

LEAGUE AWARDS

At the end of another exciting season, almost 200 players and officials from league member clubs came together for the Presentation Evening, held at the Halton Stadium in Widnes on Saturday October 1, for a chance to reward the teams and individuals who have been successful this year.

This may have been the league's highest scoring season to date, with as many as 13 centuries in the first division alone, made by batters from seven different clubs. Ellie Mason reached three figures on three occasions, despite only playing five matches, but the overall highest run scorer was Rachael Walsh, whose 580 runs took Leigh to their first league title. The top-flight's leading wicket taker was Emily Page, who played a major role in Appleton's second place finish.

Leigh won this year's league championship after finishing bottom of division one in 2021, becoming the seventh different team to finish as leaders in the top division of the CWCL in the last decade. The period starting from 2012 - the last of Appleton's three titles in a row - has seen only one occasion when a club has retained the first division title. It all adds up to a level of competitiveness and unpredictability that is the envy of every other English women's club competition! Indeed, with Leigh having finished bottom of division one last year, and only reprieved from relegation due to an expansion of the top-flight, this could be the League's Leicester City moment!

Furthermore, 10 different clubs took home a team trophy this year, with no club winning more than one prize. The closest fought division was undoubtedly Division 2, where Upton edged out Lindow by a single point, despite a second division record of 432 runs across the season from Heidi Cheadle. Along with Leigh's Jaimie-Lee Strang, New South Wales 2nd XI captain Cheadle heralded a new era in the league this year as one of the first women's overseas players to come to Cheshire specifically to play for a club team.

The players winning two individual trophies this year were Appleton's Emma Barlow (as wicketkeeper in both Division 1 and T20 competitions), Jenny Wallace of Langley (best bowler and fielder in Division 4) and Stockport Trinity's Emma Royle (leading wicket taker in T20 and also tied for most fielding dismissals in the short-form competitions). After winning the division 1 batting award on numerous occasions – albeit not this year – Barlow has certainly won more individual trophies than anyone else since the league's awards ceremonies began back in 2007.

AWARD WINNERS AT A GLANCE

	BATTING AWARD – most runs	BOWLING AWARD – most wickets	FIELDING AWARD – most catches and run outs as fielder	WICKETKEEPING AWARD – most catches and stumpings as 'keeper
DIVISION 1	Rachael Walsh (Leigh) 2 nd Ellie Mason (Stockport Trinity)	Emily Page (Appleton) 2 nd Ali Cutler (Chester BH)	Sophie Connor (Oakmere) 2 nd Abbey Gore (Appleton)	Emma Barlow (Appleton) 2 nd Jaimie-Lee Strang (Leigh)
DIVISION 2	Heidi Cheadle (Lindow) 2 nd Lily Scudder (Upton)	Lily Scudder (Upton) 2 nd Philippa Dagger (Upton) & Libby Ackerley (Lindow)	Rachel Warrenger (Hawarden Park) 3 players tied for 2 nd	Ellen McGowan (Upton) 2 nd Heidi Cheadle (Lindow)
DIVISION 3 WEST	Flo Seymour (Nantwich 2 nd XI) 2 nd Gemma Rose (Chester BH 2 nd XI)	Lucy McCarten (Chester BH) / Anna Bourne (Wistaston)	Hannah Thorley (Chester BH) 7 players tied for 2 nd	Alex Viggars (Porthill) 2 nd Zoe Davies (Wistaston)
DIVISION 3 EAST	Bethany Garforth (Greenfield) 2 nd Helen Johnson (Didsbury 2 nd XI)	Zoe Cuthill (Greenfield) 2 nd Charlotte Peacock (Hayfield)	Charlotte Peacock (Hayfield) 2 nd Jo Stephenson (Hawk Green)	Ruth Lomas (Hayfield) / Helen Johnson (Didsbury 2 nd XI)
DIVISION 4	Carolyne Jones (Langley) 2 nd Amy Shaw (Heaton Mersey & Cheadle)	Jenny Wallace (Langley) 2 nd Charlotte Thompson & Naz Hancioglu (both Lindow 2 nd XI)	Jenny Wallace (Langley) 2 nd Olivia Randles (Heaton Mersey & Cheadle) & Becky Scholes (Stockport Georgians 3rd XI / North East Cheshire)	Amy Shaw (Heaton Mersey & Cheadle) 2 nd Kate Avery- Lofthouse (Stockport Georgians 3rd XI / North East Cheshire) & Emma Travis (Buxton)
T20 COMPETITIONS	Ellie Mason (Stockport Trinity) 2 nd Kate Harvey (Stockport Trinity)	Emma Royle (Stockport Trinity) 2 nd Abi Lamidey (Stockport Trinity)	Nicole Fisher (Chester BH) / Emma Royle (Stockport Trinity)	Emma Barlow (Appleton) 2 nd Rosie Davis (Didsbury)

President's Award (Outstanding Contribution to Women's Cricket in Cheshire): Sarah McCann

TEAM TROPHY WINNERS

	WINNERS	RUNNERS-UP
Division 1	Leigh	Appleton
Division 2	Upton	Lindow
Division 3 West	Porthill Park Northern Stars	Chester Boughton Hall 2nd XI
Division 3 East	Hayfield	Greenfield
Division 4	Lindow 2nd XI	Langley
Division 5 West	Kingsley	Alvanley
Division 5 East	Macclesfield Treacle	North East Cheshire
T20 Divisional Competition	Appleton Tigers	Stockport Trinity Fire
Senior Knockout Cup	Nantwich Vipers	Stockport Trinity Fire
Development Knockout Cup	Greenfield	Hayfield

More information on 2022 performances can be found in the Statistics document sent with this newsletter.

Alex Blake, who coached the Cheshire senior women between 2011 and 2014, was Master of Ceremonies for the event, which was once again superbly organised by Di Totty. Di chose Sarah McCann – league chair for more than a decade up until last year - as the recipient of the coveted President's Award for an outstanding contribution to the sport in Cheshire.

The League was also delighted to welcome Laura MacLeod - currently director of West Midlands Women's Cricket - as its special guest, and she presented the prizes to the winners and participated in a Q&A session with Alex, where she talked about her progression from grassroots cricket in Cheshire to an international career that included 13 Test matches, 73 ODIs and three IT20s. She spoke of the fact that women's cricket can now be a career, but that sacrifices need to be made by those fortunate enough to make it to professional level. Laura also nominated an Ashes win in 2005 and her role in the first ever T20 international in 2004 as career highlights.

There was further recognition for a number of people connected with the League last Friday at the Lancashire and Cheshire Grassroots Cricket Awards and Lancashire Cricket Player of the Year Awards, where most of the CWCL's Officers were amongst the 750 attendees. At the event, held in Old Trafford's The Point suite, Sarah McCann was again recognised for her 25-year commitment to the league and for the advances made during that time as she was the joint winner of Cheshire's Growing The Game award. Long-time Alvanley CC stalwart Andy Bennion, now running the club's women's softball team, was the other recipient of this award. Stockport Georgians' women's manager Ray Bell scooped the Inspired To Play award, having also had a crucial role in the running of the league's junior girls' competitions in recent years.

AGM NOTICE

The Annual General Meeting of the Cheshire Women's Cricket League will take place at Oakmere CC on Tuesday November 8 at 1930.

Ahead of this meeting, any club wishing to join the league's hardball divisions for the first time will need to prepare a detailed application that answers all of the questions on the standard application form, a copy of which can be supplied on request. This includes any club wishing to be promoted from the Division 5 softball competitions.

Any club wishing to make a promotion application should also be ready to present their case to the AGM as to why they believe they are ready for a higher level of cricket. Division 2 champions Upton and the two regional division 3 winners (Porthill Park Northern Stars and Hayfield) will not need to apply for promotion and are now automatically entitled to play in the higher division next year, although we would still ask that these clubs inform the league of their intentions and also that they confirm that they are aware of the stricter regulations that apply in the higher divisions. It should be noted that there is no automatic promotion from division 4 to division 3 and any promotions here must be via an application.

Similarly, any club wishing to field an additional team, such as a second or third team, in next year's hardball divisions should make an application to the AGM, covering issues such as their playing strength, ground availability and availability of suitable coaching and management resources for the additional team.

The AGM will also include the usual elections for Officer positions, including Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Fixtures Secretary, Welfare Officer, Disciplinary Secretary, Umpires/Scorers Representative and Competitions Secretary. Nominations are especially welcome for the Planning and Strategy role and for the East Cheshire representative of the Junior Girls' League, both of which remain vacant. Indeed, anyone wishing to get more involved with the running of the league in any capacity and participating in what we hope will be our next phase of expansion, will be very welcome. There may be scope to split some of the existing roles, especially given that the league is continually expanding.

If there are any clubs that are in the unfortunate position of having to consider requesting a voluntary relegation, or withdrawing a second or third team, or resigning from the league altogether, they are asked to make their intentions known by December 1 at the latest so that the League has time to consider the impact of this ahead of January's Regulations and Competition Structure meeting.

OTHER NEWS

The League is delighted to be able to announce that Cheshire will once again be running its women only cricket umpire course this autumn.

For women and girls who want to take up umpiring or get a bit more confidence umpiring your own team, or simply learn more about the game we love, this is the course for you. Participate in our umpire courses and the (cricket) world is your oyster. Female umpires no longer have to officiate in men's leagues in order to reach international level, as the ECB have devised a pathway specifically for women, using women's club competitions as well as competitions for county and regional teams. You can still join a men's league umpires panel should you wish.

As an example of the women's pathway now in place, Anna Harris started at club level when she was around 16, then at 17 she umpired a National U13 & U15 club final, and five years later she became one of the very youngest people to umpire Tests and ODIs.

As the first part of the course is now also available online, it means that you only have to commit to attending one face-to-face session.

The first step is to complete the online Stage 1, which is offered free of charge. You will need to have finished Stage 1 before taking part in Stage 2, and we strongly recommend also completing the MCC general introduction to the Laws of Cricket. Once you have registered for Stage 1, you can register for the Stage 2 course, to be held on Saturday November 26 at Northwich CC.

For the face-to-face session at Northwich, both tutors are very experienced female umpires. Cheshire's very own Education Officer, Inge Bevers, will be joined by an umpire who has only recently retired from the top levels of our national women's competitions and has extensive experience of umpiring in international matches for visually impaired cricket. Please do not hesitate to contact Inge Bevers via email should you have any queries.

If you cannot make it on November 26, there will also be umpires' courses in Cheshire – open to both men and women – in December, January and February. These will be advertised on the Cheshire Cricket Board site and on the Board's Facebook page.

- Cheshire Cricket Board invites applications for the voluntary post of Independent Director – Women & Girls' Lead. The closing date is October 21. It is important we find someone to take this role as it is vital to ensure that Cheshire women's and girls' cricket has a prominent voice at Board level. Di Totty, who previously held the post and is now stepping down, is available to provide guidance to anyone who wishes to know more about what the role entails.