

BOND TIMBER CORNWALL CRICKET LEAGUE SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022

It seems a long time ago but I'll start this annual report with a reminder as to where we were with Covid twelve months ago. That read *"At the time of writing, in mid-January (2022), the highly transmissible Omicron Covid variant, that emerged at the end of November 2021, seems to have peaked and restrictions are being reduced. The hope, therefore, is we can have as normal a 2022 season as possible."*

Those hopes duly materialised and a week before the season began the ECB issued this statement: *"On 1 April, the Government's guidance on COVID-19 measures for grassroots sport participants and providers was lifted. To align with this policy change, ECB has also removed any cricket-specific guidance relating to COVID-19. As such, clubs and leagues will no longer be required to follow any protocols aside from the single piece of public health guidance issued by the UK Health Security Agency."*

"This good news means we have the green light to return to business as usual for the 2022 season. However, we continue to encourage players and volunteers in the game to be responsible and considerate to others."

It meant after two seasons of disruption the 2022 Cornwall Cricket League season, thankfully, went ahead as normal.

Season Summary: Of 1526 scheduled League games 1301 were completed, 83 were abandoned, 83 were cancelled due to weather, and 60 were conceded, an increase from 33 in the previous year.

Milton Abbot CC withdrew from the League in mid-March having joined in 2013 following the demise of the Tamar Saturday League. In October St Buryan CC, who joined the League in 1947 after playing in the West Penwith League from the turn of the century, very sadly folded. They were County Champions in 1999 & 2000. During the season itself, there was some disruption in the lower divisions when three teams withdrew. Porthleven seconds from Division 6 West on 30 May, having conceded four games. Tideford seconds from Division 5 East on 9 August, also having conceded four games. Gulval seconds automatically from Division 5 West on 26 August after a fifth concession.

Having boosted numbers Tideford seconds and Gulval seconds have both been readmitted for 2023. After missing a season it is also very pleasing to see Gorrán return to the League, along with Luckett seconds. At the end of January 2023, following the publication of the fixtures, St Just fourths withdrew from Division 5 West. It leaves 66 clubs to compete with 142 teams in 13 divisions.

Division 6 Central has 11 teams and Division 6 West and East have seven teams each, playing each other three times. It means no team is scheduled for less than 18 games, with the earliest-ever start date of 15 April. This is due to the demise, at the request of clubs (87%), of all Bank Holiday Mondays scheduling in recent years so we now play 22 successive Saturdays.

The weather was kind in 2022 with only three Saturdays being affected. Overnight heavy rain resulted in 24 games being cancelled on 4 June. A fortnight later heavy showers around tea-time saw 52 games abandoned. The penultimate weekend of 3 September saw heavy morning rain wash out all games in the west and only five were played to a conclusion in the east with a total of 46 cancelled and 13 abandoned. A prolonged dry spell in July and August produced drought conditions and water restrictions. Exceptionally, Saturday 13 August was hot and sunny with temperatures of 29 degrees. There was just one Saturday match cancelled in nine weeks.

Another dry spring meant the Premier T20 Kernow Crash went ahead uninterrupted over the first month of pool games. It led again to a Sunday Finals Day at Grampound Road, in sunny conditions in early July. Wadebridge (136-7) beat Penzance by three wickets in the semi-final and St Just in the final by 96 runs after Matt Robins hit 99 in the 185-7. St Just had beaten St Austell in the second semi-final by 38 runs after making 178-6.

The previous day Wadebridge had won at Penzance in the Premier League. With one game of the first half remaining, they moved to within three points of the champions and only 22 points covered the top five clubs. However, Wadebridge lost to St Just the following week and by mid-August, the Penzance lead was 42 points over St Just, with just four games to play. The title was secured on Bank Holiday Saturday with two games to spare. Penzance beat Hayle at home by eight wickets but it was only eighty minutes later, when St Just's defeat at St Austell was confirmed, the corks could be popped at St Clare. Penzance ended 47 points ahead of St Just with Wadebridge ten points further back in third. Camborne were two points behind in fourth place and St Austell made up the top half.

The drama came at the bottom where after 10 games, remarkably, Truro had failed to win and were 41 points adrift. A professional was employed and fortunes changed as four wins followed. With the penultimate weekend wash-out, the final day arrived with Truro and Werrington tied on 147 points and Callington just five points better off. Truro's fate was virtually sealed when they were dismissed for only 75 against St Austell at Boscawen Park, after electing to bat. St Austell knocked off the runs before 5 pm for the loss of four wickets. With a haul of just two bonus points, Truro were ensured to finish bottom as Werrington and Callington had already picked up bowling bonus points. Both went on to win their games at Redruth and Camborne respectively. Truro ended 16 points adrift to be relegated for the first time, having been founder members of the League in 1905.

In County Division One Beacon, having won their second game at Helston, led for the first half of the season but they then lost three in a row in early July and were overtaken by Helston. They went on to win the division by a comfortable 57 points from Grampound Road. Beacon ended a point behind in third place. Paul, St Erme and Falmouth, thanks to a late-season winning run, completed the top half of the table. At the bottom Werrington seconds only won a couple of late games and ended 40 points adrift. Lanhydrock ensured survival on the final day by winning at Mullion whilst any hopes that Callington seconds had of avoiding the drop ended when they lost heavily to Falmouth.

In Division 2 West Penzance seconds only lost two games and finished 63 points ahead of Camborne seconds. St Gluvias were well adrift at the foot with Barripper also being relegated. Hayle seconds comfortably won Division 3 with a 35-point advantage over Ludgvan.. Gerrans and Praze had quite a tussle in Division 4 but the Roseland club eventually prevailed by 12 points. The Camborne club had a good year and the thirds beat local rivals Crofty Holman by 22 points to take the Division 5 title. Two clubs, who not long ago faced each other in County Division 1, had a battle royal in Division 6 West. Rosudgeon eventually headed Troon by 12 points. It was very similar in Division 6 Central where St Day won their title race with Mawnan by just 11 points.

In Division 2 East Roche and Wadebridge's seconds contended for much of the season but Roche remained unbeaten to win the title by 31 points. At the bottom, Menheniot Looe's final day win over Wadebridge seconds narrowly relegated Grampound Road seconds, with Tideford and Callington thirds also going down. St Minver ran away with Division 3 by 64 points from St Austell's thirds. Division 4 was highly competitive throughout but Pencarrow's final day win saw them end 11 points ahead of Saltash St Stephens with Liskeard and Launceston seconds 'highly commended' for their season efforts. It was a great season for the St Minver club as their second eleven won Division 5 by 30 points from St Stephen. St Austell fourths topped Division 6 with a 44-point advantage from Gunnislake.

The regular season finished on a sombre note with the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II being announced on 8 September less than 48 hours before the final round of league fixtures. With all football postponed an uncertain Friday resulted in the ECB giving their approval for games to go ahead with respect and mourning guidance of a minute's silence, black armbands and flags at half-mast. Therefore, on a warm and sunny afternoon, final day issues were able to be decided on the field.

The East v West County Finals completed the season on Saturday 17 September. Penzance seconds (172-9) beat Roche by 31 runs in the Division Two Final at Vryan. Penzance had to work hard for runs against a lively Roche attack let down at crucial moments by the spilling of half a dozen catches. St Minver won the division three final at Redruth defeating Hayle seconds by four wickets with three overs to spare after being set 132. Pencarrow dominated at Lanhydrock to win the division four final by eight wickets. Gerrans collapsed to 36-6 before mustering 123 all out. St Minver seconds made it a club double in an excellent division five final at St Stephen. They beat Camborne thirds by just three runs in a game of over 400 runs. Needing 207 Camborne ended on 203-9 when they could only manage four singles off the last over. St Austell fourths took the division six crown at St Gluvias beating St Day by 33 runs after making 182-6.

Werrington won the Clive Rosevear Insurance Hawkey Cup defeating hosts St Austell, who have been runners-up in three of the last four finals. St Austell slumped to 10-4 before a recovery to 101-9. Werrington won by seven wickets with five overs to spare. Sadly the year ended with the passing of former League President Clive Rosevear at the age of 88. Had it not been for Covid last season would have been the thirtieth-anniversary final of his company's sponsorship of the Hawkey Cup. The sponsorship, along with the Rosevear Cup, will continue in his memory.

Penzance beat St Just, also by seven wickets, in the Bradleys Vinter Cup Final getting the 110 required at the beginning of the 16th over. However, it transpired that they played a 'cup-tied' player and were subsequently disqualified. Therefore, it was St Just (161-6) who won the WT Edwards Cup for the 14th time with a seven-run win over Werrington in a well-contested game at Truro. It was the sixth defeat in nine appearances for Werrington.

The Vitality Club Twenty/20 Area Finals Day saw St Just travel to Bridgwater which, it seems, is set to be an annual central venue for the Wales & West group. They made 158-8 against Newport who went on to win by three wickets with

five balls to spare. Newport then lost to Devon's Bradninch in the Area Final. Bradninch had beaten Bristol in the semi-final.

Perranporth won the Eden Motorhomes Division 2 Cup at Redruth sensationally hitting 242-3 in 20 overs in the final against Penzance seconds to retain the 'Raymond Reseigh Trophy'. They won by a huge margin of 159 runs. Player of the Match Josh Anderson completed his century (101) with 6 sixes and 9 fours off 53 balls. Lous Rudin (79) had helped to add 180 for the second wicket. Stithians and Roche were the losing semi-finalists.

St Minver won the Clive Rosevear Cup for the first time on a very hot mid-July Sunday at Lanhydrock. They bowled out the host's second eleven for 83 in the final and went on to win by ten wickets. Boconnoc and St Austell thirds were the losing semi-finalists.

Hayle's seconds secured the Andrew Cup for the second time. They recovered from 59-5 off 12 overs to make 135-8 against Praze at Mount Ambrose. Praze never fully recovered from 10-3 in the third over and were eventually bowled out for 115.

The Mining Division Evening League final was a 'joyous affair' at Falmouth where local pub side Sea View Old Boys defeated the hosts by eight wickets to claim the 'Michael Evans Trophy' for the first time. Falmouth were dismissed for 88. Wendron and Perranporth were defeated in the semi-finals.

However, Sea View Old Boys lost to Gulval by 42 runs in the West Cornwall Challenge match at Helston a week later. It completed a treble for Gulval who had already bagged the Peter George Cup and the West Penwith Evening League after St Just had won the WPEL Runciman Cup.

A new evening competition, the *East Cornwall Evening League* was initiated with, it has to be said, a mixed response. Ten teams entered, placed in two groups, but half of the 40 games were conceded. The geography of East Cornwall is no doubt a factor for evening cricket. A final was played with Callington taking St Austell at Liskeard on 18 July in 'exceptional heat' of 31 degrees at 6 pm. With such temperatures forecasted the League even resorted to asking the competing clubs and umpires if they were happy to play ahead of the day. They did and St Austell won the game by six wickets.

Sadly it was a far too busy year for our Compliance Secretary Robert Jobson who has provided the following 2022 report:

"Despite repeated pre-season and early season requests by Cornwall Cricket's leaders for club captains to lead by example and players to "let their cricket do the talking", 20 individuals and seven clubs were reported for misconduct in 2022.

The current policy of the Cornwall Cricket League, in accord with legal advice on privacy and data protection issues, is not to publicise the identities of offenders but instead to produce an end-of-year summary of their offences and the sanctions imposed.

The majority of the 2022 offences, similar in number to 2021, again involved across-the-board dissent towards panel umpires, club umpires and player umpires, and verbal abuse of both these officials and opponents.

Penalties imposed by the League's disciplinary panel ranged from 4 match immediate bans to 1 match-suspended bans and final warnings, while it emerged a few weeks after one such incident that a serial offender had been expelled from his club midway through a game.

Among those given final warnings by umpires for dissent and/or verbal abuse were 4 Premier Division captains. In other team sports these individuals would have been at risk of dismissal from the field, followed by lengthy suspensions.

In addressing such breaches, the Cornwall League was compelled to adhere to the ECB's new General Conduct Regulations, imposed nationwide in April 2022 to deal with escalating levels of misconduct off the field as well as on. These regulations restrict most club cricket offences to Levels 1 and 2, with Level 3 reserved for threats of violence and Level 4 to acts of violence.

While there was an allegation received in Cornwall of a player umpire being the victim of Level 4 violence, the evidence examined at a hearing led to that matter being downgraded to Level 2 'non-dangerous contact' and the offender receiving a suspended 5-game ban.

Similarly, when a complaint was received from a woman player that she had been the target of sexist comments by an opponent from overseas, the alleged offender could have been charged at Level 3/4 under previous regulations, and possibly banned for 10 or more games.

However, amid conflicting evidence presented to a League panel, the accused, having denied being sexist, was found on the evidence of an umpire and on the balance of probabilities to have made an offensive, insulting remark for which he was given a suspended 2-match ban.

Following a social media furore about this outcome, and the aggrieved complainant going public, the offender's club opted to protect him by not selecting him for the next 2 matches. This led to the complainant's appeal to Cornwall Cricket Board being withdrawn by her club.

Another high-profile case, circulated by an unidentified third party across social media, involved a fielder and a bowler celebrating the fall of a wicket by simulating an act of gross indecency in view of a live stream camera.

For this Level 2 offence of making obscene, insulting gestures and bringing cricket into disrepute, the offenders were banned for 8 and 6 matches.

The case of a Tier 3 male adult reported for verbally abusing and allegedly threatening a girl opponent was referred to the ECB's Safeguarding Unit, which opted not to intervene. The offender, who had admitted some but not all of the allegations, was banned by his club for 3 matches, a course of action endorsed by the League.

On social media, one club was reported by a neighbouring club for its members posting offensive comments about an opposing player, only for that player to request no further action. Elsewhere a player's obscene post-match comments about an opposing captain resulted in a 4-match suspended ban.

In November a club complained to the League that a member of the cricket community had posted an offensive tweet about a BBC Sport presenter/World Cup pundit.

A number of sanctions, including a requirement for the offender to attend and complete Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training approved by the Cornwall Cricket Board and England and Wales Cricket Board, were imposed after the offender was found by a disciplinary panel to have posted an offensive tweet and conducted themselves in a manner prejudicial to the best interests of cricket, which may bring or did bring the Cornwall Cricket League into disrepute.

During the 2022 season, Five Tier 1 clubs were found to have fielded under-age players in their lower teams in League matches in contravention of ECB safety guidance and were sent warning letters. Any repetition of such an offence in 2023 is likely to result in fines and points deductions for clubs who breach this rule."

Signed: Robert Jobson (CCL Compliance Secretary), January 15, 2023.

The 2023 AGM will be the third to be held on Zoom with the rules ballot again being completed online. As last year there was a 100% return. A new option to pay for cricket balls and competition entries via Bank Transfers has also proved popular in 2023 with more than 60% of clubs opting to use the technology.

On the field, electronic scoring continues to increase – up from 42.7% to 44.4% in 2022 - again exceeding the ECB target. Also, five Premier Clubs regularly live-streamed games in 2022 – Camborne, Hayle, Penzance, Truro and Wadebridge plus Beacon did some in County Division 1.

The move to all transfers being done electronically in 2022 proved to be a success, once clubs got to grips with the system. There were 260 transfers in all including free agents – players who had not played in the previous season.

Our annual ECB Play-Cricket Registration 'cull' took place on 30 September to only retain players who have played in the last two years. It left 3844 Players Registered of which 1364 (35%) were full play-cricket members and 2480 Temporary members. From May 2022 players can only now view their stats if fully signed up members so even more reason to encourage members to sign up.

The League Management Committee will see some changes at the top table in 2023. St Austell's Stuart Wilder steps up from Vice-Chair to replace Mark Mitchell, who has been Chair for three of the most challenging years in League history. Also, Treasurer Chris Marsh is retiring after eight years in the post. The LMC are proposing him as a Vice-President in

recognition of his service. Jon Lambert is set to replace him but will also continue as Registrations Secretary. Michelle Kent is nominated to handle the Eastern Results role.

My usual thanks to the local press and to *BBC Radio Cornwall* for their coverage. Also thanks to Bond Timber, Clive Rosevear Insurance, Bradleys Estate Agents, Eden Motorhomes and Tiflex for their valued sponsorships. Thanks also to clubs who provided facilities for finals, club officials for their assistance during the year, Umpires, Scorers, Groundsmen and of course club volunteers.

Finally, if I may on a personal note, can I thank everyone for their calls, emails, cards etc following the announcement of my award of a Medal of the Order of the British Empire (BEM) for 'services to Cricket in Cornwall' in the 2023 King's New Year Honours List. It came as a complete shock and having to keep it confidential for over a month was the hardest thing ever in my 30 years as a League Management Committee Member! I'm honoured and humbled to receive the award on behalf of Cornish Cricket.

Thank You.

*Michael Weeks BEM
Hon. Secretary
February 2023*