. He then presented the trophies to the various winning recipients. A draw took place prior to the trophy presentation, with prizes comprising bottles of champagne, chocolates, biscuits, signed Steve Kirby and James Hildreth shirts and cricket equipment that had been kindly donated by Mr Najmi of Lords International. Mr Najmi also presented a bat to the 'best batter in the League', his description rather than mine. However, there was no doubt about the obvious recipient that I chose, Gordon Warlow of North Perrott who scored 856 runs at an average of 85.6 and included a knock of 101 n.o in that total. These runs were scored in the SCL's top division.

The ECB player survey has given an excellent insight into the feelings and needs of today's players. The Management Committee received an early pre-view of the results and were so impressed with the quality of the process and the fascinating results that it asked Andy Fairbairn, the County's Cricket Development Manager to give an illustrated presentation at the AGM. I hope that club officials who attend the AGM will take a careful note of the facts that Andy will elaborate on, before voting in some in the relevant rule proposals.

The Management Committee has again proposed the use of two new balls in the game for all matches. It has managed to keep the price of a cricket ball at £8, which is much lower than many other leagues that use a comparable ball. The Committee feels that it makes a fairer game when both teams can enjoy the use of an identical facility. ie The ball! At the last AGM in 2013 this proposal was lost by just one vote and bearing in mind that this change required a two-thirds majority, the majority of SCL teams wanted the compulsory 'two balls per match'. Many clubs already take the voluntary option to provide two new balls, let us hope that this proposal goes through this time.

The Committee continues to use its own independent panel of umpires and clubs that have benefitted from the support of these dedicated officials are full of praise for the system. We would hope to increase the size of the panel and anyone who is interested should make contact with Derek Hicks, who arranges the SCL umpiring system. There are courses for umpires during the close season and anyone who would like to join a course should contact Derek or me and we will pay 50% of the cost of the course.

I should like to finish by paying tribute to members of the Committee who give so freely of their time. David Derrick, Amanda Counsell and Toby Strong ensure that the results service gives all users an up to date picture of results, tables and other statistics. Of course, they can only provide this up-to-date service if clubs carry out their part of the process by accurate reporting on time! John Squirrell, the website manager, continues to offer a great service to all users with the management of the website and the weekly results service. I am most grateful to John for the most efficient way he keeps it functioning. The Committee works most efficiently and members have contributed in many ways. Attendance has been good at meetings and all members have played an important part in the League's business. Derek Hicks has ensured that umpires were regularly available for Division 1 games and together with the Grounds Committee Chairman, Toby Strang and committee member Martin King will continue to check and monitor the standards for grounds and 'off pitch' facilities. Ian Latchem worked his way through a season of results sheets to ensure that the initial calculations were correct, while Tom Packman carried out the financial aspects and other tasks in his usual efficient manner. The Chairman, Malcolm Fox has maintained a close watch on all League activities throughout the year and has also been a key figure in the wider regional and national scenes.

Ray Hancock,
Hon. Secretary SCL,
November 2014.