

What a marvellous end to the County Championship season - especially if you were following Warwickshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire or Hampshire. In fact, since Durham became the eighteenth first-class county has there been an occasion when four teams had a chance of being crowned champions as the last round of matches began?

The manner in which the finale unfolded was richly entertaining. Never have bonus points mattered as much. The moment that the first innings' ended at Aigburth it swung into Warwickshire's favour and when The Bears couldn't get the last bowling bonus point against Somerset, the calculators were out and suddenly Hampshire were in the driving seat - and what a match at Aigburth (a ground I have been to many times).

Critics will argue that the pitch at Aigburth or the batting line-ups were poor, but that is doing a tremendous dis-service to the ground staff and the players - the bowling was excellent and as the second innings progressed the pitch did play better and as both captains agreed after the match, once in, it was easier to play.

Hampshire came within a wicket, a whisker of being champions, and by not doing so they actually ended up fourth in the table - Lancashire sneaked across the line in under three days and then had an agonising wait to see if Somerset could stop Warwickshire winning. Somerset did what they have been doing all season, having one innings in the game that they would like to forget.

But watching the last few others at Edgbaston after Lancashire had defeated Hampshire there was an air of inevitability about the Warwickshire victory charge and Rhodes' captaincy on the last day was a delight. As a Lancashire fan, there was no time on the final day when it looked anything other than a Warwickshire win.

A marvellous end to what has been a wonderful county season.

Other matches in the other divisions also sprung a few surprises, but probably not much of a surprise but a shock in its severity was Essex humiliating Northants by an innings despite only scoring 170 in their only knock. One of our WCC members attended the second day and was planning a lovely lunch with a dear friend. Upon arrival they reached the end of the row to move along to their seats and the final Northants wicket fell.

Kent secured the third tier title and apparently were presented with a trophy. Should every team in the two tiers above them also receive a trophy? Seems a bit odd, giving a trophy to the winners of the third tier but nothing to third place in Tier 1.

But sadly the failings of the county game were highlighted by the match at The Oval. A total of 1,394 runs scored, 10 wickets fell over the four days, 373 overs bowled and the scoring rate was a 'paltry' 3.73. With nothing at all to play for and a pitch so flat that many-a-driveway builder is now asking for tips - couldn't the captains have been more adventurous??

On Tuesday we have the Bob Willis Trophy Final - and one of the questions I have invited responses to is simply, 'is this a meaningless fixture or not?' I await your responses with interest.

I am not sure if anyone saw Peter Oborn being interviewed on Sky TV by Kay Burley in which he responded to the cancellation of England's proposed visit to Pakistan - have a [look here](#).

I have to agree with him - Pakistan players and officials left their homes and their families in the summer of 2020 when the Pandemic was at its worst, they came to the UK, they isolated, they lived in what was a poor quality hotel and they played three Tests and some T20's...and we repay them by cancelling a brief two-match (men and women) visit.

The ECB are cowards. It is ok for England players to pop off to the IPL, but not to tour Pakistan, well 'tour' is a pathetic term in view of the fact they were due to be there for less than a week.

Player power is the winner and yet another reason why I feel that my stance on England - not bothered and do not care, because it seems they don't care about me or the game - is justified.

I would also be interested in the views of readers on the new edict from the wonderful cricket-loving folk in the offices of power - batsmen are now 'batters.' Apologies but referring to the 'Don' as the greatest batter of all-time seems to belittle him, or maybe you disagree.

Here is hoping that if good weather prevails Warwickshire and Lancashire don't score 1,900 runs, lose a combined nine wickets and play out a meaningless draw.

Happy Wisdening to one and all

Bill

Your views please and competition winner

The 2021 English season is over and I would welcome your thoughts on not just the season but some of the issues that have come to the fore during the summer months.

As always, please do not hold back, but kindly be respectful as always. Wax lyrical and I will try and be as generous as possible if I need to edit any responses.

1: Do you think that the format for the 2021 County Championship was a success or not?

2: Do you agree or disagree with the following and please explain your answer - 'The County Championship should continue to have three divisions because some counties are not good enough and need to play counties of the same level.

2: What is your view on the cancellation of the short tour to Pakistan?

3: The word batsman can no longer be used, what are your thoughts on using the term 'batter?'

4: Who was your stand-out player during the English cricket season and why?

5: If the ashes series was due to start now, who would win it?

6: According to the marketing folk, The Hundred was a resounding success, apart from the obvious (number of balls bowled) do you think it was so different to Twenty20 and did your opinion on it change once it started?

The County Championship competition based around the final set of matches had the largest number of entries for any

The next edition of the Wisdener, No 41 will be emailed out in October and I would welcome your views on the questions on the left.

There is no limit on how many words you can write, your views are important and I will try and publish as many as possible.

All responses please by Monday October 11th

competition run in The Wisdener,. So a massive thank you to one and all.

Matt Bullman 95 points

Matt wins the £150 Wisdenworld Gift Voucher

Oliver Cooper 93 points

Paula Rendall 90 points

Oliver and Paula each win a £76 John Lewis Voucher

Colin Lowe 88 points

Derek Donnelly 88 points

Bob Yates 86 points

Colin, Derek and Bob each win a yearly subscription to The Nightwatchman

Ed Jarman 84 points

Sean Taylor 84 points

Kate Reynolds 82 points

Tim Bradshaw 80 points

Ed, Sean, Kate and Tim each win a £20 M&S gift card

Commiserations to the 14 of you who each finished on 77 points and I know that some of you like to know who didn't do too well, but rather than name names the bottom three scores were

25

21

18

There were two entries that scored 18 points.