

2011 Season

Beavers Off To Blistering Start

Abergavenny got the 2011 league season off to a stunning start at Tondy on Saturday. Despite being without the services of 3 or their 4 leading seam bowlers from last season, Aber went with a strong side, confident of carrying on from where they left off last season.

After winning the toss, skipper James Schofield inserted Tondy. Tondy initially got off to a fast start as a combination of some streaky edges to third man off opening bowlers Ryan Watkins and first-team debutant dan Cooke, and some got drives on what looked a decent wicket carried them to 30 for no wicket in the 5th over.

Watkins then made the first breakthrough, accounting for Stennar thanks to a very good catch from last year's league player of the season Greg Fury.



Two overs later, Watkins struck again as Harris was caught at cover, the first of four catches in the game for Schofield. Nevertheless, despite these wickets, it appeared a good track and that Abergavenny would have to work hard for their wickets. In the 10th over, Ryan 'Midge' Jones was introduced into the attack to change the pace. He struck in his first over, clean bowling Owen. This was the start of a brilliant spell from Midge, as he bowled intelligently, wicket-to-wicket, always testing the batsmen. With subtle movement, and changes of pace, allied to a flawless catching performance from the fielders, Midge bowled unchanged for seven overs, recording the magnificent figures of 5-20. At the other end, Ben Pike used the breeze well, and picked up 1-13 with his away swing, before new boy Will Ford was introduced into the attack. The leg spinner's spell was short but fruitful and he picked up the final two wickets for just four runs - one to an LBW and the second to a catch by Abergavenny's third debutant Will Glenn.

Abergavenny used just 22.5 overs to wrap up the Tondy innings as they collapsed from 30-0 to 84 all out.



After a 10-minute turnaround, opening batsmen Fury and Andrew Jones went out to begin the Beavers' run chase. Jones got the innings off to a flyer with a sumptuous pulled six over midwicket and a well timed four both in the first over. The openers were in no mood to hang about and both played some superb shots in racing to the victory target in just 11.5 overs. Jones finished on 33 not out from 36 balls while Fury continued in the same vein as last season in compiling 47 from just 34 balls.



A fine start from Abergavenny, who will hope to maintain their excellent form when they take on Sudbrook at Avenue Road next week, in what promises to be another competitive and enthralling league season



Abergavenny Pull Off Close Victory Over St Fagans

Abergavenny continued their fine start to the season with victory in a closely fought match against last year's premiership side St Fagans.

St Fagans won the toss and elected to bat first, but opening bowlers Ryan Watkins and Nathan Byrne bowled superbly to restrict St Fagans to a miserly two runs an over in the first 10 overs. Indeed, if it hadn't been for wides, St Fagans may well not have made it into double figures until the 12th over. Wides were to prove a problem for the Abergavenny bowlers as they racked up 38 in total, a figure that could have proved costly on another day. Byrne bowled an excellent spell of 10-2-25-2 straight through, while Watkins was followed by Gavin Heritage. Heritage was understandably rusty early on in his first league outing of the season, and his initial three overs were expensive. Meanwhile Tom Watkins was introduced after Byrne had bowled out and struck with his first ball in league cricket for the Abergavenny first team. He bowled a disciplined line and length, and finished with 1-45 off nine overs, with only his last over coming in for any punishment. At the other end, Heritage was replaced by Will Ford, who bowled steadily, but struggled with a back problem and just allowed St Fagans to continue building a partnership through Hopkins, who struggled to get a run in the early exchanges, and Williams. With Ford hampered, youngster Dan Cooke was introduced into the attack. Cooke hit a consistent line and length, and was rewarded for some fine bowling with the key wicket of Hopkins, bowled by a good yorker. Cooke finished with 1-24 from 6 overs. With 11 overs to go, St Fagans were handily placed on 170-4, with their sights set on 240 if things went well. However, Heritage and Ryan Watkins were reintroduced into the attack to close out the innings and both bowled magnificently. Watkins was extremely unlucky to be unrewarded in the game but finished with the exemplary figures of 10-1-27-0. At the other end, Heritage mixed his pace well, and bowled some good yorkers and picked up five wickets, to finish with 5-56. More importantly, the pair kept conceded only 42 runs of the last 11 overs, and with Williams the mainstay with 71, St Fagans finished on 212-9 from their 50 overs.

Abergavenny got off to a steady start through openers Greg Fury and Andrew Jones, before Fury fell, caught at mid-off for five. Ryan Watkins joined Jones and the pair played several attractive strokes, although several found the fielders. The score had advanced to 46, when Watkins was bowled by a good ball for 20. Heritage continued the steady momentum to the innings compiling a patient 24, while at the other end, Jones continued to show all his quality, demonstrating excellent judgement of which balls to defend and attack, always quick to punish anything loose. However, with the score on 107, Heritage was caught at short fine leg and Will Glenn walked to the wicket at a pivotal moment. He showed no signs of pressure, and apart from one mix-up when running between the wickets with Jones, demonstrated excellent temperament and timing in progressing to 23, striking two 4's and a 6. However, with about 40 needed from 9 overs, Glenn just got marooned at one end, and was eventually bowled, bringing a fine partnership of 68 to an end. James Schofield joined Jones, who was now nearing a century, and after Schofield had taken a few balls to get to grips with the wicket, the pair ran positively and kept up with the rate comfortably. However, two overs later, it came as something of a shock when Jones was caught behind for a superb 93 with 30 still needed. Jon Denning, currently playing just as a batsman, picked up the baton and Abergavenny continued to chip away at the total. Denning also fell before seeing

the side home and Cooke now had to handle the pressure of trying to chase five runs an over to get Abergavenny over the line. He handled the situation very well, hustling some good singles, and, with 10 needed from 13 balls, struck a fine boundary over midwicket to reduce the pressure and the equation to just six runs needed from the final two overs. Unfortunately he was bowled attempting to finish the game with the same shot, and it was left to Will Ford to see Aber home as Schofield struck the decisive boundary of the last ball of the 49th over.

This was a good win for Abergavenny, made all the more impressive through the contributions of the younger players such as Cooke and Glenn who will have gained valuable experience in chasing targets and closing out tense matches against good opposition in St Fagans, who will be in the final shake up in the battle for promotion to the premier league. Meanwhile, its Pentyrch next up at home for Abergavenny, who will look to keep their fine winning streak going

Three From Three For Abergavenny

Abergavenny continued their winning start to the 2011 with a comfortable 9 wicket win over Pentyrch. Aber won the toss and decided to bowl first, a good decision in hindsight, as the weather closed in late on.

Ryan Watkins and Jon Denning opened the bowling, and despite a few edges bringing four runs in the direction of the vacant third man boundary, Jon Denning drew first blood in his first bowl of the season for the club, gaining a caught behind decision in his favour. However, he had to be withdrawn from the attack after three overs as a precaution against a recent back injury. This forced a reshuffling of the pack as Gavin Heritage was introduced, and Watkins switched ends. Abergavenny endured a testing period as Pentrych scored at a decent rate, aided by a mixture of good shots and good fortune, which led to Abergavenny going a little quiet in the field. However, Tom Watkins, as he did last week, changed the game upon being brought into the attack, picking up two wickets in his second over, leaving Pentyrch 60-3. Watkins and Heritage bowled tidily, drying up the runrate for a time, but Pentyrch gradually built another partnership, reaching 97-3. Tom Watkins struck again, having Gardner caught at mid on, before leg spinner Will Ford eventually won an interesting dual with Lewis Coates, bowling him with a googly as he shaped to play through the newly vacant slips. The final overs before drinks saw Pentyrch's Ghorri playing some expansive though risky shots. Upon the resumption, skipper James Schofield turned to Ryan Watkins to try and nip Ghorri's innings in the bud, and Watkins duly delivered. Watkins embarked on a superb spell of 5-0-19-4 as he tore through the lower order, to leave the innings in tatters on 149-9. Going for the jugular, Schofield turned to Heritage to try and end the innings quickly, rather than save overs for the death, and was rewarded with a wicket from the final ball of the 35th over, as Pentyrch were dismissed for 157.

Abergavenny went out for half an hour before tea, and Greg Fury, aided by some woeful bowling, got the innings off to a flier, before falling just before the break. After the tea interval, Ryan Watkins and Will Glenn embarked on a match winning partnership of 123. Initially Watkins made the running as he continued his excellent and fluent form with the bat this year, but after playing himself in, Glenn expanded

his game in taking the attack to the spinners, with several shots over the top, as Abergavenny went about their run chase with one eye on the rain that was hugging the Sugarloaf. The pair scored at an excellent rate, and both reached well made 50's, Glenn finishing on 61 not out, and Watkins unbeaten on 56. Abergavenny used just 25.3 overs to reach their target as the rain closed in and achieved maximum batting points in the process.

Another good performance from Abergavenny, who nevertheless have room to take their game to even better heights. They will hope to continue their unbeaten start to 2011 in their double header with Rogerstone at home in the Macey Cup on Friday night, then away against the same opponents on Saturday

Abergavenny v Penarth

Abergavenny maintained their 100% winning record in the league in 2011, but only just. They were made to sweat on what had appeared at one stage to be a comfortable victory by an excellent Penarth 4th wicket partnership, and in particular a superb innings of 94 from Mike Provis.

On winning the toss, Abergavenny elected to bat first, for the first time this season. They made an excellent start through Greg Fury and Andrew Jones, who raced to 59 in nine overs, before Fury was caught behind for 36. Ryan Watkins joined Jones and the pair moved the score on to 83 before Jones was LBW for 31. Not long after that, the rain closed in and forced the players off the field. When they eventually resumed, Watkins and Gavin Heritage had to work hard for their runs as the Penarth attack used the conditions well, skidding the ball onto the bat and proving difficult to get away. Watkins perished for 39, caught at backward point when well set, and Heritage was joined by Will Glenn. Glenn made 10 before being bowled - the first of five wickets for Penarth's Khan. James Schofield made his way to the wicket, and as Heritage put away the bad balls that came his way, the pair were busy between the wickets and advanced the score to 198 after 42 overs before Schofield was LBW. Heritage fell not long after for a well made 48, and it was left to the lower order to take the score to 254-9 after 50 overs, with Jon Denning (19) and Nathan Byrne (23 not out) in particular batting well in the latter part of the innings.

Due to the rain, Penarth were set a revised target of 245 off 48 overs, and were immediately up against it as Byrne in particular made good use of the new ball with an excellent spell of 10-2-31-3. When Byrne finished his spell, Penarth were 68-3 from 20 overs, and Abergavenny appeared in total control. However, a combination of too many boundary balls served up by the bowlers, a pitch that continued to get better as it flattened in the evening sunshine, and some very good batting from Morgan and Provis gradually brought Penarth back into the game. Indeed, with 15 overs to go, Penarth were in the driving seat, still needing six runs an over, but scoring runs at will. However, the reintroduction of Tom Watkins into the attack changed the game as he removed Morgan LBW for a well made 47, and Butt first ball, smartly stumped by Fury. The game was now finely poised, as Provis and captain Docherty kept Penarth up with the rate. Watkins then dropped Provis off his own bowling, a miss that seemed as though it could be costly. However, Abergavenny showed some real resolve in the final stages, displaying an intensity that had been absent during the middle part of the run chase. Watkins struck again in each of his last two overs, bowling Docherty, then crucially having Provis LBW for 94, when he looked set to guide Penarth to victory. Ryan Watkins finished his

spell with a tight three over burst from the Brook End, keeping the pressure squarely on the visitors' lower order, while Denning, operating off a reduced run came on for the final overs at the Avenue Road End. Denning had Thomas caught and bowled, before Khan was run out with 17 still needed from 20 balls. Denning finally wrapped up the innings, and ended an enthralling game, by having Sims caught by Fury with Penarth just 11 runs short of their target.

This was, in the end, a hard fought win for Abergavenny, but one that will hopefully do them a lot of good as they contemplate how close they came to losing. They can take a lot of heart from the character they showed to close out the game in the latter stages, but will need to heed the lessons learned from this game as they take on a strong Panteg side next weekend. Their batsmen will be looking to make sure they cash in as five of the top six got out after making a good start, with no-one making 50. As a bowling unit (with one or two exceptions), they will be looking to reduce the amount of wides and four-balls bowled. However, the best time to learn from a game is after a win, and next week should be another cracking game between the top two teams before today's round of matches.

Panteg v Abergavenny



James Schofield leads out the League Leaders at Panteg



A less than inspiring start

Panteg (W) 254-7 (J Reid 42 C Reid 38 R Jones 33 n.o W Ford 4-50) Abergavenny
190 all out (W Glenn 69, J Schofield 44, C Mee 4-20, M A Bukari 2-34, K Bell 2-37)



G Fury and W.Ford



Errol,Len,Ray and JR



Table before the Panteg Fixture

Thomas, Carroll Glamorgan/Monmouthshire League							
(not including yesterday's results)							
Division One First XI							
	P	W	D	L	Ab	Pts	Av
Abergavenny	6	4	0	0	2	83	20.75
Panteg	6	4	0	1	1	92	18.40
Usk	6	4	0	1	1	89	17.80
St Fagans	6	2	1	1	2	67	16.75
Penarth	6	3	0	2	1	74	14.80
Blackwood	6	1	1	2	2	50	12.50
Sudbrook	6	2	0	3	1	60	12.00
Rogerstone	6	1	0	2	3	32	10.67
Tondu	6	2	0	2	2	44	10.67
Chepstow	6	1	0	4	1	47	9.40
Croesyceiliog	6	0	1	3	2	26	6.50
Pentyrch	6	0	1	3	2	17	4.25

Table after Week 6 and following the defeat by Panteg

Panteg	57	29	27	114/6	19.00
Usk	57	26	26	109/6	18.17
Abergavenny	44	23	22	89/5	17.80
Penarth	46	25	25	96/6	16.00
St Fagans	36	22	16	74/5	14.80
Sudbrook	36	25	21	82/6	13.67
Tondu	36	13	18	67/5	13.40
Blackwood	26	19	17	62/5	12.40
Chepstow	21	20	23	64/6	10.67
Rogerstone	12	13	13	38/4	09.50
Croesyceiliog	01	16	15	32/5	06.40
Pentyrch	02	7	12	21/5	04.20

Washout v Blackwood but Victory over Cresselly

Abergavenny's league game against Blackwood was washed out on Saturday, but on a blazing Sunday at Avenue Road, they continued their run in the Welsh Cup. Cresselly won the toss and elected to field to the dismay of some of their players, and Abergavenny immediately set about making them regret the decision. Despite the early loss of Richy Morris for 8, Greg Fury and Ryan Watkins were in supreme form as they spent valuable time at the wicket in advance of next weekend's crucial league game against Usk. Fury played in customary brisk and attacking manner and made an excellent 86, before holing out at long on, ending a super partnership

of 138 with Watkins. Watkins added a further 133 with Gavin Heritage, another who made the most of the opportunity to find some form. Watkins made a brilliant 139 featuring a full range of shots, and eventually fell with the score on 293, with 5 overs to go. Will Glenn kept up the tempo, making a quickfire 15 not out, while Heritage finished a good innings unbeaten on 50, as Abergavenny totalled 322-3 off just 45 overs. Cresselly did not help themselves with a spate of dropped catches, a theme that was to continue into Abergavenny's fielding effort.

Facing such a gargantuan total, Cresselly could easily have wilted, but to their credit, openers Morgan and Harris played excellently, and remained positive when the opportunity allowed. Abergavenny's seamers struggled initially on a flat wicket and a hot day and it was left to the spinners to keep a check on the Cresselly opening stand. Will Ford bowled a magnificent spell of leg spin bowling but went without reward, while James Schofield also made the most of a rare bowling opportunity with a good initial 7 overs. It was left to the third spinner introduced into the attack, Owain Bradley, to make the inroads into the Cresselly line-up, first ending a fine opening stand of 125, having Harris stumped by Fury. He went on to claim two further wickets, luring Morgan and Davies down the wicket only to be deceived in the flight and chip catches to the infielders. That they were taken at all was something of a surprise as Abergavenny were just as profligate in the field as the visitors had been, although it was undoubtedly easy to switch off at 20 overs with the game seemingly done and dusted. There was time for Nathan Byrne to return and pick up two wickets in two balls before coming mightily close to claiming a hat-trick. Staunch defence and some lusty blows at the end lifted a spirited Cresselly to 210-5 at the end of their innings, bringing to a close a good day's cricket played in excellent spirit by both teams

Abergavenny (3rd) now have a top of the table clash with Usk (2nd) to look forward to, before crossing swords with Panteg again on Sunday in the sectional final of the Welsh Cup

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Abergavenny v Usk Town

Usk dented Abergavenny's hopes of promotion, while moving to the top of the table themselves on Saturday, as they cruised to a 7 wicket win.

Winning the toss, Abergavenny elected to bat first on what appeared to be a good pitch. They made a solid start through openers Richy Morris and Will Glenn, before both fell in quick succession. Ryan Watkins was joined at the crease by Gavin Heritage and the pair proceeded in steady if unspectacular fashion, on a pitch that didn't seem to offer as much to the batsmen as anticipated, and Usk's first change bowlers gradually exerted something of a stranglehold. Watkins eventually fell for 38, yorked by a good delivery, with Abergavenny approaching 100 after 30 overs. James Schofield joined Heritage, and they gradually stepped up the rate as new bowlers entered the attack, and the pair ran well between the wickets. Heritage eventually departed for an unusually sedate 34, leaving Doug Spencer to try and pick up the pace. Spencer timed the ball impressively from the start, depositing his second ball back over long on for a sweet six. With more good running between the fourth, and when Schofield was dismissed attempting one too many hit into the leg side, fifth wicket partnerships, Abergavenny closed their innings on 196-5 - perhaps a few below par, but a score that they were not too displeased with, given the apparent nature of the pitch.

The Usk innings got off to a good start with a flurry of early boundaries, before Nathan Byrne struck. With Jon Denning running in with impressive fire and venom after being overlooked for new ball duties, Aber gained further success with an LBW decision in Denning's favour, leaving Usk at 40-2, and the game delicately poised. Another wicket or two early would have made the game extremely interesting. Unfortunately, despite a raft of bowling changes, Abergavenny were unable to break through until Usk had passed 100, as Dan Cooke gained reward for a good spell, bowling the Usk number 3 with a good delivery. The home side were progressing at a swift rate, meaning Abergavenny's only chance of forcing victory lay in taking wickets. However, Usk's fourth wicket of James and Clayton

batted serenely and played several lovely drives in guiding Usk to the victory target with more than 10 overs unused.

Another disappointing result for the Beavers, who, although they are still right in contention with Panteg also losing on Saturday, nevertheless are short of form after several disrupted or cancelled games in the previous weeks. Hopefully they can use a potentially kind run of fixtures, and the return of key personnel to build up a head of steam in the second half of the season before return fixtures against the top sides. They went on such a run last year, and after losing to Pentyrch at the mid point of the season, remained unbeaten for the rest of their games, with some spectacular performances. Here's to more of the same this time around.

Welsh Cup

Abergavenny got their season back on track in a pulsating encounter with fellow title contenders Panteg in the sectional final of the Welsh Cup on Sunday. They ultimately emerged victorious by two wickets in a game that contained several dramatic twists and turns.

Panteg elected to bat first, but unlike in their league fixture, Ahkter Balouch was well contained by the Abergavenny opening bowlers Ryan Watkins and Jon Denning. Denning eventually had him caught well by Will Glenn in the 6th over with the score on 15. However, with Ian Bird's arrival at the crease, and a proliferation of wides - a serious problem for the Beavers this season - the run rate leapt forward, reaching 100 in the 18th over. The 19th over saw a dramatic turnaround in fortunes as Gavin Heritage, under used as a bowler thus far this season, struck twice in two balls, making good use of the low bounce in the pitch and bowling straight, bowling Bird, before having Callum Reid LBW first ball. With the introduction of leg spinner Will Ford at the other, Aber put a serious brake on the scoring rate. Ford bowled beautifully, and it was a real surprise that his only reward was to have James Reid caught behind down the leg side by Ryland Wallace, who had an excellent game behind the stumps, and offered tremendous encouragement and competitive spirit all innings. Ford completed a nine over spell for just 15 runs, and reduced the Panteg lower order to very small returns towards the end of the innings. However, the key lay in the bowling partnerships Abergavenny put together, and Heritage maintained a superb spell of disciplined bowling and picked up a well deserved five wicket haul, including the dangerous Ali Bukhari for 29, just as he looked set to change the momentum of the innings again. Watkins and Denning returned to great effect and the innings fizzled out and Panteg reached just 185 before being dismissed in the 44th over.



Abergavenny leave the field having bowled Panteg out for 185

After such a superb comeback in the field, Abergavenny were buzzing and looked to emphasise that their poor performance at Panteg three weeks before had simply been a bad day at the office. Openers Will Glenn and James Schofield got the reply off to an excellent start, and the score reached 35 in just the fifth over before Glenn chopped on, trying to cut a ball that was too close to him from Bukhari. Watkins joined Schofield and the pair continued to make good progress towards the victory target, adding 59 together before Schofield was LBW playing across the line for 24.



James Schofield & Ryan Watkins take the game to Panteg

Heritage now played a leading role with the bat to go with his earlier heroics, and together with Watkins progressed with supreme ease. Watkins played excellently, and was particularly severe on anything loose, while Heritage appeared to get more and more fluent as his innings wore on. With just 16 required from 7 overs, it was something of a surprise when Heritage was dismissed. Remarkably, that precipitated a panicked collapse as Abergavenny lost wickets at an alarming rate, to reach 180-8 after 41.5 overs. Supporters and teammates on the side were biting finger nails as the tension mounted and there was a real fear that they might undo all their good work. However, Abergavenny's other bowling hero also made his mark with the bat - with just 6 needed, Ford played his first ball over the bowler's

head for four, seemingly oblivious to the tension around him. That made the task much easier, and Ford and Wallace collected the last two runs needed for victory in the next over.

A superb game of cricket, in which Abergavenny levelled the score at one win apiece between these sides. They now face Cardiff at home in the next round on Sunday 24th July. More importantly, they will hope that this win acts as a springboard for a run of good form in the weeks to come as they seek to reignite their title challenge.

[Abergavenny v Rogerstone \(Abandoned\)](#)

Deja Vu For Abergavenny As They Send Sudbrook Packing

In what turned out to be almost a carbon copy of the reverse fixture from last year, Abergavenny hammered Sudbrook by 9 wickets down at Deepweir.

They were fortunate to win a potentially match deciding toss, and bowled first on a pitch that was damp from the torrential downpour Friday night. Their bowlers made excellent use of the conditions, with Ryan Watkins and Jon Denning giving absolutely nothing away. Watkins' five over spell yielded just four runs, while Denning's initial six over burst conceded 18 runs and was rewarded with the wicket of Shaw, bowled for six. Youngster Dan Cooke replaced Watkins and struck first ball, as his short loosener was pulled tamely to Watkins at midwicket by a hitherto watchful and solid Ross Lewis. Cooke bowled a good six over spell, and had a difficult chance dropped behind the wicket, but later picked up a second wicket, as Kinchin was caught at the wicket by Greg Fury. Tom Watkins was introduced to the attack somewhat later than normal, but immediately settled into an excellent line and length, making full use of a pitch tailor made for his style of bowling. He picked up the wicket of the positive and potentially dangerous Miles for 31 and had O'Leary caught by Fury off the last ball before drinks, leaving Sudbrook on 100-6 from 25 overs, with Gavin Heritage having earlier bowled Archer. With Heritage and Will Ford struggling with the slope, Denning was re-introduced to bowl in tandem with Watkins and the pair bowled tightly, but without taking a wicket. However, just as Abergavenny considered changing the bowling, Watkins enticed the explosive Carl Morgan to sky an attempted hit over the top, and saw him caught at cover for 26. This opened the door for Abergavenny to wrap up the innings and Watkins went on to claim a further wicket, finishing with the exemplary figures of 8-3-10-4. At the other end, Denning picked up the final wickets to end with figures of 3-29 from his 9.4 overs.

Just as was the case last year when Abergavenny rolled Sudbrook for a low score, there was to be no thought of giving the opposition a sniff of a chance by being

cautious. Instead, Fury and Andrew Jones went out and took the game away from Sudbrook with some positive batting, and had reached 45 from 6 overs when Fury was bowled for an explosive 30 from 25 balls. Ryan Watkins went to the wicket and after an initially watchful start, was kicked into life with an opening over from Jon Lewis that yielded 18 runs. He went on to play several further blistering shots and finished the game unbeaten on 58 from just 33 balls. Such was the carnage at the other end that Jones, who opened the innings, finished on just 33 not out from a total of 132-1.

Although they benefited from a correct call at the toss, Abergavenny nevertheless played some excellent cricket, picking up from where they left off at Panteg three weeks previously in the Welsh Cup. It has been difficult with a number of fixtures rained off in recent weeks, but they will hope that they can gather momentum and go on a real run of winning games to put themselves at the top of the table in the promotion shake up. Next up in the league is St Fagans at home

Welsh Cup Run Ends

Abergavenny's excellent run in the Welsh Cup came to an end on Sunday at the hands of an in form Cardiff side, who are top of the South Wales Premier division.

Cardiff won the toss and elected to bat, and thanks to Thomas and Preece, got off to an excellent start.



Aber's cause was undermined by early injuries to opening bowlers Ryan Watkins and Nathan Byrne, though Watkins was able to get through his 9 overs. Assisted by a spate of wides and some loose bowling early on, Thomas raced to 87 from 63 balls. At the other end, Preece was caught of a leading edge by Tom Watkins off the bowling of Gavin Heritage, whose initial 3 over spell was expensive. It wasn't until Nick Francis was introduced into the attack that Abergavenny started to gain a semblance of control, and he removed danger man Thomas in the 18th over. At drinks Cardiff were extremely well placed on 179-3 after the dismissal of Rees, bowled by Heritage who settled into a much better rhythm from the Avenue Rd end.

However, from here, Abergavenny competed hard and picked up wickets regularly, ensuring that no-one got set to make a real charge in the final overs. Francis was the pick with 9 overs costing just 39 runs as well as the wicket of Thomas. Both Ryan and Tom Watkins also bowled good spells from the opposite end, Tom picking up 3-12 in his final three overs, while Chaitanya Sanapala bowled respectably at the death. Cardiff finished on an imposing 288 all out, but Abergavenny could be well proud of their competitive performance in the second half of the innings. The real bugbear was the number of wides bowled, which reached 50, and made a real difference to the total Abergavenny were asked to chase.

Nevertheless, requiring more than 6 runs an over didn't daunt Greg Fury or Ryan Watkins, who after the removal of Will Glenn for 9, set about the Cardiff bowling with relish, both striking some absolutely sumptuous boundary blows. Fury was eventually given run out going for a tight single for a magnificent 60 off just 49 balls, but Watkins carried on, making a superb 49 off 39, before being bowled by Boorman. Unfortunately, with Abergavenny well placed at 130-3 off 20 overs, the wheels came off as, with the necessity of trying to keep the pace going, some big shots and contentious LBW decisions led to a collapse to 162-9. Will Ford and Byrne played some good shots in a defiant last stand at the end, but ultimately Cardiff ran off 100 run winners.

Abergavenny came away disappointed, which given that they went toe-to-toe with arguably the top side in Wales suggests that they are not a million miles away from competing with some of the sides in the Premier league if they can realise their hopes of promotion. They will have to address a few shortcomings, but they have had their eyes opened to what they would be up against and will be better prepared for it if and when the chance arises

Abergavenny Fall Short Against St Fagans

In an enthralling encounter at Avenue Road, Abergavenny's title challenge suffered a wobble as St Fagans ran out winners by 13 runs.



St Fagans won the toss and elected to bat first. Opening bowlers Ryan Watkins and Jon Denning immediately posed the St Fagans batsmen problems, with Denning in particular shaping the ball back into the bat beautifully. However, after the early removal of Williams for 1, Abergavenny did not make the further breakthroughs that were perhaps anticipated as Hopkins and John built a solid if unspectacular partnership. However, as the sun came out and the shine came off the ball, they gradually accelerated, reaching 107-1 at the drinks break. Dan Cooke bowled a food spell and was unlucky to have a caught behind decision turned down. Tom Watkins' initial spell, along with those of Will Ford and Gavin Heritage were also fruitless and Aber were desperate for a wicket to change the game. Skipper James Schofield turned to Denning for a quick burst from one end, while introducing Mike Devoy from the Brook End. The pair immediately created pressure through some tight bowling, and although neither bowler made the breakthrough, Hopkins was run out for a fine 62, and Aber had the breakthrough they were looking for, leaving St Fagans 137-2. After Denning's short spell, Schofield turned to his other main strike bowler, and Ryan Watkins also delivered, removing John, caught behind by Greg Fury for a well made 60. With Devoy going well, picking up a deserved wicket and Tom Watkins' second spell proving successful with another two wickets, Abergavenny really reined the visitors in and restricted them to a final score of 235-7, which at one stage had looked set to be a great deal more.

Aber set out on their run chase at a rate of knots, as Andrew Jones and Fury flayed the opening bowlers to all parts with a stream of sumptuous shots, the pick being Fury's pick up over square leg which sailed into the clubhouse garden for 6. When Jones was dismissed, caught behind for 35, Aber were 84-1 off 14 overs, and ahead of the game. Fury followed shortly after for an explosive 44, caught on the deep midwicket boundary, the home side were looking for a period of consolidation and steady accumulation from the middle order. Ryan Watkins started well, but unfortunately Heritage and Will Glenn's recent poor form continued, and both were dismissed cheaply with the Beavers at 130-4 on the stroke of drinks. Schofield joined Watkins and the pair continued the assault on the target with an assured partnership, which ended with Watkins bowled by Lansdown for 43, looking to take advantage of the vacant deep midwicket. Denning joined forces with Schofield and took the score to 184 before being caught behind. Abergavenny were still well in contention and up with the rate but were steadily losing wickets, and another followed shortly afterwards as Cooke departed for 7 after an assured start. With the lower order for company, and the required rate climbing to 6 runs an over, Schofield chanced his arm one time too many and departed, caught at midwicket for 34. With that the hopes of a win were effectively over, but Devoy, Ford and Watkins ensured Aber gained extra points for being within 20 runs and not being bowled out.

An excellent game of cricket ended with Abergavenny on the wrong end of the result, with none of the top six going on to make a really telling contribution, something of a drawback on occasions this season. Nevertheless, with Usk and Panteg also coming unstuck, Aber didn't lose too much ground, though they can ill afford any more slip-ups as they chase their dreams of the title.



Abergavenny 2nd XI v Sudbrook

Beavers Pummel Pentyrch

Jones and Denning the Stars

Andrew Jones and Greg Fury got the side off to a quick start despite the wet outfield caused by a fierce shower which delayed the start by thirty minutes. Fury departed when the score reached 53 caught on the backward square leg boundary by Mike Grossett off his sons bowling. Ryan Watkins and Will Glenn quickly followed him to the pavillion but captain of the day, Gavin Heritage, gradually played his way back to form and started hitting and clearing the boundary. At the other end his partner, Andrew Jones, was batting perfectly and giving a master class in pacing an innings mixing patience with aggression and swift running between the wickets. Heritage was eventually caught at long on for 75 and this was followed by a quick bombardement by Jon Denning. When the allotted 50 overs had been completed, Jones was undefeated on 119 and Abergavenny had reached 266-5.

Pentyrch started off at a steady pace aided by a generous helping of wides and then Denning, pitching the ball up and swinging it in late trapped the opener LBW. He then proceeded to produce his best ever figures for Abergavenny as in the following overs he bowled two double wicket maidens and decimated the home side with a total haul of 3 LBWS and 5 victims clean bowled.

The home side were finally all out for 66 with Abergavenny earning maximum points leaving them just behind Panteg and gaining on leaders Usk, who lost their second successive game in the race to top the table.

Abergavenny are home on Saturday to Rogerstone

Brilliant Batsmen Vanquish Rogerstone

Abergavenny continued their quest for the title in spectacular fashion on Saturday at Avenue Road.

On winning the toss, Abergavenny skipper James Schofield asked Rogerstone to bat first on a green looking wicket in muggy conditions. Opening bowlers Ryan Watkins, and in particular, Jon Denning immediately posed problems. Denning continued his recent superlative form in a brilliant opening spell of 6 overs for just 7 runs, regularly beating the bat and being extremely unlucky not to pick up the wickets he deserved. However, Harris and Lezar battled through, only for Lezar to succumb to a full ball from youngster Dan Cooke who continued his trend of picking up a wicket in his first over. Cooke bowled a steady spell, and Tom Watkins also picked up a wicket in his fifth over, to leave Rogerstone on 109-2 off 22 overs.



Denning goes past the outside edge

Nevertheless, as the innings wore on, Harris and Manohar looked increasingly comfortable and gradually increased the run rate as Abergavenny tried to disrupt their rhythm and rang the bowling changes. In the end, Schofield turned to his opening bowlers Ryan Watkins and Denning to make the breakthrough and both obliged, Watkins removing Manohar, and Denning picking up the prize scalp of Harris for a well made 85. Tom Watkins was reintroduced and Gavin Heritage was brought on at the Brook end and between them, the pair bowled extremely tightly to drag Aber right back into the game. After two excellent direct hit runouts from the predatory Andrew Jones, the innings was finely poised at 217-7 with 5 overs remaining. Unfortunately, Webb seized the initiative, and, through a mix of good fortune and strong hits, took Rogerstone to an imposing 274 as 57 runs were plundered off the final 30 balls. Despite this, Denning still recorded the superb figures of 10-4-17-1.

At the halfway stage, Abergavenny were well aware that they had a lot of work to do to remain in contention. However, with the exception of some good bowling from Berry, openers Jones and Greg Fury were fed a surfeit of long hops in the early overs and raced to a century opening stand in just 12 overs. The pair were progressing brilliantly towards the target before a distraught Fury was caught off a full toss at deep midwicket for 55. Ryan Watkins joined Jones with the score on 136, and the pair picked off the remaining 139 with only one or two alarms, and completed the run chase in just 37.2 overs. Jones, dropped once in the fifties, went on to complete his second hundred in as many games, and despite the paucity of the opposition attack, still looked in supreme form as he dispatched the bad balls with consummate ease on his way to 115 not out. Watkins suffered nothing by comparison, and was equally severe on anything short, striking four big sixes in making an excellent unbeaten 77.

So Abergavenny continue to keep themselves in the hunt for the title but will be aware that they cannot afford any slip ups as they enter a crucial run of games against Penarth, and the two sides above them, Panteg and Usk. They will also be aware that they will need to tighten up in a few aspects of their play if they are to emerge victorious. For now, their top three can bask in the glow of a job well done in their execution of a fabulous run chase

Abergavenny Pull off tense win

Abergavenny pulled off a dramatic win in a close game against Penarth on Saturday to keep their title aspirations alive. There were any number of key contributions from different players, but the two outstanding performances came from Will Glenn with the bat, and, once again, Jon Denning with the ball.

Penarth won the toss in a game reduced to 37 overs a side after the morning rain, and elected to bowl first. Abergavenny got off to their customary fast start as Andrew Jones reduced Greg Fury to spectator status for the first wicket partnership as he raced to 26 off just 17 balls. However, in the 4th over, he was bowled after an uncharacteristic sashay down the wicket to Sims. Ryan Watkins played two lovely drives to the boundary before he too fell to Sims, bowled for 9. Fury and Gavin Heritage took the score to 65 with some excellent shots, before Fury was caught at fine leg for 19. Heritage departed four overs later for 15, immediately followed by Richy Morris, and Abergavenny's innings was in danger of imploding at 76-5 in just the 13th over. There followed a partnership of sorts as James Schofield dropped anchor, taking 20 balls to get off the mark. However, Will Glenn kept the innings moving, playing the spinners superbly. Importantly, with run rate not really an issue due to the excellent start, the pair stayed together for 10 overs, preventing the innings from being wrapped up too early. After a painstaking innings, and with the score on 106, Schofield tried to break the shackles and fell to a good tumbling catch at mid-on, trying to hit Thomas over the top. The lower order continued to hang around and support Glenn, but wickets still fell regularly, until, in the 33rd over of 37, Tom Watkins was caught and bowled, bring the innings to a close at 140 all out. Will Glenn finished unbeaten on 45, and held the innings together - without his knock, Abergavenny would have struggled to set Penarth a challenging target. As it was, they still gave Penarth an extra four overs to try and reach the 141 needed for victory - overs that could have made the difference.

Despite the disappointing performance with the bat, Abergavenny came out in very determined mood, intent on taking early wickets to put Penarth under pressure. They did exactly that, as Jon Denning continued his purple patch with the ball, removing Thomas in the first over. Ryan Watkins followed up immediately by having Provis - who had made 92 at the reverse fixture at Avenue Road - caught behind by Fury. Denning then removed Sidford and Skone in his third and fourth overs to leave the innings in tatters on 23-4. Thereafter, Penarth, through Nick and Rhys Morgan, dug in and fought well, resisting Denning and Watkins' best efforts, as well as those of Tom Watkins and Will Ford who were introduced as the first change bowlers, both of whom were well suited to bowling on a slow, turning pitch. Tom Watkins bowled a super spell of eight overs for 15 runs, but more importantly, removed the obdurate and well set Nick Morgan for 27. Ford showed signs of a welcome return to form after a difficult couple of weeks, bowling an excellent and testing first six overs, before picking up the wicket of Sims in his seventh, aided by

a very good catch by Dan Cooke at mid-off. Ford finished with 1-37 from his spell. Schofield then brought himself on to bowl some off-breaks and struck in his first over, having his opposite number Docherty well caught by Jones at midwicket. He should have had a second wicket in his next over, but Denning put down a relatively simple offering at mid-on. However, after one expensive and potentially match-deciding over from Heritage, Denning was given the chance to make amends, as Schofield gambled on bowling Penarth out early, rather than hold his opening bowlers back for the final overs. With the score on 120-7, and with just 21 runs needed off 6.2 overs, Denning changed the game in Abergavenny's favour with the final two balls of his allotment. First to go was Rhys Morgan, who had battled hard and run well, and looked like he might have taken Penarth to victory. Denning rapped him on the pads, and while the appeal for LBW hung in the balance, Jones removed all doubt by running him out anyway. Immediately, and with his final ball, Denning swung another one back in and trapped Thomas LBW first ball to leave Penarth 120-9 with 6 overs to go. Denning finished another exemplary spell with the figures of 8-2-24-4. Two overs later, the innings was wrapped up to bring this enthralling encounter to an end, as Ryan Watkins, who finished with 2-19, had last man Jones caught by Schofield to spark scenes of delight amongst the Abergavenny players. Another contribution that cannot be understated is that of Dan Cooke. Cooke was brought on to replace Heritage and kept his length and nerve superbly, and his three over spell yielded just five runs. This was crucial in preventing Penarth from getting any momentum and closing in on their target, and gave Denning and Watkins the chance to finish the game at the other end.

Abergavenny showed tremendous character and determination in the field to complete a tense but excellent victory, having left themselves up against it by failing to capitalise on their excellent start with the bat, and committing something of a sin in not batting out their overs. They now have two crucial and season defining games over Bank Holiday weekend as they take on Panteg, and then table topping Usk, both at Avenue Road

■ IN Division One of the Glamorgan and Monmouthshire Cricket League, second-placed Panteg slipped up at Chepstow and were overtaken by Abergavenny.

Chepstow won the toss. Opener Ian Bird held the Panteg innings together as Chepstow took three quick wickets.

Mohammed Ali Bukari hit four sixes and six fours in his 89 and Bird 72 in a Panteg score of 254 all out.

Jason Dobbie and Malith Madurasinghe put on 74 in a telling partnership for the seventh wicket for Chepstow. Dobbie saw Chepstow home with a boundary.

Abergavenny took full advantage of Panteg's defeat by beating Rogerstone at Avenue Road.

In what must be one of the most dramatic games ever played at Avenue Road, Abergavenny emerged victorious by just two runs over rivals Panteg, claiming the final wicket off the penultimate ball of the match, and sparking scenes of wild celebration amongst players and supporters alike. Victory tasted all the sweeter with the news that Usk had failed to beat St Fagans - a result that returned Abergavenny to the top of the table.

The result was perhaps all the more impressive for having been achieved against the odds, with Abergavenny having been asked to bat first after skipper James Schofield lost what had seemed a vital toss in light of the heavy rain on Thursday and Friday that had left the pitch damp and sticky in patches.

Opener Greg Fury departed early, a victim of the slowness of the pitch and chipping to mid-on in the second over. Ryan Watkins joined Andrew Jones and the pair displayed great patience and skill to negate the Panteg bowlers, adding 61 hard-earned runs in the next 17 overs before Watkins was bowled by Ali Bukhari for 23. Abergavenny reached 81-2 at the drinks break, a good position in the circumstances, with the feeling that 160 to 170 would be a competitive total. However, that started to look a long way off as Gavin Heritage, Jones and Richy Morris all departed to young leg spinner Jack Mayers, who bowled a super spell of 10-5-7-3, leaving the score on 86-5 from 32 overs. Jones, who survived some close appeals for LBW, had battled extremely hard for 45, and his and Watkins' contributions cannot be understated in giving Abergavenny a start to work with in difficult conditions, and allowing the lower order to take them to a competitive total.

The innings was just beginning to falter, and things would get worse as Will Glenn departed soon after, with Abergavenny on 92-6 and 15 overs of the innings still to go. Schofield was joined by Jon Denning and the pair set about rebuilding the innings and trying to reach a total that would give Abergavenny's bowlers something to work with. Denning played his best innings of the season and showed the potential that he has as a batsman, adapting his game as required at the different stages of the innings. Initially the pair played carefully, picking off ones and twos where possible, before rain interrupted the innings with nine overs to go and the score on 103. After the break, Schofield and Denning changed tack and put the Panteg bowlers and fielders under pressure, running extremely well between the wickets. Denning started to play more and more aggressively, striking a number of impressive boundaries before eventually being bowled by Bukhari for a very well made 30 from just 31 balls. Dan Cooke and Will Ford also perished in the latter overs, trying to advance the score, and it was left to Tom Watkins to join Schofield in trying to get as many runs as possible from the final five balls. In a game of fine margins, Watkins played an invaluable part with the bat, playing to instructions and allowing Schofield, who finished on 28 not out, to get back on strike for the last few balls. The last five balls yielded a vital eight runs and Abergavenny posted a competitive 167-9 from their 50 overs.

Panteg's reply began cautiously as Akhtar Balouch and James Reid faced up to an in form bowling partnership of Ryan Watkins and Jon Denning. However, despite some edges and near misses, neither was able to make the initial breakthrough Abergavenny desperately wanted to sow the seeds of doubt in the Panteg ranks. Balouch rode his luck and increased the scoring rate ominously. It was youngster Dan Cooke who eventually removed the dangerman for 33, caught behind by Greg Fury, with the score on 60 from 15 overs. Callum Reid joined his brother at the crease and instantly looked in excellent touch, as the pair advanced the score to 90 before Callum Reid was caught by Ryan Watkins off the bowling of brother Tom. The game entered a crucial phase as Panteg's key players, Ian Bird and Ali Bukhari lay in wait in the middle order to capitalise on what looked like a match winning start. However, at no point did Abergavenny give up hope, drawing on the memories of the Welsh Cup game against these opponents, when Panteg collapsed from 105-1 to 180 all out. James Schofield gambled and, after a probing but fruitless initial spell from leg-spinner Will Ford, he brought back first Ryan Watkins, then Jon Denning in order to try and spark a collapse that might bring the home side back into the game. Watkins struck immediately, having Bird well caught at gully. Bukhari replaced the Panteg skipper and looked positive from the outset, threatening to take the game away from the home side. He was dropped at deep square leg off Denning, but fortunately for Abergavenny, he perished to the same shot in the very next over from Tom Watkins, with the score on 121-4 from 29 overs. The game still looked like it was in Panteg's favour, but now Abergavenny scented an opportunity to take quick wickets and put the visitors' lower order under real pressure.

And how they responded. Jon Denning struck three times in quick succession, picking up the wickets of James Reid, LBW for 42, Rhys Jones and Chris Mee. At the other end, Tom Watkins, who was in the middle of a super spell, picked up his third wicket, removing Stewart Roden for 4 and Panteg's innings was in tatters at 127-8 from 33 overs. However, there was another twist in the tale as, just as Abergavenny were in a position to wrap up the innings, rain swept across the ground, forcing the players from the field.

When they re-emerged, the break meant that Panteg were chasing a revised target of 162 from 48 overs. Crucially however, the interruption had robbed Abergavenny of their momentum and Panteg number nine Jack Mayers was extremely fortunate to survive a very strong LBW appeal from Denning and a massive shout for caught behind off Tom Watkins. One by one, Denning, and the Watkins brothers all reached the end of their spells, with Panteg still only eight down and the score now on 141 meaning that just 21 more runs were needed from the final eight overs. Denning returned figures of 3-30, Tom Watkins picked up 3-31, and Ryan Watkins finished with 1-29 from their ten-over allocations, each of them bowling superbly.

At this point, Panteg were perhaps slight favourites, as Schofield turned to Dan Cooke and Will Ford to try and make the final breakthroughs. Both bowlers responded magnificently, and despite not picking up wickets, they restricted the visitors to such an extent that with four overs left, 12 runs were still required. The game now turned again in Panteg's favour as Mayers struck Dan Cooke for a straight six, which, in addition to a wide and a leg bye, reduced the equation to four runs needed from three overs. However, Will Ford, whose second spell was simply outstanding, bowled a maiden at Mayers, which allowed Abergavenny to retain hope as they gambled on Cooke bowling a maiden at Scott Murphy (who faced 42 balls for just five runs), and Ford being able to repeat the trick in the final over. Cooke's final over, in light of what had happened in his previous over, was outstanding, with only one run coming as a result of overthrow following a shy at the stumps. Cooke's fabulous second spell of five overs yielded just 16 runs.

And so the game came down to the final over, with Panteg needing three runs and Abergavenny wanting at least a maiden. Crucially, however, Mayers was off strike as a result of that single in the previous over. The responsibility for the final over fell to Ford and he responded magnificently, bowling a dot ball first up before having Murphy stumped off the second. Ford then bowled another two dots at last man Sean Clarke, before having him stumped off the penultimate ball of the game, leaving Panteg agonisingly short of their target. The excellence of Ford's second spell is difficult to describe, but to bowl four overs at the end of an innings, without conceding a run is a staggering achievement. The entire team played its part in the second innings, led by the contribution of all the bowlers, and backed up by a tigerish effort by the fielders that sought to fight for every single run, an effort that ultimately made the difference in this game decide by the smallest of margins.

The final wicket sparked a joyous huddle amongst the Abergavenny players and the spontaneous scenes of celebration reflected a moment that will live long in the memory of those who were privileged to have played and watched such a fantastic game of cricket

Usk Scupper Abergavenny's Hopes

After defeating Panteg and returning to the top of the table on Saturday, Abergavenny didn't manage to hang on to the top spot for long as they were sunk by second-placed Usk on Bank Holiday Monday.

The game's defining stand came from Usk's fifth wicket pair Iain Clayton and Neil Perrett, who constructed a brilliant stand of 207 and rescued the innings from the wreckage made of their top order by incisive bowling by Ryan Watkins and Jon Denning. Aber won the toss and elected to bowl to try and take advantage of any

residual moisture in the pitch, and their opening bowlers did just that, as Watkins had Portz LBW for a duck, before Denning bowled Tamplin for eight, had Warwick LBW for five and took the key wicket of James, caught at square leg as an inside edge ricocheted off his pad and looped to Will Glenn. This left the visitors 19-4, and Aber scented blood. However, Perrett and Clayton first steadied the innings to remove the possibility of total implosion and gradually stamped their authority on the bowling. Seamers Dan Cooke, Tom Watkins and Gavin Heritage struggled to return to heights they attained on Saturday and found it difficult to maintain a consistent line and length, allowing Perrett and Clayton to take advantage of some loose balls and reached 99-4 at the drinks break with the game finely poised. However, the momentum was gradually building in the visitors' favour and Aber needed to strike as soon as possible. Even the re-introduction of Denning for a two-over burst didn't yield the breakthrough Aber were hoping for and Perrett and Clayton continued on their way, steadily increasing the rate all the while. They reached a monumental 200-run partnership in the 45th over before Perrett finally departed for a well made 88, bowled by Watkins. Three overs later, Denning returned to the attack and bowled Clayton for a wonderfully calm and composed 87, before immediately removing Matt Robinson next ball. Kear and Wilcox took the score to 250-7 from their allotted 50 overs.

Faced with a stiff target, it was imperative that Abergavenny got off to a good start, and they began well, reaching 23 before Andrew Jones was victim of a dubious LBW decision, and departed for 11. Two overs later, with the score on 43, Ryan Watkins was bowled by a good ball from Portz, though there appeared to be an element of good fortune about this dismissal too, as Portz seemed to have overstepped the crease and delivered a no-ball. However, Greg Fury, having ridden his luck a little early on, and Will Glenn continued to keep Abergavenny in the race, scoring at a good rate. The score had moved on to 94 in the 21st over when Fury was brilliantly caught at long-on by James for 42. Worse was to follow as, three overs later and with young Glenn batting calmly, he was run-out for 33 as Gavin Heritage called him through for a tight single. Abergavenny were well in the game, and keeping up with the required rate, but were just losing wickets too frequently for comfort. Unfortunately this would continue as James Schofield (12), young debutant Alex Astley-Jones (11) and Jon Denning (10) each perished after having played themselves in well and progressed the innings nicely in partnership with Heritage. Sadly, the writing was on wall with the fall of Denning at 171-7, and it became a matter of how many Abergavenny could get, and how long they could delay Usk's moment of triumph. Dan Cooke, Will Ford and Tom Watkins all departed in quick succession, leaving Heritage stranded on a well made 43 not out, and Aber were all out for 189 in the 42nd over.

So a disappointing Bank Holiday for Abergavenny, and the result means Usk have once again leapfrogged Abergavenny into first place, and with three games to play, their destiny is in their own hands. It remains for Abergavenny to focus on trying to win their remaining fixtures and put as much pressure as possible on the league leaders in the hope that they will slip up at some point.

Abergavenny Suffer Second Setback

The wheels came off Abergavenny's title challenge at Chepstow on Saturday, as the home side won an enthralling encounter by two wickets.

Still harbouring hopes of winning the league, Abergavenny knew they had to try and take maximum points from every game, and hope Usk and St Fagans slipped up along the way. Skipper James Schofield won the toss and elected to bat first on what looked a pretty good wicket. The early overs held promise as Greg Fury and Andrew Jones struck a number of early boundaries off Sellers and Dobbie as they reached 33 off the first nine overs. However, the true nature of the pitch was revealed as the accurate medium seamers of the Chepstow first change bowlers, and suffocating field settings meant that run accumulation was a tortuous experience on a very low and slow surface. Fury was eventually caught at mid-on trying to break the shackles, bringing Ryan Watkins to the crease. Five overs later, Jones fell to a good low catch at short cover, bringing to an end an uncharacteristically stodgy knock from the opener. Youngster Will Glenn set about building a good partnership with Watkins, who looked in good form. With the score on 92 from 27 overs, Glenn was caught behind, and Abergavenny were just about in a position to kick on and post a respectable target. Gavin Heritage also appeared in good touch after his knock against Usk on Bank Holiday Monday. With the fourth wicket pair progressing nicely, it came as something of a surprise when Watkins was bowled by Sellers, bringing to an end a super knock of 60. However, his dismissal brought about a drop in scoring rate as youngster Alex Astley-Jones found this a difficult experience, that will nevertheless stand him in good stead as he enjoys a run in the first team at the end of the season. It took the arrival of Schofield to inject some impetus back into the innings as he and Heritage ran well, and picked off the bad balls that came their way. The loss of Heritage for a well made 30 didn't particularly affect the scoring rate as Chaitanya Sanapala maintained the momentum with equally energetic running. With some late contributions from Ben Pike and Tom Watkins, Aber posted 195-8, a total they felt was a good return on that wicket.

However, opener James got the Chepstow reply off to a flyer, striking several sumptuous boundaries off Ryan Watkins' opening five-over spell, on his way to 30, before being trapped LBW by Tom Watkins at the other end. Tom had already had Watson caught at slip by Jones in an opening burst of 2-26. Chepstow looked ahead of the game, despite those two wickets, as Pike and Will Ford proved expensive in their early overs. Schofield introduced himself into the attack, and although he bowled a few too many boundary balls, he did pick up the wicket of Dobbie, well caught by Astley-Jones off a full toss. Ford had now settled into a lovely groove, and in his sixth over, was rewarded with two wickets, leaving the home side on 117-5 and the game in the balance. In between some testing deliveries, more loose balls from Schofield were well put away by Kings, and the score advanced to 142, before the captain reintroduced Ryan Watkins in his stead. Watkins struck three times in his first two overs to reduce Chepstow to 143-8. However, neither he, nor Will Ford (who finished an excellent ten-over spell with the figures of 2-27), nor Tom Watkins could make the next decisive breakthrough, as Chepstow's positive early run rate allowed Dickinson the opportunity to just block out an end, while Kings continued calmly past 50. Ultimately, despite a good little spell from Sanapala, Kings guided the home side to victory with four balls to spare, compiling an excellent 71 not out.

So a second successive disappointment for Abergavenny, who were hampered by the losses of Jon Denning and Dan Cooke from their bowling resources. Nevertheless, they rightly felt they had scored enough to win the game, but just couldn't quite finish the job in the field. It is likely that any title aspirations they may

have held have disappeared for another year, but they will be determined to finish the season on a high note and do what they can to keep the pressure up on the leading pair

Presentation Evening September 30th 2011

First Team Player of the Year 2011.



John Denning – Presented by Skipper James Schofield

2nd X1 Player of the Year



Matt Knight- Presented by Jon Viveash

3rd X1 Player of the Year



Mark Winstanley- Presented by John Roberts

4th X1 Player of the Year



Nick Francis- Presented by Lawrie Watts

Other Awards

Most Promising Player to Lewis Holley

Clubman of Year award to Eryl Cooke and Cricket Committee award to Greg Fury

There was a special "Stonewall" award for Nick Kinman

U17 awards - Player of Year to Matt Knight, Manager's Award to Garin Price

League Player of the Year 2011

After Greg Fury winning the 2010 award, an Abergavenny player has been awarded the honour of Player of the Year again. Jon Denning easily topped the bowling averages with season figures of 32 wickets at an average of 9.31. The wickets haul was extremely impressive as Jon missed five games through injuries throughout the season. His best figures were achieved at Penttyrch when he claimed 8-22 followed by 5-24 versus Penarth, but possibly his outstanding performance was against League Champions Usk where the left arm bowler took out half the Usk team for 37 runs.

