



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

## **Honorary Secretary's Report 2015**

**Prepared by Ray Hancock  
November 2015**

The Somerset Cricket League continued to prosper in 2015 and players in all eleven divisions enjoyed favourable climatic conditions throughout the summer. The main reason for cancellations was some clubs' inability to raise a team, a worrying trend that started in previous seasons and picked up momentum in 2015. Disciplinary issues increased in the season and these were highlighted by the revised 'Don Crouch' marking system (the sportsmanship criteria).

Cheddar Cricket Club, which was promoted at the start of the season, won the J C Bail Trophy. This trophy is awarded to the winners of Division 1 and the team accumulated 474 points from only 16 matches due to the late withdrawal of North Curry from the top division. Temple Cloud CC was just 16 points behind. The Brian Stockhill Trophy for the winners of Division 2 was taken by Westlands Sports 1<sup>st</sup> XI with 508 points, a comfortable 31 point margin over Barrington 1<sup>st</sup> XI. Long Sutton 1<sup>st</sup> XI took the Bryan Lobb Memorial Trophy by winning Division 3 with 579 points, this total was 88 points clear of Lympsham 1<sup>st</sup> XI and was the highest points accumulation in any division in 2015. Fitzhead Cricket Club won Division 4 and took the Terry Mockridge Memorial Trophy with 537 points, while South Petherton 1<sup>st</sup> XI was 22 points adrift. Peasedown St. John CC with 403 points from only 14 games won the Shrubbery Hotel Trophy in Division 5 with a slender 3 points margin over Belvedere 1<sup>st</sup> XI. This team (Peasedown St. John) had won Divisions 6 and 7 in the previous two seasons so teams in Division 4 need to be aware! In Division 6, the winner with 533 points was Crewkerne 1<sup>st</sup> XI with the smallest winning margin of all winners as they secured the top spot by just 2 points over second placed Taunton St. Andrews A (3<sup>rd</sup> XI).

North Petherton 2<sup>nd</sup> XI totalled 541 points and won Division 7 with a modest winning margin of 5 points over Evercreech. Temple Cloud 2<sup>nd</sup> XI with 556 points amassed a large points total and won the North/East version of Division 8. with a margin of 55 points over second placed Watchet 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. In the South/West section, Division 8 was won by Westlands Sports 2<sup>nd</sup> XI with 576 points and this club had a huge lead of 59 points over second placed Trull 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. There were only 9 teams in both sections of Division 9 where Westlands Sports had a third success when the club's 3<sup>rd</sup> XI won the South West version with 445 points, a margin of 14 points over Long Sutton 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. In the North West area Cranmore 2<sup>nd</sup> XI won with 381 points, a margin of 17 points over Weston s Mare 4<sup>th</sup> XI.

The Sunday Independent Cup, which is awarded for the highest points' aggregate of all 11 divisions was won by Long Sutton 1<sup>st</sup> XI with 579 points. Westlands Sports Cricket Club won the Ladbrokes Trophy for the 'Club of the Year' due to all three of the club's teams winning their respective division, a feat that had never been done before. The Don Crouch Trophy, which is awarded for sportsmanship based on the scores recorded by the opponents, was won by Barrington 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. Barrington recorded an average of 97.61% points from 18 matches. The AVCO Trust Young Player of the Year was awarded to Ollie Phillips of Long Sutton CC. Ollie scored 452 runs at an average of 45.2 for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI and kept wicket in a very competent manner. Steve Redwood of Barrington was awarded the Glastonbury Mowers Cup for the best All Rounder. He scored 870 runs at an average of 58 and took 29 wickets for 399 runs at an average of 13.76.

The Team of the Month prizes were won by three clubs as Long Sutton 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> XIs won May and July respectively, while Trull 2<sup>nd</sup> XI was drawn 'out of the hat' as three teams – including South Petherton 1<sup>st</sup> XI and Belvedere 1<sup>st</sup> XI had maximum points averages for July. The third club to benefit was Baltonsborough with a win in August.

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.

During the 2015 season, a number of teams struggled to raise a team on some weeks and were forced into cancelling matches. In the second half of the season the Management Committee reluctantly had to expel both Glastonbury Lambs and Wedmore 3<sup>rd</sup> XI from Divisions 9 for failing to fulfil yet another fixture after a written warning. North Curry, Horrington and Bishops Lydeard 2<sup>nd</sup> XI withdrew before the season started and as a result of all these failings, teams found themselves with a reduced list of fixtures. The Management Committee has considered all aspects of these cancellations and as a result has put forward a proposal to the AGM that following the third cancellation any further one will result in expulsion.

The SCL's concern about the facilities at some grounds has brought positive action in most cases with additional provisions at the council/school venues. Failure to achieve these minimal standards would have resulted in teams being suspended from the League. However, all those venues under question will be used in 2016.

The Management Committee took up the ECB initiative of keeping players in the game and 'getting the game on'. I was able to find some examples of 'player loan schemes' and the SCL introduced its own loan arrangement in 2015. In excess of 35 players participated in the scheme and helped other clubs fulfil a fixture that otherwise might have been lost. The loan scheme has now received much credit in cricketing circles and other competitions have been in contact to copy it.

The major change in the season has been the build up to the WEPL re-organization. The process started in late 2014 when the WEPL Committee together with the 3 Cricket Development Managers produced a 'blue print' for the re-structure of the competition. Representatives from the 4 feeder leagues then became involved and finally a proposition that was put to the WEPL membership resulted in the 150 teams being reduced to 70 teams for competitive cricket in 2016. A Premier League, two regional divisions at Tier 2 level and four 'county' divisions in Tier 3 will comprise 66 1<sup>st</sup> XIs and the 4 strongest 2<sup>nd</sup> XIs. As a result, 15 teams returned to the SCL and will compete in our upper divisions next year.

The League's 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 135 members, partners and guests sat down to a fine meal provided by our sponsor and host Stuart Shepherd. Peter Trego 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. During the presentations, awards were made to the long serving umpires in recognition of their service to the SCL.

The independent panel of umpires that has been an integral part of the SCL since its inception in the early 70s will cease to exist next year. Instead, umpires will be provided by SACO (Somerset Association of Cricket Officials) and be appointed by that organisation to matches in Division 1 & 2. The downside of the change is in the price increase. Whereas clubs have paid £24 per umpire in the past, they will now be charged £35 by SACO. The SCL Management Committee has agreed, in the transitional year of 2016, that it will help the Division 1 & 2 clubs with a £5 subsidy thus making the charge for an umpire just £30 next season.

The Management Committee's proposal to use two new balls for all matches was agreed at the AGM in 2014 and proved to be a positive move which made the contest a much fairer one. It remains to be seen if a proposition that will go to the AGM to have a superior ball for Division 1 & 2 games, is supported. I anticipate that the price of £18 per ball may have some bearing on the result of the vote, particularly when compared with the price for the other 10 divisions still at £8 per ball!

I should like to finish by thanking the members of the Committee who give so freely of their time. The successful administration and organisation of the SCL is in good hands and the contributions that these members make should not be underestimated.

Ray Hancock,  
Hon. Secretary SCL,  
November 2015.