

2012 Season

Abergavenny Strangled by Spin

Despite an excellent opening stand of 102 between Will Glenn and a superb knock of 70 from Greg Fury, Abergavenny went down to defeat to Penarth in their opening game in 2012.

After losing the toss, Abergavenny suprisingly found themselves asked to bowl first, and made a steady start through Dan Cooke and Joe Hrastelj, and struck in the 5th over after a brilliant stumping by Fury, standing up to Cooke, to remove the dangerous Sidford. Will Ford was given an early bowl and immediately found some turn on a helpful surface. However, a solid second wicket partnership was beginning to develop when skipper James Schofield struck in his third over, bowling Thomas through the gate. Doug Spencer ran out Sam Docherty shortly afterwards with some sharp work at midwicket, and Schofield snared Abergavenny old boy JJ Davies to leave Penarth 89-4 after 26 overs. However, despite the dismissal of Rhys Morgan to leave Schofield with figures of 3-38, Abergavenny couldn't remove the obdurate Nick Morgan, who made a very good 87 on a surface that required patience and watchfulness, before being trapped LBW by Ford. His innings set up a last over assault from James Docherty, who struck 20 from the final four balls of the innings from an otherwise assured Hrastelj, to guide Penarth to 227-7.

Abergavenny made a superb start in reply, with Fury showing the benefits of regular nets over the winter in an innings that demonstrated the fluency and form he showed in the 2010 season that saw him named as League Player of the Year. With Glenn, the pair led Abergavenny to the dominant position of 102 from 19 overs, before Glenn was caught in the deep. Shortly afterwards came the turning point of the match as Schofield ran out Fury, before being dismissed himself for just three. From a position of strength, Abergavenny suddenly stagnated as the Penarth spinners restricted them to just seven runs from eight overs. Spencer was eventually dismissed, shortly followed by youngster Lewis Holley. However, the arrival of Cooke and the return of the seamers, Abergavenny retained a chance, as the score moved to 163-5, requiring a further 64 from the last seven overs. Unfortunately Cooke was caught at mid-off and the innings subsided thereafter, and Abergavenny were dismissed for 177.

So a disappointing start to the season for Abergavenny, who will hope the rest of their batting order finds the sort of form showed by Fury and Glenn in order to build on the good work showed by the bowling and fielding unit and pick up their first victory away at Pontypridd next week



Pontypridd 238-5 D.Cooke 3-61

Abergavenny 179 All out W.Glenn (33)

Abergavenny Up And Running In The Welsh Cup

Aber picked up their first victory of the season in an enthralling last over finish to their Welsh Cup tie at home to Llantwit Major Cavaliers

Aber won the toss and elected to bowl, hoping to take advantage of any residual moisture in the surface and boosted by the return of opening bowler Nathan Byrne. However, it appeared that captain James Schofield's decision might have been the wrong one as the Llantwit openers made largely untroubled progress against Byrne and Dan Cooke, advancing the score to 39-0 off the opening 10 overs. The introduction of Will Ford, and in particular Nick Francis slowed the scoring rate. Francis was extremely unlucky not to pick up a wicket in an excellent spell in which he beat the outside edge on numerous occasions. Eventually, Ford made the first breakthrough, catching Collins off his own bowling for 16. There followed a 51 run stand for the second wicket that took the score to 113-1 from 30 overs before Andy Timpson had Cousens caught by Colin Knight for a well made 66. However, the momentum of the innings did not really swing until Cooke and Byrne were reintroduced for the final 6 overs, with the score on 152-2. Byrne in particular gave a lesson in how to bowl at the death and was rewarded for an excellent second spell with four wickets, to finish with 4-35. Cooke took two wickets at the other end to pick up 2-25 from his 8 overs, and Llantwit finished on 176 all out.

The home side's reply began brightly as Schofield and Will Glenn put on 39 in good time, running well between the wickets, before Schofield perished for 20 to a superb catch in the gully. Glenn and Doug Spencer took the score to 69, and both will be the better in the upcoming league matches for having spent some time in the middle. Glenn was bowled for the second time in two days, this time for 25, before Nathan Holley and Francis fell in quick succession to leave the Beavers on 81-4 from 22 overs. At this point, and for the next 15 overs, the game remained in the balance as Llantwit kept a close rein on the innings. Cooke (21), Spencer (39) and Matt Knight (6) all fell to Snelson and Aber needed a further 46 from the final seven overs. After a useful contribution from Colin Knight (10), the turning point came as Ford advanced down the track to his first ball and the stumping chance was missed. Thereafter, he supported the excellent Byrne well, the pair played sensibly and ran well, and the Cavaliers coughed up a few too many wides. Eventually, with nine needed for outright victory from the final over, Ford played a straight drive for two off the penultimate ball to seal victory for the home side. Byrne finished on a very composed 21 not out.

Aber will hope to use this victory as a catalyst to improve their league form, while looking forward to entertaining Barry in the next round of a competition that saw them reach the quarter-finals last year.

Abergavenny Collapse against Chepstow

Abergavenny failed to capitalise on a fantastic start in both innings of the game against Chepstow, falling to a 115 run defeat.

After winning the toss and electing to bowl, Aber made an excellent start as Dan Cooke took three wickets in an incisive new ball spell, removing Madurasinghe to a super catch from Matt Knight, Watson caught behind by Greg Fury and trapping Jones LBW to leave the hosts on 35-3. He was backed up superbly by Joe Hrastelj who continued his excellent new ball form, and was extremely unfortunate not to pick up a wicket. Chepstow number five Monk rode his luck with several thick edges that eluded Fury, but stuck in the provide opener Smith with some much needed support. However, despite several bowling changes to try and break the partnership, the pair put on an excellent partnership as Smith went to a 100 and Monk to 50. Eventually Aber removed them both, but as several dropped catches blighted a somewhat ragged fielding display, Dobbie finished the innings well with an unbeaten 41, as Chepstow closed on 260-5.

Despite the stiff target, Aber nevertheless made a blistering start as Andrew Jones, Greg Fury and Will Glenn continued their excellent form in taking Aber to 99-1 in 16 overs. Unfortunately, neither Fury or Glenn was able to go on, and the middles order of Doug Spencer and James Schofield failed to get

themselves in and departed quickly. Jones continued to 50 before taking a blow to the knee attempting a quick single. Shortly after he was erroneously given out caught behind, and the innings stalled completely. Despite this, there was plenty of time to pick up more batting points and increase Aber's haul from the match. However, the tail folded quickly as Madurasinghe picked up a 5-wicket haul with his slow in duckers and the innings subsided to 145.

Aber have showed fitful signs of good performances this year, but apart from last weekend's match against the fugitives, have failed to sustain this for a whole game. They need to be smarter in being aware of the points they can pick up in different situations as they adjust to a much more difficult season than they are accustomed to. Next week, they entertain Blackwood, and despite the good start made by the visiting team, Aber will look to target this as a game where they can pick up a victory.

Abergavenny win tense encounter

Abergavenny maintained their 100% home record in a very close and enthralling game against Blackwood at Avenue Road on Saturday.

After losing the toss and being asked to bat, Abergavenny were at the mercy of the soft and damp pitch as a result of the heavy rain in the week. Despite a number of balls misbehaving, openers Andrew Jones and Greg Fury nevertheless got the innings off to a sound start, reaching 30 in the 6th over before Jones was run out by some excellent work by the cover fielder. Will Glenn struggled to adapt to the conditions and departed soon after, bringing Gavin Heritage to the crease. He and Fury put on a good partnership of 35, with Fury continuing to look in good touch, before he was bowled by the off spin of Ghori for 32. After Doug Spencer was dismissed by yet another superlative catch, the score was 80 for 4 from 22 overs and the innings was in the balance. However, James Schofield stayed in at one end, and despite not scoring quickly, offered the excellent Heritage valuable support. Heritage played seam and spin equally well and continued from where he left off against the Fugitives two weeks previously and finished on a superb and vital 77 not out. After Schofield was dismissed for 24, Dan Cooke came in and changed the momentum of the innings in striking several good boundaries, making a brisk 28 and helping Aber to reach, given the conditions, a very good 200-6 from their 50 overs.

Cooke and Nathan Byrne opened the bowling, and, despite Cooke's early strike in removing Evans, it quickly became apparent that the pitch was drying well and there were few demons left in the wicket. Joe Hrastelj and James Schofield managed to break the next two partnerships that formed to leave the innings on 69-3 from 20 overs. The fourth wicket took the score to 91-3 at drinks, with Blackwood probably slight favourites, particularly as they then advanced the score to 145. However, the Aber bowlers had managed to push the run rate up with some attritional bowling as Will Ford in particular was unfortunate not to pick up a wicket in a testing 10 over spell. Cooke returned to bowl an excellent second spell and picked up the key wickets of Ghori and Wilkinson in the same over, finishing with 3-27 from his 10 overs. Ryan "Midge" Jones was halfway through a good spell, with Blackwood needing 55 from the final 10 overs. Blackwood number six Davies played aggressively, striking several boundaries in his 31 to bring the equation to 24 needed off the final four overs. However, Midge struck twice in his last two overs, crucially removing Davies LBW, leaving Blackwood wanting 12 off the final over. Byrne kept his cool and restricted the visitors to 196-8, aided by a smart run out by Fury. The bowlers all did themselves proud in keeping their nerve to restrict Blackwood in a tight contest, after the batsmen had done a fine job of posting a total in difficult conditions.

Next week the Beavers travel to one of the league favourites Panteg, but despite losing four key players from the side, will nevertheless travel with greater confidence provided by the cushion of this well-deserved and hard fought victory

Abergavenny Collapse to Second Defeat

Abergavenny collapsed to a heavy defeat away at Pontypridd on Saturday. On winning the toss on a wet Ynysangharad Park pitch, home skipper Collins surprisingly decided to bat first. Aber made a good start, with Joe Hrastelj in particular bowling well and removing the Ponty top three with just 39

on the board after 10 overs. Unfortunately, in what was probably the crucial moment of the match, Hrastelj dropped Waughington on just two off the bowling of Will Ford, which would have left the home side in real trouble on 50-4. Instead, the fourth wicket partnership put on 104 in good time as Abergavenny struggled to make any further inroads. Eventually, captain James Schofield turned to himself and Colin Knight to try and make the breakthrough. Knight duly obliged, having the obdurate Wilcox well caught at midwicket by Doug Spencer, following it up by bowling Williams for a duck. At the third time of asking, Abergavenny removed Waughington by having him run out after good work by Dan Cooke and Schofield. Abergavenny fought back well in the closing overs, with Knight and Schofield both picking up three wickets each, in addition to the run out that left Pontypridd all out for 191 off the final ball of the 42 overs allotted after the delayed start.

In reply, openers Will Glenn and Greg Fury made an excellent start, taking the score to 36 without loss from the opening seven overs. A mini-collapse ensued as Fury and Alex Astley-Jones were adjudged LBW and Glenn was bowled. Schofield joined Gavin Heritage and the pair looked in good touch, taking the score to 54-3 at a good rate. Unfortunately, both were victim to balls they could do little about after they deviated wickedly off the surface, a legacy of the divots left by earlier deliveries in the wet pitch. From thereon in, Abergavenny folded as Spencer fell to a good catch, Cooke became a third LBW victim and Hrastelj was bowled to give the impressive Morgan six wickets from his nine-over spell. Colin Knight and Ford were caught to leave Abergavenny all out for a paltry 71, suffering a humiliating 120 run defeat to a side they would have dispatched with ease with the side they had last year.

Abergavenny will hope to improve markedly when they entertain Newport Fugitives next week, and will welcome back Andrew Jones and Nathan Byrne at different points in the season. Nevertheless, they are facing the harsh reality that this season is not likely to see them challenging for the title as they are accustomed, but instead they will hope to take the opportunity to give youngsters such as Glenn, Cooke and Matt Knight experience in the first team and come back strongly next year.

Newport Fugitives Hold on to Draw at Avenue Road

Abergavenny off The Mark As Glenn Scores Maiden Ton

Abergavenny (W) 256-7 (W Glenn 112 G Heritage 47 D Spencer 35 J Didcote 2-36)

Drew with Newport Fugitives 214-6 (J Didcote 103no M Knight 2-19 W Ford 2-34);

Two magnificent centuries marked Saturday's contest between Abergavenny and Newport Fugitives on a glorious day at Avenue Road that finally saw Aber claim their first league win of the season to build on last Sunday's Welsh Cup victory.

On winning the toss, skipper James Schofield had no hesitation in batting first and openers Will Glenn and Greg Fury set about making the most of the excellent conditions. Fury, having been dropped second ball scored three sumptuous boundaries before being well caught at backward point for 15. He was frustrated at missing out but looks in excellent form and should score heavily this year. Gavin Heritage joined Glenn and the pair set about building a substantial partnership. Scoring runs at a gradually increasing rate, the pair put on 109 in 24 overs to take the score to 136, before Heritage fell for a well made 47. That brought Doug Spencer to the crease and he continued where Heritage had left off in supporting Glenn and helping add a further 91. Glenn eventually went to a superb maiden ton, with several lovely shots all around the wicket, and departed to a richly deserved standing ovation after eventually being run out for 112. Spencer also looked in good nick but departed soon after for 35, leaving Aber 229-4 with under four overs to go. After Schofield was involved in a second run out in three games in selling the unfortunate Alex Astley-Jones a horrendous dummy, he and Dan Cooke helped carry the score to 256 before both were dismissed LBW to Aber old boy James Didcote.

The Fugitives got off to an excellent start as Cooke proved profligate with the new ball. However, with Joe Hrastelj continuing his revelatory form with the new ball, and Will Ford looking dangerous and striking twice in his opening overs, Aber reined the innings in and reduced the visitors to 49-3 from 12 overs. Didcote was building his innings nicely, however, and the game was back in the balance at the

first drinks break at 79-3 from 18 overs. However, Ryan 'Midge' Jones struck immediately after the resumption, having Evans expertly stumped down the leg side by Fury. Another partnership ensued as Schofield rang the bowling changes to little avail. With the innings delicately poised on 150-4 from 35 overs, youngster Matt Knight was introduced into the attack. He struck in his first over, and again in his third to leave Newport Fugitives on 171-6. He continues to settle into the team and will only get better for the experience, and his contribution here cannot be underestimated. With 10 overs to go, the visitors were still in a decent position but they struggled to beat the defensive fields set by Ryland Wallace (sorry, by James Schofield!) and Jones, Knight and Cooke bowled well to tie up the innings for 214-6 from the allotted overs. However, Didcote was able to go to his own well deserved century from 134 balls, one that will no doubt have pleased him greatly as he played a full part in enriching the game on his return to Avenue Road. He played several excellent shots and held the innings together well in the middle and late overs.

So a fine win for Aber who will hope to build on this as they travel to Chepstow next week, and despite the loss of Heritage and Astley-Jones, will welcome back Andrew Jones to bolster the top order.



Will Glen leaves the field after completing his century



Abergavenny Battered at St Fagans

A severely depleted Abergavenny side suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of promotion chasing St Fagans on Saturday.

Asked to bat first, and already missing several top order batsmen, the visitors made a calamitous start as Will Glenn and Greg Fury both departed without troubling the scorers, to leave Aber on 7-2. James Schofield and Alex Astley-Jones stabilised the innings somewhat as Schofield eschewed all risk in making a painstakingly turgid 18, while Astley-Jones grew in confidence as his innings progressed, striking several good shots over the infield. However, with the score on 56, Schofield fell trying to loft the ball over mid off. Astley-Jones followed soon after for 35 and the innings stalled thereafter as a succession of batsmen came and went for single figure scores. Despite lasting 44 overs, Aber had made on 83 when they were finally dismissed, with Mansoor Tariq picking up 5-21 for St Fagans.

Despite this, Aber made the perfect start as Dan Cooke removed opposition skipper and opener Owain Hopkins to his first ball, with the score on just 1. It proved a false dawn however, as Chris Lawlor and Freddie John took a heavy toll on the Aber attack in racing to their target inside 15 overs, John finishing on 52 not out.

Aber failed to pick up any points and they will have to ensure they address this failing in the games they do lose as every point could prove vital this season. They will hope to welcome back a number of key players and return to some sort of form for the very important games coming up against fellow lower table sides Rogerstone and Tondy.

Abergavenny Demolish Pentyrch

Abergavenny bounced back from the huge disappointment of the crushing defeat at St Fagans with a comprehensive thrashing of Pentyrch on Saturday.

On winning the toss, skipper James Schofield asked Pentyrch to bat first on a green pitch. After a couple of exploratory overs from Dan Cooke, Joe and James Hrastelj bowled superbly in reducing Pentyrch to 39-3 from 16 overs. Joe Hrastelj continued his revelatory form with the new ball in bowling his 10 over spell straight through, taking 2-16. In his return league debut, James was no less impressive in his six over spell. Will Ford

proved initially expensive before a switch of ends proved more fruitful, but Lewis Parfitt, on his league debut for the club, struck early to remove Grossett thanks to an excellent catch by Hrstelj senior. Wilcox then chanced his arm, striking several boundaries, but always looking as though he might get out at any time. So it proved, as he hooked Ford to deep square leg where James Hrstelj held another good catch to cap a superb fielding display. Indeed, the fielding in general from Aber was very sharp as the addition of Hrstelj and Parfitt have added an extra dimension to this part of their game. From 99-6 after 32 overs, it became a question of how long Pentyrch would hold out and how many they would set the visitors. After a flurry of blows from Matthews, Aber wrapped the innings up on 165, Parfitt finishing with 3-40, James Hrstelj 2-34 and Cooke with 2-31.

Any thoughts Pentyrch harboured that they were in with a chance were quickly dispelled by openers Greg Fury and Andrew Jones, who raced along to 55 from the opening ten overs. Fury went to a quickfire 50 from just 42 balls, just before the century partnership was reached in the next over. Fury finally fell for a fluent 66 containing several excellent boundaries, with the score on 110 from just 20 overs. That brought Will Glenn to the crease, and after a couple of singles to get moving, he too dealt entirely in boundaries thereafter. At the other end, Jones looked unruffled, despatching any loose bowling to the boundary with ease. The pair finished to game in short order, with Jones finishing on 64 not out, and Glenn on 33 not out.

After two games rained off that Aber would have hoped to have won, this was a very welcome victory. It was achieved in a manner that suggested that they need not struggle in the second half of the season as they welcomed back players from work commitments and holidays. Indeed, this was probably the strongest side they have fielded this season and one that is capable of some strong performances and results in the games to come. Next week, they entertain Penarth at home, and will be looking to gain revenge for their defeat at the start of the season.

Batsmen Fail To Follow Fabulous Bowlers

Abergavenny crashed to a disappointing defeat to Penarth on Saturday, with their batting line up failing to capitalise on the excellent work done by the bowlers and fielders.

Penarth won the toss and elected to bat, but struggled from the outset as Dan Cooke and Joe Hrstelj gave absolutely nothing away. In the 10th over of the innings, Cooke removed Sidford LBW for 10, leaving the visitors 23-1. Cooke was replaced by Nathan Byrne who continued to keep them under the pump as, despite conceding 30 runs from his six over spell, he tormented the batsmen with some beautiful deliveries that took the edge and found the boundary instead of the fielders. Hrstelj was also incredibly unlucky not to pick up a wicket as he finished his 10-over spell for just 19 runs. Lewis Parfitt replaced Hrstelj and picked up three wickets in a testing spell, removing Skone, Morgan and Thomas, and continuing to give Penarth no respite bowling in tandem with Will Ford. Their efforts were backed up by the fielders as they continued where they left off against Pentyrch in holding their catches and hustling the batsmen in the ring. Abergavenny picked up wickets at regular intervals and the innings ended in the 42nd over with Penarth finishing on 158 all out. Cooke took 2-26, Parfitt 3-45 and Will Ford 4-33.

At the halfway stage, Abergavenny felt that they had put themselves in the dominant position in the match, a feeling that intensified as Andrew Jones and Greg Fury raced to 18 in after just two overs. However, Jones was bowled by a good delivery that nipped back, which heralded a mini-collapse and Will Glenn and Gavin Heritage both fell in the next over with the score on 23-3. Parfitt maintained the frenetic pace to the innings with three fours and a well struck six. With the score on 56 from eight overs, Parfitt struck a long-hop straight to midwicket, just as he looked like he might assist Fury in taking Abergavenny towards their target. Fury continued his imperious form what was becoming an increasingly one-man crusade as he lost Alex Astley-Jones soon after. James Schofield joined Fury and calmed the situation down for a few overs, with the pair running well between the wickets. But with the partnership progressing and now just 60 needed, Schofield got a full toss from Thomas and instead of hitting it to the boundary, he could only pick out mid-on. Cooke followed soon after, leaving the home side reeling on 97-7. At this point, and running out of partners, Fury's lone stand came to an end as he skied a shot to the bowler and departed for a fine 62. Byrne and Hrstelj kept hopes alive as Hrstelj blocked resolutely and Byrne picked off the runs. However, Hrstelj's doughty defiance was ended with the score on 116, and Ford couldn't resist a tempting slow ball and holed out to cover, leaving Byrne stranded.

Abergavenny were shell-shocked after this collapse given the situation at tea, but will hope to pick themselves up by next week when they entertain Pontypridd, another game they will feel they are capable of winning if they perform to potential

]

Duckworth Lewis Does for Abergavenny

Abergavenny 179 (W Glenn 33 A Collins 6-16) lost to Pontypridd (W) 238-5 (G Hughes 66no J Hughes 61 A Collins 33 D Cooke 3-61) by 70 runs on Duckworth Lewis target

Jones Stars In Abergavenny Win

Abergavenny put two disappointing defeats behind them and returned to winning ways with a good all round performance against Newport Fugitives, built on the back of a superb century from Andrew Jones.

On winning the toss, James Schofield elected to bat, and after a couple of hair raising moments with short balls keeping unbelievably low, Greg Fury got off to his usual flying start, racing to 19 before being caught behind to just about the only ball that carried all day. Will Glenn joined Jones and the pair advanced the score to 60 from 12 overs before going through something of a lull. However, they came out the other side and constructed a superb partnership of 155 in 31 overs. Jones went to a magnificent 100 and Will Glenn scored a measured 45 before being bowled by the opposition captain. Gavin Heritage maintained the momentum, sharing a further 63 with Jones before the opener was finally dismissed for a marvellous 138. A few late boundaries and hustled runs took the final score to 258-6 from the 50 overs.

However, despite wickets to Joe Hrastelj and Dan Cooke, Aber were sluggish and slack at the start of the Fugitives' reply and a plethora of poor balls and wides allowed the home side to 61-2 from the opening 12 overs. Lewis Parfitt and Will Ford put a tight rein back on the innings though, and bowled two fantastic, tight spells, with Ford bowling his 10 overs for just 18 runs, picking up the wicket of Aber old boy James Didcote along the way. Parfitt's initial six overs yielded just 14 runs and grabbed a wicket of his own, removing Thomas LBW for 8.

At drinks, Aber had dragged the innings back to 91-4 and had assumed control of the game. They were never to let it go, and on his first team league debut, Andy Pratten picked up 2-25, to leave the home side on 123-6. From that point, it became a question of how many wickets and points Aber could pick up. For a while, they were stuck on seven, but Matt Knight picked up two late wickets, and Newport finished on 188-9.

Abergavenny will be relieved to have stopped the rot and given themselves a little more breathing space at the bottom with their 20 point haul from the game. Next week they entertain Chepstow at Avenue Road in what promises to be a tough game for the Beavers

	P	W	D	L	C	Pts	Avg
Sudbrook.....	14	5	3	0	6	162	20.25
Chepstow.....	14	6	0	0	8	121	20.17
St Fagans.....	14	5	1	2	6	128	16.00
Penarth.....	14	5	0	2	7	109	15.57
Panteg.....	14	4	0	2	8	88	14.67
Pontypridd.....	14	4	1	2	7	98	14.00
Blackwood.....	14	2	1	3	8	66	11.00
Abergavenny.....	14	1	2	5	6	74	9.25
Tondu.....	14	2	1	5	6	57	7.13
Pentyrch.....	14	1	1	5	7	45	6.43
Rogerstone.....	14	1	1	5	7	41	5.86
Newport Fugitives.....	14	0	1	6	7	29	4.14

Newport Fugitives 188-9 (R Jones 46 C Bridges 23 A Prallen 2-23 M Knight 2-27 D Cook 2-46) drew with Abergavenny (W) 258-6 (A Jones 138 W Glenn 47 G Heritage 27 C Bridges 2-11 T Barnes 2-60)

Abergavenny come up just short

Another masterful hundred from Andrew Jones lit up Avenue Road on Saturday but was not quite enough for Abergavenny to overcome Panteg after some more sterling work from Abergavenny's bowlers, led by Joe Hrastelj.

After winning the toss, James Schofield elected to bowl first on a pitch that had seen a lot of rain in the previous two weeks. His bowlers made full use of the conditions, striking early as Joe Hrastelj removed the dangerous Akhter Balouch with the first ball of the third over. Opposition skipper Ian Bird and Carwyn James were watchful as Hrastelj and Dan Cooke continued the good work. Eventually Bird chased a wide one from Cooke and found the safe hands of Will Ford at point. Callum Reid did not last long, playing on to Hrastelj, before two low catches from Schofield accounted for Carwyn James and James Reid, leaving the visitors on 38-5. Joe Hrastelj bowled his ten overs on the bounce as usual and finished with the excellent figures of 4-17, with five maidens. There followed a period of rebuilding as Dave and Adam Harrison showed their experience and class, weathering the

conditions and setting themselves for the long haul. However, Adam Harrison fell just after drinks, comfortably caught by young debutant Richie Roberts off the bowling of James Hrastelj, who continued where his brother left off. When Will Ford was finally rewarded for his own good spell with the wicket of James Lewis, Panteg were deep in trouble at 83-7. However, with a flattening pitch and the experienced Dave Harrison still at the wicket, Abergavenny's lack of a fifth bowler told as Chaitanya and Schofield proved expensive. Panteg would lose no more wickets as Rhys Jones played very well for his own unbeaten fifty as Dave Harrison finished on an extremely composed 80 not out. Panteg finished on 214-7, a score Abergavenny may well have settled for before play, but one that left them with a feeling of an opportunity missed, despite the best efforts of the four main bowlers.

Nevertheless, Andrew Jones and Greg Fury set about the run chase in a calm and professional manner, keeping the runs ticking over, batting well on an ever improving wicket. They took the score to 68 before Fury, who had kept wicket superbly earlier, fell to a catch at mid on for 38. Gavin Heritage kept Jones company for a time, adding a further 25 before he was caught at cover. Schofield, Roberts, Cooke and Nick Dash all fell for single figure scores, and the innings was in danger of finishing tamely as Chaitanya joined Jones (on 70 not out) with the score on 139-6. He played exactly the right innings, knocking singles and some busy running between the wickets, while Jones accelerated at the other end to keep Abergavenny in with a chance. With two overs to go, Aber needed about 30 to win, but despite their best efforts, the seventh wicket partnership couldn't quite get there, and came up 17 runs short. Jones completed a superb hundred, giving a masterclass in building an innings before going through the gears at the end.

Nevertheless, this was a more encouraging performance from an inexperienced Abergavenny side featuring two debutants, and, although they relied heavily on Jones' hundred in their reply, did not fold as they have done on previous occasions and picked up a good haul of points from the game, on the back of more good work from their bowlers. With the spectre of relegation all but removed, Aber now travel to Sudbrook and Rogerstone in their final games hoping to round off a difficult season well.

The Champions Elect defeat Abergavenny

In their penultimate game of the season, a depleted Abergavenny side were defeated by 7 wickets at Sudbrook.

After winning the toss, James Schofield elected to bat first, and they got off to a good start as Alex Astley-Jones and Greg Fury made swift progress against the Sudbrook new ball attack, shorn of their two main seamers. Astley-Jones played several good shots before falling to an excellent one handed catch by Carl Morgan off his own bowling. Schofield joined Fury and the pair continued well as Fury continued to take the attack to the bowlers. However, the introduction of spin and cutters changed the game as Lewis Morgan and Jon Lewis found lavish movement off the pitch. Fury eventually fell for 39, stumped as he advanced to a leg spinner that beat his outside edge. Lewis Holley hung in well for a few overs before overbalancing and being stumped off Lewis. Dan Cooke partnered Schofield well for a time as the pair looked to see off the threat of Morgan and Lewis and take the slightly easier pickings on offer from the off spin of Rhys Pescod. Eventually Cooke was caught off Lewis as he played fractionally too early in an attempt to hit Lewis over mid on. James Hrastelj played one sumptuous shot over the top off the leg spinner and hinted at his potential for his return to form as a batsman next season, but fell soon after for 4. James Schofield's long vigil came to an end next ball as he was given out caught at slip for 41. The lower order of Matt Davies, Will Ford, Joe Hrastelj and Colin Knight took Abergavenny to 155-8 from their 50 overs with some good hustled runs and well played shots in the final few overs. In the circumstances it was pleasing to see the whole batting order making themselves tough to get out and being determined to bat the 50 overs through - something they have not always managed to do this year.

After seeing the nature of the pitch, Aber gambled on opening the bowling with leg spinner Ford in tandem with Joe Hrastelj, and the pair began very well. However, Ross Lewis and Matt Kincham punished the bad balls as Ford's spell wore on and the conditions nullified the swing Hrastelj normally finds and Schofield had to make a change to try and get a breakthrough. Cooke was introduced and struck early as Kincham slapped a wide long hop straight to Astley-Jones at cover. However, Cooke was guilty of some bad balls on a pitch devoid of life and Sudbrook continued to make swift progress towards their target. At the other end, James Hrastelj settled into a nice groove and got his reward when he brought an off cutter back to bowl Ross Lewis for 23. Micky Martin and Lewis Morgan carried on the momentum as Matt Knight and Schofield proved equally unable to stem the flow of runs or make a further breakthrough. Hrastelj picked up a well deserved second wicket when he had Morgan stumped by Fury for 47. With just a handful of runs needed, that proved to be Abergavenny's last success as Sudbrook closed the game out, reaching their target in the 29th over.

Nevertheless, the effort of the players could not be faulted and the end result simply reflected the difference in quality of the two sides this season. Without a full strength side, Aber were never likely to trouble a side who are unbeaten this season. It was pleasing to see the side trying hard to the end, and putting in a disciplined performance with the bat. They will hope to finish off the season well when the side travels to Rogerstone next week.



Abergavenny 2nd X1 v Sudbrook