

## **BOND TIMBER CORNWALL CRICKET LEAGUE SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

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It seems one way or another that the weather always has an impact on the Cornish cricket season and 2024 certainly didn't disappoint! The start was delayed after the wettest winter in living memory, followed by an ordinary summer in terms of warmth with rain continuing to play its part on and off. Only 75% of games were completed, as low as any season in the last decade. Cancelled games accounted for 13.6%, abandoned games 7.5 % and, on top of that, 3.5% were conceded.

The season summary: of 1,535 scheduled League games, 1,156 were completed, 116 were abandoned, 210 were cancelled due to weather, and 53 conceded, an increase from 29 in the previous year. In Tier 1, just as in 2023, 16 games were decided by the DLS method.

It wasn't all doom and gloom, with half the Saturdays seeing dry days but there were no heatwaves. Only on 11th May, under blue skies, and on 31st August did the temperature nudge up to 20 degrees. Midweek fared little better and a jacket for the Evening Cup Finals was never being overdressed. However, rain showers on 25 May ruined 41 of 71 games. On 6 July almost half the league programme (33 games) were brought forward to earlier start times due to England's Euro quarter-final against Switzerland. It was also a day of heavy showers that interrupted all but one game in Tier 1

On 20 July heavy rain saw a total washout with all 71 games cancelled. It was Déjà vu as on the corresponding weekend a year earlier the same total washout happened! August it seems also never escapes disruption and on Saturday 10th half of the games were either abandoned or cancelled. Then, to 'bookend the season', the final Saturday, 7 September saw only 18 of 61 games completed as rain set in from the south in mid-afternoon. A soggy end to complement an extremely soggy beginning.

The season had begun with this dramatic League statement on 3rd April *"Following consultation with all ten Premier Division clubs, the LMC has agreed to cancel this year's Premier T20 Kernow Crash competition, which was due to be played 13 April – 4 May. It follows the wettest winter on record with double average rainfall and the forecast of an unsettled April."*

*"This is placing our volunteer groundskeepers in an impossible situation which is worsening by the day. It will allow groundskeepers to concentrate on preparing for Premier Division cricket commencing on May 11. The amount of rainfall in recent months left one experienced groundskeeper saying "In 30-plus years the ground has never been as bad as this. It is far too soft for any cylinder mower or light, medium, or heavy rollers. There is no prospect at present of using those in April. Conditions are getting worse and worse". The statement added: "As usual, the other divisions of the League, including County Division One, can mutually agree to reschedule games for any Sundays or Bank Holidays throughout the season, provided seven days' notice is given. If not mutually agreed, cancelled fixtures will be awarded six points each."*

The decisions by clubs since 2008 to drop, one by one, the three Bank Holiday Mondays from the schedules resulted in the Cornwall League planning to start earlier than anyone else in the country in 2024 – April 13th - the earliest ever in CCL history.

The previous year only five games survived the mid-April start and 2024 was even worse with not a single game of the original 58 starting. The second weekend fared a little better, with only 8 of 62 games being completed. Then, to compound matters, it rained on 27th April during the afternoon, to only allow 10 games to complete. In summary, the three April weekends saw only 18 of 192 fixtures completed. 8 were abandoned, 78 were cancelled and 87 re-scheduled.

The following Bank Holiday weekend saw 50 games completed but still 15 were cancelled as some grounds struggled to become fit. The first month saw a total of 54 games agreed to be cancelled in advance, and share the points, as one or both clubs did not wish to reschedule. Twenty years ago all Saturday weather postponed games were rearranged and all three Bank Holidays played as a matter of course– a sign of changing times.

The make-up of the League saw St Ives Seconds withdraw from Division 5 West in mid-March and Grampond Road Fourths were removed on 11 August after conceding a fifth game in Division 6 Central.

For 2025 the numbers have been boosted with the returns of Crofty Holman seconds and St Just fourths, plus Buckland Monachorum has entered a second XI for the first time. It leaves 67 clubs to compete with 147 teams in 15 divisions – yes expanded by two to 15 divisions – more below.

The number of teams in the League has remained steady over the last decade with 150 teams in 2015 and no lower than 140 at any point since.

There is a change for 2025 with all divisions, apart from the lowest, made up of 10 teams. An informal survey was held in Autumn 2023. Around 40% of clubs indicated they preferred 10 Teams, but with several clubs not submitting a reply no action was taken at the time.

However, the League was well aware that around 10 clubs don't have use of grounds before May, plus many teams struggle to field teams in the spring and autumn cross-over periods. With a second successive season delayed due to weather, the LMC decided to formally test the water (pardon the pun) by conducting, within the rules, an email postal ballot, for all clubs to have a say in three weeks. The result was surprising – not least to the LMC, it has to be said.

The ballot result, with all 67 clubs voting, was announced on 2nd May.

With three options available, the 'Alternative Vote System' was to apply. However, it turned out that one option received over 50% on the first count.

The electorate was made up of 67 clubs - 19 x 1 team (1 vote) , 48 x 2 or more Teams (2 votes) = 115 Votes Available

<b>Club's First Choices:</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Clubs</b>
<b>Option 1 – The Status Quo - 12 Teams &amp; No Bank Holidays</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>38.26%</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Option 2 – Ten Team Divisions</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>53.91%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Option 3 – Play on Bank Holidays - 12 Team Divisions</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7.83%</b>	<b>5</b>

**Summary** by Votes - 54% in favour of 10 Teams and 46% in favour of 12 Teams  
by Clubs - 58% in favour of 10 Teams and 42% in favour of 12 Teams

**Option 2 – Ten Team Divisions** is carried by a clear majority of **53.91% of votes**

On 26th June the League issued detailed scenarios of where teams needed to finish in 2024 to be placed in each division for 2025. Four scenarios accounted for whether the four teams to be relegated from County Division 1 were returning to the East or West Section respectively. The usual promotion rules applied to all divisions.

In the re-structure Division 4 becomes part of Tier 2. Eight teams were thus relegated and 28 teams were promoted. The new Division 7 has three sections, with eight teams in the East playing 18 games on Saturdays, and ten in the West also playing 18 games. The Nine teams in the Central have voted in a ballot (7-2) to play 16 home and away games, rather than adding two additional random non-Saturday games.

The season for all clubs is due to start on 3rd May and continue until 30th August, aligning with leagues in the various other South West counties. All divisions will play using the same matrix, so there is no requirement for the early season T20 Premier Cup, which had previously filled in blank early season Saturdays for the 10 Team Premier Division.

To the cricket: Penzance won the Premier Division for the fourth time in five attempts and claimed a record 26th County title. They were given a run by Callington but were crowned champions on a balmy late summer evening at St Clare, winning the title with a game to spare. They went into the penultimate day leading Callington by 13 points. They dismissed visitors St Austell for 55 and won by eight wickets in just over two hours.

The events at Callington, which were streamed, were then followed keenly with the home side needing to beat Redruth to take the title race to the final day. Redruth, requiring 132, slipped to 40-3 but won by five wickets just after six o'clock, to set off the celebrations 70 miles away at Penzance.

With rain then seeing matches abandoned on the final day, at least the Premier Division title had already been decided.

The season began on 11th May when at Camborne a dramatic finish saw Callington achieve a tie – 252 runs apiece - with a run out off the final ball. Penzance took maximum points at newly promoted Truro to lead after week one.

However, in Round 4 Penzance were dismissed for 57 at Callington and lost by five wickets. Redruth and St Austell moved up to equal top but only five points covered the top five teams.

Penzance won convincingly at home against champions Wadebridge by eight wickets. Then on the 15 June, they drew level with Redruth, following a DLS home win over Camborne, who were at the foot of the table and, minus Lewis Goldsworthy, were never able to properly recover.

Penzance took maximum points at Werrington to lead Redruth by three points after seven games – and they were not to be headed for the rest of the season. A comprehensive home win over the 'Reds' extended the lead to 20 points. Meanwhile, St Just slipped to the bottom after eight games. At the halfway mark a couple of DLS results saw St Austell beat Penzance by seven runs and Callington win at Redruth by 10 runs.

After 9 games the table read: Penzance 138, Callington 122, St Austell 121, Redruth 119. At the bottom St Just 76, Werrington 80 and Camborne 89.

The gap between Penzance and Callington remained through July though Penzance crucially squeezed home by two wickets with just two balls to spare in their home game with Helston.

It set up a Round 13 top-two clash at Penzance on 3 August. Callington ran out winners by one wicket off the final ball of the match late into the evening at St Clare. It left Penzance nine points clear at the top with five games to play. Camborne were now bottom on 113 with St Just 121 and Helston 130.

Round 14 saw the title race take a turn in the favour of Penzance with the weather having a big say. Penzance won a DLS game at Wadebridge, whilst title rivals Callington had to settle for an abandoned game at home to St Just. It meant the Penzance lead was doubled from nine to 18 points with just four games to play.

Penzance then looked to be cruising to victory at Camborne but dramatically could only tie on 185, while Callington beat Helston by two wickets in a low-scoring game at Moores Park. With three to play: Penzance 220, Callington 206, Wadebridge 180. At the bottom Camborne 132, Helston 142, St Just 147.

On August Bank Holiday Saturday Penzance and Callington both gained comprehensive wins and the gap was 13 points with two games to play. Penzance won at home to Werrington by 113 runs and Callington won at Wadebridge by seven wickets. Camborne lost at St Just by four wickets and were 24 points behind Helston, who beat Truro, with two games to play. On the penultimate weekend, Camborne was confirmed as finishing bottom, after losing at Werrington by 99 runs in a game they had to win to have any survival hopes on the final day.

Final Premier standings: Penzance 270, Callington 240, Wadebridge 210, St Austell 207, Redruth 199, Werrington 197, Truro 195, St Just 192, Helston 176, Camborne 154.

In County Division One Beacon clinched the title after a dramatic final day. Their one previous success was 31 years ago in 1993 in the fourth year of the competition. They went into the final day knowing Grampound Road had to better their points tally with the clubs tied but Beacon won the head-to-head by just a point. With the weather forecast in mind, Falmouth and Roche agreed to earlier starts. It yielded dividends for Beacon who bowled Falmouth out for 61 and swept to a ten-wicket victory to claim the title with maximum points. It was just in time as rain set in within the hour. Meanwhile, Grampound Road were also able to force a home victory over Roche who batted the fifty overs to make 152-7. The Road eased home by seven wickets.

At the halfway mark Beacon were eighth in the table on 116 points but did have two games in hand on leaders Newquay (146) with Grampound Road just a point behind with two games in hand. By the end of July, Grampound Road led Pld 14-225, Paul Pld 15 – 207 and Beacon Pld 14-199. Beacon were embarking on a remarkable run of 14 straight wins having lost successive games at the beginning of June. The 'Road' lost twice including a DLS game at home to Beacon on 10 August. They still ended up being promoted as Beacon's second eleven are too low in the League structure presently. At the bottom Penzance's seconds were detached, failing to win a single game. The second elevens of Camborne and Wadebridge also looked doomed to finishing in the bottom four throughout. Roche also looked set for relegation until three successive wins in late August saw them eventually finish 14 points above Mullion.

Final County 1 standings: Beacon 352, Grampound Road 350, Hayle 300, Paul 271, St Erme 263. Newquay 258, Falmouth 254, Roche 229, Mullion 215, Wadebridge II 189, Camborne II 188, Penzance II 89.

Perranporth will play Tier 1 cricket for the first time in 2025 and become the 44th club to do so since the County Divisions were formed in 1990. They comfortably won Division 2 West with a 50-point margin over Stithians. Meanwhile, St Austell Seconds return to Tier 1 after a three-year gap. It is the fourth time they have been promoted to this level. They finished 33 points ahead of Werrington seconds.

Wendron won a keen race to top Division Three West by 12 points from Gulval with Mount Ambrose a close third. Rosudgeon continued to rise the divisions as they won Division Four by 16 points at the expense of St Erme seconds. There was quite a title race in Division Five with Helston thirds edging out Troon by a point on a rain-ruined final day. Constantine's seconds competed well to finish third while Beacon's seconds, having led for much of the season fell away with a cancellation and two defeats at the end 19 points off the top. Newcomers Hellesveor dominated to claim the Division 6 title from Gulval seconds. Similarly, Ladock seconds made no mistake in Division 6 Central ending 56 points ahead of Perranarworthal thirds.

In the east Lockett are another club returning to its former glories. They convincingly won Division Three by 72 points from St Austell thirds. The St Austell club will have a team in each of the top three divisions in 2025. It was a close run thing in Division Four with St Neot edging the title from St Blazey seconds by just three points. Gorran are another club it is good to report that are back on the up as they dominated Division Five to end up 72 points ahead of Wadebridge's thirds. It was all smiles on the border at Lockett whose second team made it a club double taking the Division 6 title by 35 points from Tintagel seconds.

After a disappointing summer, weatherwise ironically the County Finals Day was played out under blue skies and unbroken warm sunshine on Saturday 14 September, allowing the sun to literally 'set on the season'. In the Division Two final at Lanhydrock St Austell Seconds made short work of beating Perranporth by eight wickets in a game of less than 34 overs. The last six wickets fell for two runs in less than six overs. Requiring 75 St Austell secured victory in the 18th over. In Division Three Robbie Piper led the way for Lockett with bat and ball as the resurgent Tamar Valley club defeated Wendron, another club on the comeback trail, by 68 runs at sun-baked St Gluvias. Opening the batting, after his team had been inserted, Piper showed sound judgement on a drying pitch to score 59 in a total of 158. There was an excellent game at St Minver where Rosudgeon & Kennegey, playing in a second consecutive County Final, claimed the Division Four crown but only by the narrow margin of 11 runs against St Neot. Opener Stephen Bertrand batted through the Rosudgeon innings to make 105 not out as the West Cornwall side posted 201-3 in 40 overs.

In Division Five at Mount Hawke & Porthtowan's Victory ground the club successfully staged their first county final with Helston Thirds defeating Gorran by five wickets. With top order regulars missing Gorran were reduced to 35-5 and 67-7 and an early finish looked on the cards. However, Geoff Goostrey hit three sixes in his 32 and Matthew Liddicoat made 32 not out to reach 137-9 off the 40 overs. Kannan Mathivannan (26) continued his good end-of-season form and with Michael Smith making 40 the winning runs came with over six overs to spare. Hellesveor completed a great first season in the League to win a competitive Division Six final at St Stephen defeating Lockett Seconds by four wickets. Richard Seeley made 32 for Lockett sharing an opening stand of 112 with Martin Budge who went on to hit 4 sixes and 10 fours in his 97. Dillon Hart took 5-53 and Jason Shaw 3-29. The Hellesveor reply was built on a third wicket stand of 123 between Dave Marsh (56) and Hart who hit 3 sixes in his 87.

In one of the great Clive Rosevear Insurance Hawkey Cup Finals Callington beat Wadebridge in a thriller on a balmy evening at St Austell by just four runs. It was a night of records with the aggregate of 356 runs beating the previous record of 344 in the 2003 Final between Newquay and Menheniot. The highest individual score in a final was also achieved with Kevin Renecke's unbeaten 99 surpassing Tim Walton's 82 in 2003. Callington posted 180-5 with Liam Lindsay making 74 and Max Waller 69 in a fourth-wicket partnership of 139. Renecke reduced it to 13 off the last over, bowled by Ben Ellis. Eight runs came off the first five balls leaving the left-hander on strike and a four was required to bring up his century and tie the match and for a 'Super Over' to come into play. To his dismay, he missed the ball to spark scenes of delight by the Callington players and supporters and leaving Renecke with the consolation of being named player of the match in what was to be his final appearance for the club.

Penzance retained the Bradleys Vinter Cup in a memorable final at Camborne. Their skipper Ben Seabrook was named Player of the Match for his 84 as Penzance hit the third-highest final score of 183 for 4. In a valiant response, an understrength Camborne kept up with the required rate for much of their innings but late wickets proved crucial. They ended on 168 for 7 to lose by 15 runs. It was the highest score ever recorded by a losing team in the final beating Falmouth's 152 v St Just (173/7) in 2014.

Penzance then won the WT Edwards Cup for the ninth time and fifth in the seven finals since 2017. Following a bright start conditions deteriorated to an overcast and cool evening at Truro Cricket Club. Callington won the toss but were contained to 40 in the six-over powerplay. Liam Lindsay went on to hold the innings together before being dismissed in the last over for 59. Requiring 150 Christian Purchase and Ben Seabrook (36) added 57 for the first wicket inside six overs.

Player of the Match Dylan Blignaut (42no) and Grant Stone (34no) comfortably chased down the target with eight wickets and 14 balls to spare.

The Vitality Club Twenty/20 Area Finals Day saw Penzance travel to the neutral venue of Bridgwater. They hammered Newport by 86 runs in the afternoon semi-final after amassing 262-5 (Ben Seabrook 81, Dylan Blignaut 60, Jack Paull 52no). In the final, against Bristol, Penzance got off to the worst of starts losing Christian Purchase, caught at deep cover off the first ball of the innings. Ben Seabrook followed, bowled for a single in the second over. Dan Lello got 43 in the 139-9 but Bristol cruised to victory by seven wickets with five overs to spare.

In the the National Club Championship Penzance beat Bridgwater at home by five wickets, Helston at home by eight wickets and Golden Hill at Bristol by seven wickets. Bath proved too strong in Round 4 making 237-7 at St Clare and restricting Penzance to 223-8. In their first-round game, Helston made 295-6 at home to Cornwood with Karl Leathley hitting 115 in the 39-run victory.

In the Voneus Village Cup, Grampound Road reached the semi-finals for the second successive year. They won at Perranporth by 84 runs before Gulval and Yelverton Bohemians both conceded. St Erme were defeated by 69 runs. In Round 5 they beat Sully Spartans (Glamorgan & Gwent) by 74 runs in a match reduced to 30 overs at the 'Road'. In Round 6 heavy rain at tea saw the game at Horspath (Oxford) abandoned. Grampound Road won the home replay by five wickets. In the quarter-final at home to Painswick (Gloucestershire) the visitors were beaten in a thriller by four runs with five balls remaining. In the semi-final at home to Foxton Granta (Cambridgeshire) the visitors were restricted to 153-8. Having looked well set at one stage the Road collapsed to 145 all out to lose by eight runs with three balls remaining. The Cambridgeshire side went on to win the Final at Lord's by seven wickets chasing Dumbleton's 240.

Redruth Seconds won the Eden Motorhomes Division 2 Cup at Redruth defeating Perranporth in the final by 23 runs, despite only making 113, to claim the '*Raymond Reseigh Trophy*'. Player of the Match Daniel Viner took 3-19. In the semi-final, Redruth made 155-7 to secure a 33-run success on DLS over St Austell seconds. Perranporth beat Holsworthy by five wickets on DLS in the second semi-final.

Callington Thirds retained the Clive Rosevear Cup, winning for the third time in four years. On the Finals Day at St Stephen, they beat Luckett by seven wickets in the final with 17 balls to spare scoring 81-3. Lanhydrock Seconds and Roche Seconds were defeated in the semi-finals.

A youthful Redruth Thirds won the Vingoe Family Law Andrew Cup at Mount Ambrose. The first Redruth success in the competition since the back-to-back wins the seconds achieved over Crofty and Troon seconds in 1990 and 1991 respectively. Requiring 129 Falmouth seconds ended on 119-4. Wendron and Leedstown were defeated in the semi-finals.

Perranarworthal won the Mining Division Evening League with a six-wicket win over Sea View Old Boys at Falmouth. The game was postponed by five days due to rain. They claimed the '*Michael Evans Trophy*' after Perranarworthal were restricted to 87-7. Constantine & Methigion were defeated in the semi-finals.

In the West Cornwall Challenge match at Redruth WPEL champions Ludgvan beat Perranarworthal by 16 runs after making 108-7. In the WPEL Cup competitions St Just beat Paul by five wickets in the *Peter George Cup Final*. Gulval beat St Just by five wickets to win the *Runciman Cup*.

It was another busy year for our Compliance Secretary Robert Jobson who has provided the following 2024 report:

*"More than 50 matters relating to alleged breaches of rules, misconduct on and off the field and social media transgressions were brought to the League Management's attention in 2024.*

*"The two questions most asked by clubs: how do they ( certain Tier 1 teams and players ) keep getting away with it, when we can see what they did and said on Live Stream coverage, and we ( Tier 2/3 teams and players ) do not? Where is the consistency?*

*"My answers: 1) we are reliant on umpires, captains and club officers submitting full, accurate reports on any alleged breach and 2) each matter is treated on its particular and differing merits.*

*" Cases are considered with care. If however, umpires opt to take a lenient or dare I say it soft line and administer just a warning, or evidence submitted does not come up to prove, or correct Laws of Cricket procedures have not been followed, we cannot act as many would wish us to act."*

*For the record, 11 individuals received Level 1 and 2 bans in 2024 - similar to 2023. The majority were Premier players and the rest spread across East and West divisions down to Six.*

*Two Premier players were reported for alleged Level 3 offences. Those cases were discontinued due to procedural issues and an administrative failure, for which League Management apologises.*

*Several other clubs, players and supporters, reported for alleged misconduct on and off the field, were warned about their future conduct.*

*More than 20 alleged contraventions of League Rules included clubs found to be strengthening lower teams with higher division or ineligible players. They were penalised with points deductions.*

*Signed: Robert Jobson (CCL Compliance Secretary), January 10, 2025.*

The 2025 League AGM will be the fifth to be held on Zoom with the rules ballot again being completed online. The option to pay for cricket balls and competition entries via Bank Transfers and collection of the Annual Fees in November by the same method has proved a success as League Admin continues to 'move with the times'.

On the field, electronic scoring continues to increase – up from 49.9% to 56.2% in 2024 - exceeding the ECB 50% target. Also, Premier Clubs again regularly live-streamed games in 2024 – Callington joined Camborne, Truro and Wadebridge plus Beacon and Hayle in County Division 1.

There were 204 transfers in all including free agents – players who had not played in the previous season. That compared to 257 the previous year.

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 3,864 Players Registered of which 1,841 (47.6% - an annual increase of almost 4%) were full play-cricket members and 2,023 Temporary members. A reminder 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 again see stability for 2025 with all officers seeking re-election unopposed. We continue to gradually prune our numbers to reach the ideal requirements of ECB. Their aim is for smaller committees but all members have specific remits and skills. Sadly during the year, we lost John Buddle at the age of 89. A long-standing member of 20 years and our respected 'Mr Vinter Cup and Father of the House'.

My usual thanks to the local press, *BBC Radio Cornwall and Ross Ellis* for the weekly coverage and 'banter!' Also thanks to *Bond Timber, Clive Rosevear Insurance (ending after 31 years of superb support), Bradleys Estate Agents, Eden Motorhomes, Vingoe Family Law 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, Groundskeepers and of course all our club volunteers.

*Michael Weeks BEM  
Hon. Secretary  
January 2025*