

Somerset County Cricket Club 2024 Season Review

County Championship

LV County Championship Division 1 2024 Prizemoney*				
	County	£	Won	Total Points
Winners	Surrey	521,000	8	231
2nd	Hampshire	260,000	6	214
3rd	Somerset	160,300	5	196
4th	Essex	104,240	6	194
5th	Durham	78,180	4	171
6th	Worcestershire	65,150	3	162
7th	Warwickshire	58,640	1	159
8th	Nottinghamshire	52,120	2	155

*2023 Prize Money as ECB refused to release 2024 values, but likely to be more (10%?) than in 2023

Division 1 Stats

Vitality County Championship 2024										
Division 1 - Final Placings 30/09/24										
	County	P	W	L	D	Bat	Bowl	Ded	Pts	+/-
1	Surrey	14	8	2	4	34	37	0	231	-
2	Hampshire	14	6	1	7	31	33	2	214	-
3	Somerset	14	5	3	6	28	40	0	196	-
4	Essex	14	6	3	5	34	36	12	194	-
5	Durham	14	4	4	6	30	30	1	171	-
6	Worcestershire	14	3	4	7	21	37	0	162	-
7	Warwickshire	14	1	4	9	33	38	0	159	-
8	Nottinghamshire	14	2	4	8	25	35	1	155	-
9	Lancashire	14	3	6	5	15	34	3	134	-
10	Kent	14	1	8	5	12	32	1	99	-
Division 2										
	County	P	W	L	D	Bat	Bowl	Ded	Pts	+/-
1	Sussex	14	8	2	4	40	40	3	237	-
2	Yorkshire	14	5	2	5	41	40	0	217	-
3	Middlesex	14	5	2	7	28	32	0	196	-
4	Northamptonshire	14	2	3	9	22	35	0	161	-
5	Leicestershire	14	1	3	10	28	31	0	155	-
6	Glamorgan	14	2	4	8	22	30	2	146	+1
7	Gloucestershire	14	2	4	8	27	29	10	142	-1
8	Derbyshire	14	1	6	7	20	31	1	122	-

Bonus Point Breakdown								
	Batting	County		Bowling	County		Total	County
1	34	Surrey Essex	1	40	Somerset	1	71	Surrey Warwickshire
3	33	Warwickshire	2	38	Warwickshire	3	70	Essex
4	31	Hampshire	3	37	Worcestershire Surrey	4	68	Somerset
5	30	Durham				5	64	Hampshire
6	28	Somerset	5	36	Essex	6	62	Nottinghamshire
7	27	Nottinghamshire	6	35	Nottinghamshire	7	60	Durham
8	21	Worcestershire	7	34	Lancashire	8	58	Worcestershire
9	15	Lancashire	8	33	Hampshire	9	49	Lancashire
10	12	Kent	9	32	Kent	10	44	Kent
			10	30	Durham			

Players, Overseas, Scores Over 50/Bowlers with 30 Wickets & 5/10W								
County	Players Used	Overseas	100	50	Total Over 50	30W	5W	10W
Division 1								
Surrey	26	4	14	30	44	2	8	1
Hampshire	17	3	18	23	41	3	12	1
Somerset	21	3	8	35	43	3	11	2
Essex	19	2	17	24	41	5	10	1
Durham	24	4	18	22	40	3	5	1
Worcestershire	23	2	7	35	42	0	1	0
Warwickshire	21	3	14	27	41	1	5	0
Nottinghamshire	22	4	15	30	45	1	5	1
Lancashire	23	3	8	17	25	1	3	0
Kent	22	3	9	31	40	1	4	0
Division 2								
Sussex	19	3	13	32	45	2	7	1
Yorkshire	21	1	19	29	48	2	7	0
Middlesex	15	0	16	31	47	3	7	2
Northamptonshire	26	3	12	25	37	1	9	0
Leicestershire	23	4	9	34	43	0	2	0
Gloucestershire	20	3	14	26	40	1	8	0
Glamorgan	25	3	13	28	41	2	5	0
Derbyshire	20	3	5	31	36	1	4	1

Includes players on "loan"

County Championship

Division 1 - Match by Match

1 – Kent – Canterbury F-M 5-8 April 2024 – Drawn. 4 batting, 3 bowling 15 points, Kent 12. 2nd in table

Pre-match: Sutherland pulled out of contract due to injury. Additional overseas sought allegedly. Leach still unfit and not likely to be available until May and Overton, although playing and bowling v Exeter University not included in the 13. Umeed has a broken finger, although club have not communicated this and worst of all Abell has gone in the hamstring again – too much emphasis on fitness perhaps? TKC carrying drinks for the Rajasthan lot in the IPL.

Teams: **Somerset:** Lammonby, Dickson, Renshaw, Banton, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Gregory*, Aldridge, Davey, Leonard, Ball. (Green & Bashir left out of 13).

Kent: Compton, Muyeye, Bell-Drummond*, Leaning, Denly, Finch†, Evison, Agar, Gilchrist, Garrett, Parkinson.

Toss: Somerset - field

Umpires: Rob Bailey & Russell Warren

Match Ref: Simon Hinks

Day 1 – For the 2nd season running, play on Day 1 was abandoned at 13:50 due to a waterlogged outfield – this time at Canterbury and not Taunton.

Day 2 – Ball and Davey bowled tightly with the new ball without success and at lunch Kent had reached 78-0 with some ease. Gregory's first over was a shocker – 20 runs being conceded but thereafter he was the pick of the bowlers to pick up 4-66. He apparently has a couple of niggles so was restricted on the volume of overs bowled. Renshaw and Goldsworthy were employed to increase the over rate, both picking up a wicket and Goldsworthy's was his first in First Class Cricket. Finch (54) and Evison batted well and Parkinson hung around annoyingly but an all out score of 294 was about par. The Kookaburra ball once again proved innocuous – it will only swing or seam for the first 15-20 overs. So once again ECB have made the decision to play 4 rounds with this ball, which was described by Alec Stewart as “ the worst decision ever made”. Here here.

Day 3 – A really good batting display on a basically benign pitch and with the Kookaburra ball, enabled Somerset to close the day on 374-7 for a lead of 90. Lammonby played beautifully for 90 and Renshaw (66), Rew (57) and Aldridge (50*) plus Goldsworthy (35) and Banton (28) all played well. Lammonby thoroughly deserved to reach his century but was caught on the fence pulling Parkinson who bowled well all day without much luck.

Day 4 – There was an outside chance of victory at the start and even when Kent were 68-3, but the blandness of the pitch, the Kookaburra ball and the batting of Denly (110) and Bell-Drummond (107*), distinguished all hopes of forcing a victory.

Summary: With a day lost, the only result was a draw and both sides happy with that outcome.

2 – Surrey – The Oval F-M 12-15 April 2024. Drawn 1 batting, 3 bowling -11 pts, Surrey 14. 4th in table.

Pre-match: Somerset signed South African Migaél Pretorius for 6 CC matches to end of May – the South African played for Durham in 2023, 2 wickets for 227 in 63 overs and 75 runs in 2 innings. Leach, Abell and Umeed still injured, Leonard and Davey dropped out of squad (no reason given) and Ogborne added. Teams: **Somerset:** Lammonby, Dickson, Renshaw, Banton, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Gregory*, Aldridge, Overton, Pretorius, Bashir. (Ogborne & Ball left out of 13).

Surrey: Burns*, Sibley, Pope, Lawrence, Smith, Foakes†, Steel, Clark, Overton, Atkinson, Roach. (Dunn, Patel & Laws left out of 14). Worrall and McKerr injured, Jacks at IPL – others not in squad – Virdi, 3**Toss:** **Surrey – field.**

Umpires: Richard Kettleborough & Martin Saggars

Match Ref: Wayne Noon

Day 1 – After the early loss of Dickson, Renshaw and Lammonby batted really well against the new ball pair of Roach and Atkinson and trundled along to lunch at 131-1 at 4.36/over. This partnership progressed until Lammonby, batting beautifully, tried a sneaky run off a mis-field and Renshaw was run out for 86 from a direct hit from Clark at mid-on. Lammonby completed his 100 from 120 balls but then perished after missing a straight ball from Clark. A fabulous partnership of 178 in 41.3 overs at 4.28/over. From this point a large score seemed to be on the cards, but in true Somerset fashion a typically collapse ensued as 7 wickets were lost for 20 runs in 13.1 overs and all the wickets were given away. At a real point of strength, Somerset completely threw away the advantage and the prospect of a large first innings score. A final score of 285 all out was only down to Gregory (50) and Bashir (10*) sharing a last wicket partnership of 49 in 11.1 overs.

15 overs remained in the day.

Day 2 – Burns and Sibley produced a large opening partnership as Somerset failed to make use of the Kookaburra in the first 20-25 overs or so, piling on 167 before Burns was out for 75 caught behind by Rew, a decision he was not entirely happy with. Burns and Sibley, whilst not particularly attractive to watch, are a mightily effective opening pair and formed the basis of the Surrey total, with Smith making an entertaining 51 and Foakes 57. Sibley ground out a ton before being bowled by Goldsworthy - Surrey batted all day to reach 358-5, a lead of 73 - anything more than a lead of 100 may be an issue.

To be fair to the Somerset bowling attack, they stuck at it all day without much joy, the one blip was Banton spilling the easiest of chances on the fence offered by Burns on 56, a really poor drop.

Day 3 – Surrey progressed at an arguably slow pace to extend their lead as Somerset found it difficult to take wickets. But the bowlers stuck to their task manfully – Bashir going for just over 2 runs/over and bowled 36 overs in the innings (179 dots) as Surrey ended up with a lead of 143 – a lead which could determine the outcome of the match. Jamie Overton enjoyed facing his brother and his old mates in making 35. Aldridge was the pick of the bowlers taking a very commendable 5-64.

So how would Somerset fare in the 2nd innings – well, a bad start ensued as Dickson was adjudged to have touched a ball down the legside and was given out by Saggars – a really poor decision as the ball hit his pad. Lammonby again batted beautifully for 51 – a rich vein of form and long may it continue – Renshaw was then given out LBW and was probably out. Goldsworthy batted well for 57 but was caught behind swishing at a bouncer - he really needed to stay at the crease, but the loss of Banton (11) and Rew (22), saw Somerset end the day on 204-6 with the not out batsmen Gregory on 23 and Aldridge on 22 and only 61 runs in front. A crucial first session due on day 4.

Day 4 – Could Somerset survive? A 12:10 start due to rain, saw 18 overs shorn off the day's play – 78 overs. Gregory and Aldridge batted very well and extended their partnership until lunch 252-6 in the 14 overs available in the session. Eleven balls in, Aldridge feathered to Foakes for a well-made 42 which brought Overton to the crease. Another solid partnership between him and the increasingly confident Gregory saw 93 added in 35.1 overs before the captain played a loose stroke at Steel to be caught at cover for 80. Pretorius certainly did not play the situation and had a swish at Steel only to sky a catch which Foakes snaffled which brought in Bashir who didn't last long – Steel taking 5-96 and bowled 35 overs and was a constant treat. So, 351 all out and a lead of 208 with 21 overs to get them!

Surrey sent out Smith and Lawrence who certainly showed intention of making a decent fist of scoring at 9.95/over with no fielding circles in place. Overton struggled to find the right length going for 48 in 4 overs and Pretorius was equally expensive conceding 40 in 4, but Gregory and Aldridge stemmed the flow and between them took the 5 wickets to fall - Lawrence remaining on 52*. Smith's 45 was entertaining but with the dismissal of Pope and Overton, Surrey decided enough was enough having to score 17/over and called it a day with 6 overs left.

Summary: A fabulous game of cricket – ebbing and flowing and both sides happy with a draw in the end.

3 – Nottinghamshire – Taunton F-M 19-22 April 2024. Drawn – 4 batting 3 bowling, Nottinghamshire 10. 41 points, 4th = in table.

Pre match: Davey and Ball “rested” for the Surrey match, Abell still injured but Umeed and Leach playing for the 2nd XI at Headingley as a batsman.

Teams: Somerset: Lammonby, Dickson, Renshaw, Banton, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Gregory*, Overton, Davey, Pretorius, Bashir. Left out of squad.

Nottinghamshire: Hameed*, Slater, Young, Clarke†, Montgomery, Haynes, James, Harrison, Hutton, Fletcher, Paterson.

Toss: Nottinghamshire – who elected to bat.

Umpires: Russell Warren & David Milnes

Match Referee: Mike Smith.

Day 1 – Surprisingly, after winning the toss, Nottinghamshire were bundled out for 193 in 62.4 overs. Pick of the bowlers was the talisman, Craig Overton who took 3-57 from 18 overs. The pitch held no demons except that the return of the Duke ball was most welcome to all bowlers with the rest of the wickets spread amongst Gregory (2-19), Pretorius (2-56) and Davey 1-26 and Bashir 1-35. Several batsmen got in and then out when well set. Somerset ended the day well placed on 116-1 from 33 overs with Dickson not out on 70.

Day 2 – Sadly Dickson fell after 3.5 overs, slapping a drive straight to cover. Lammonby and night watchman Davey took the score to 167 before the former was LBW to Hutton stepping across his stumps. Davey was by now looking confident and with a half century on the horizon he was bowled by spinner Harrison – 218-5. Rew soon followed for 3 and then Gregory for 1, but Banton who struggled initially, unfurled some classic drives and not a t20 shot in sight to make a cultured 83 – he thoroughly deserved a century 314-8. There then followed a splendid partnership between a resurgent Overton and Pretorius who put on a highly entertaining 139 for the 9th wicket, both players playing some lovely shots against a tiring attack. Pretorius pierced the offside field with regularity and was brutal on anything short. H deserved a 100, but on 77 was bowled by the innocuous occasional spinner Montgomery. Bashir then joined Overton who was on 94.

Day 3 – Somerset fans were full of optimism as Nottinghamshire faced an uphill task as they started the day still 223 runs in arrears and a full 96 overs and a new ball to negotiate. What nobody had realised was that the pitch had totally flattened out and there were no signs of any ware on it, so wickets were going to be difficult to find.

After 10 minutes Overton nipped one back to bowl Hameed for the second time in the match for 20 with the score on 48. Joe Clarke joined New Zealander Will Young but for the next 93 overs (558 balls), they resisted all that the 8 Somerset deployed threw at them. A fabulous match saving partnership of 370 as Clarke (209*) and Young (156*) batted through the rest of the day. The 8 bowlers tried everything but ultimately the pitch and Clarke and Young won. Their massive partnership broke the Nottinghamshire 3rd wicket partnership of 361 by uncle a cousin George and Fred Gunn v Hampshire in 1903 which had stood for 121 years. Never did they have a flatter pitch to bat on. From a Somerset point of view, it was a boring day, but it must be said that the bowlers stuck to their task manfully – no chances were offered, no catches, run out opportunities nor were there any dodgy not out LBW decisions.

Day 4 – Was this to be another boring day on a flat pitch? Grey skies greeted a very sparse crowd – play duly started on time, but drizzle began at 11:35 and in true umpire fashion, the players were removed from the field of play, Nottinghamshire having added 22 runs in 9 overs bowled by Overton and Pretorius. Play was then called off after lunch at 13:40.

Summary: After day 1, the pitch became one of the flattest ever produced at Taunton and one Phil Frost would have been proud of. Nottinghamshire probably did not bat very well in the first innings as Somerset were delighted to bowl them out for 193, but then the pitch became the proverbial shirt front. This type of pitch is exactly what Somerset do not want. What is needed is a result pitch if Somerset ever have any aspirations of winning the Holy Grain. Take nothing away from Clarke and Young, but it was a blessing that day 4 was rained off after 9 overs and both sides were happy with the draw.

4 – Worcestershire, Kidderminster F-M 26-29 April 2024 – Drawn 12 points, 2 batting & 2 bowling, Worcestershire 15. 4th in table.

Pre match: 13 man squad included Goldsworthy and Davey, but not Overton as he is to be “rested”.

Teams: Somerset: Renshaw, Dickson, Lammonby, Umeed, Banton, Rew†, Gregory*, Aldridge, Pretorius, Ball, Bashir. Davey and Goldsworthy left out of final 11.

Worcestershire: Libby, Roderick†, Kashif Ali, Jones, Hose, D’Oliveria*, Holder, Waite, Leach, Finch, Gibbon. Pennington and ---left out of 13.

Toss: Worcestershire – field.

Umpires: Mike Burns & Richard Illingworth.

Match referee: Simon Hinks

Day 1: The pitch looked a belter – straw coloured and flat. 87-2 at lunch from 30 overs – honours even. Renshaw,30 & Dickson 16, were the two out. Dickson a bit unlucky, given out by Illingworth, who was to adjudicate all the decisions in Somerset’s first innings. After lunch Lammonby played well for 34, but it was Banton (always a dodgy starter it seems) and Umeed who provided the backbone. Umeed looked very secure, unflustered and untroubled, his game has come on and it was a shame when he was caught behind for 47 just before tea, with Rew (3) and Gregory (1) falling cheaply – 181-6 with Banton on 37*. A competitive first innings total looked far away.

After tea, Aldridge perished for 9 but then Banton was joined by Pretorius. These two put on an entertaining 76, 49 came from the bat of the South African, who it seems, is worth more batting than bowling at present. He missed out on a 2nd half century by 1 run as he deserved a 50. Banton was joined by Ball and Banton squeezed another 23 runs towards his century before he ran himself out on 92 – a foolish run to D'Oliveira who hit the stumps from mid on. A really good innings and he deserved a 100, but was not patient enough to wait for the bad ball. Several singles were refused but thankfully the 2nd batting point was achieved. At this point Gregory surprisingly declared – something Abell would never have contemplated, but whether 309 is a par score or a one well below par will be soon found out. Finch and Libby survived the 5 remaining overs to end the day on 14-0.

Day 2: No play before lunch. Only 29 over playable from about 2:45 during which Libby and Roderick shared an unbroken partnership of 84 after night watchman Finch was LBW to Ball for 17. Unfortunately, Roderick was dropped by Lammonby at 3rd slip when he had reached 4 – an expensive drop. The pitch was even flatter and looks like it will be difficult to bowl Worcestershire out cheaply. Bad light ended play at 17:30 with Worcestershire 202 behind.

Day 3: A 12:10 start. Libby and Jones were not parted until they had put on 194, Libby was bowled for 97 – he thoroughly deserved a century, but Bashir persevered on a day when not much happened for the bowlers. All the bowlers struggled and Aldridge was lost and went for 8.5/over – maybe not a good idea to rest him. Ball was the pick with 3-72 from 26 overs. D'Oliveira made a polished 66 and Hose (formerly one of our own before Somerset (Maynard) let him go) made 39 plus Joe Leach chipped in with 43* as Worcestershire posted 451-9 declared in 115 overs and it left 3 overs for Somerset to bat. Inevitably, Somerset lost a wicket 5-1 – Dickson edging to Roderick off Holder for 0. The day ended with Somerset 137 behind at 5-1. Can Somerset bat out day 4 for the draw? We'll soon find out.

Day 4: Night watchman Ball played some decent shots and a few edges too but made 29 out of 43 until he was bowled by Finch while Renshaw set his stall by making 12 from 77 ball before playing a dreadful shot, guiding the ball the gully off D'Oliveira – 66-3, still 76 behind. Umeed joined Lammonby and ultimately this partnership was a match saving innings as the made 120 together, both batting very well. Lammonby ended up on 81*, his 3rd half century to go with the 100 v Surrey, while Umeed made a polished 60, his highest First Class score for Somerset. He was out to a brilliant one handed reflex catch by Gibbon who stuck his hand out and plucked the ball from its trajectory to the boundary – but on this evidence with 107 runs in the match, he's a shoe in for the clash with table toppers Essex next week. The players shook hands at 16:50, with Somerset having posted 190-4 in 75 overs.

Summary: It is great to see Lammonby in such good form and long may it continue as he is such a pleasing batsman to watch when set. Umeed looked composed and a solid number 4, Renshaw needs a few more runs.

In the end the weather ended any possibility of a result, but the pitch was flat and did very little for seamers or spinners despite the welcome return to the Duke ball. Both sides happy with the draw. However, it is at this point, hard to see how Somerset are going to actually WIN a championship match as the bowlers are struggling to take wickets taking one every 77 balls while the opposition take 65 balls and the batting, well, it still looks flimsy despite looking a decent top 7 on paper.

5 – Essex, Taunton F/Sa 3-4 May 2024 – Won by 3 wickets - 19 pts, 3 bowling, Essex 3. 2nd in table, then 3rd after rest week.

Pre match: 5th game in 5 weeks but a week off after this match. Selection issues ahead of this match as Overton will return with probably Gregory “rested”. Will Davey return, is Leach fit yet? TKC still carrying drinks in the IPL and has not played 1 match yet – what a waste.

How will Somerset ever win the coveted Championship if the best team does not get onto the field together? Squad same as Worcestershire match.

Teams: Somerset: Renshaw, Dickson, Lammonby, Umeed, Banton, Rew†, Gregory*, Overton, Pretorius, Davey, Ball. Bashir and Aldridge left out of 13.

Essex: Browne, Elgar, Westley*, Cox, Critchley, Thain, Duke†, Harmer, Snater, Cook, Porter.

Toss: Somerset – field.

Umpires: James Middlebrook & Alex Wharf.

Match Referee: Phil Whitticase.

Day 1: the pitch for this match resembled the outfield – basically the same colour. A good toss to win as it turned out. Essex have a strong batting line up, so to reduce them to 97-5 at lunch was a great session, but it could have been a lot better if the bowlers had pitched the ball wicket to wicket. There was certainly some sideways movement thankfully after the non-moving Kookaburra (an experiment that will hopefully cease in 2025) but too many balls were sprayed down the legside. Somerset selected 5 seam bowlers and no spinner but 5 wickets before lunch was a good position to be in. The dangerous Elgar (formerly of this parish) was comprehensively LBW to Davey and Browne was bowled by a beauty from Overton. Westley hung around and punished anything on his legs, but Cox and Critchley were both caught in the slip cordon.

In the 23 overs after lunch Essex progressed to 156 all out in 51 overs but perhaps should have made only 120, nevertheless, all the Somerset faithful were delighted to bowl the enemy out by 15:10 when tea was taken. The wickets were spread but Pretorius produced his best figures for Somerset 4-36 from 12 overs and Gregory and Ball picked up two each. 20 extras conceded – too many in the context, 10 of

which were no balls, 4 bowled by Gregory (8 runs conceded). Essex's batsmen found the boundary on 22 occasions.

So, how would Somerset fare against Porter, Cook, Snater and Harmer? Well, not great. Take nothing away from Porter and Cook, they are a fine pair of bowlers with a Duke ball on a green seaming pitch in early May. Renshaw nicked off to Cook and Dickson followed but then Umeed, who is looking good at present, unfurled 5 boundaries (3x4, 2x6) in scoring 31 from 37, meanwhile Lammonby had dug in and set his table out to bat long. Umeed got a jaffa from Cook that he just couldn't get out of the way of and departed for 31 – 53-3, but Banton (4), Rew (4), and Gregory (9) all departed cheaply as Both Cook and Porter bowled a metronomic line and length. Overton was the only other batsman to reach double figures with a breezy 16, whilst Lammonby was out at the fall of the 8th wicket for 38 from 116 balls. He didn't reach the fence until his 85th ball but in the context of the innings, it was a good job he stayed at the crease as long as he did otherwise Somerset would have been all out for 80. 128 in 41.4 overs left Somerset 28 runs behind. Essex had to negotiate 1 over bowled by Davey who managed to bowl a no ball and concede a 4 from a long hop – 6-0 a lead overnight of 34.

A fascinating day all round – what will day 2 bring? One thing is for sure there will be a result in this match.

Day 2: To have any chance of securing a victory, Somerset would need to probably chase less than 200 as the pitch was still fairly lively. Essex have a strong batting line up and had a lead of 34 overnight, so the locals were not confident of bowling Essex out for less than 200. The key scalp of Elgar was caught behind off a beautiful delivery from Davey and then night watchman Cook was caught in the cordon by Umeed off Overton - 15-2. Then Westley was comprehensively LBW to the now metronomic Davey for 11 – 37-3. A partnership of 30 by Critchley and Brown (took the score to 67 large for this match) when Browne nicked Gregory to Lammonby for 23. A 39 run partnership between Critchley and Jox frustrated Somerset as the ball continued to beat the bat. Gregory switched the bowlers cleverly but lunch came and Essex were 95-4 from 30 overs. Three overs after the break Critchley fell caught behind off Davey – half the side out for 106, 134 in front. Essex's back was almost broken – the remaining 18.3 overs produced 32 runs as the Somerset seamers took the remaining 5 wickets setting Somerset 167 to win – the highest score of the match.

Dickson and Renshaw played brilliantly in the 11 overs before tea posting a score of 45 and although the bat was beaten they remained at the crease. After tea with 122 to win they continued the chase putting on 75 in 15.4 overs to frustrate the Essex bowlers. Ported and Cook were possibly a bit tired as Westley rotated the pair with Snater. Renshaw was first to go LBW to Cook for 35 and 8 balls later Dickson departed for an excellent 42. Sadly Lammonby made a 24 ball duck – he just couldn't find a gap and the Essex bowlers bowled well to him but the locals can let him have a failure as he has been brilliant so far this season. Umeed made a breezy 34 from 41 as Somerset were intend on finishing the match by the end of Saturday's play and Banton played the perfect innings hitting the bad ball and keeping out the good ones. He made 29 and was out with 3 runs to win. Pretorius had been sent in early but was quickly out for 2 and Rew was bowled by a good ball from Snater for 6 to continue his poor run of form. So it was left to Overton and Gregory to get Somerset over the line – and the crowd went wild!

Summary: What a fabulous match in the end – of course as Somerset finally won a Championship match. The pitch was a major factor and was underprepared due to poor weather and the fact that the Women's match was partially played in the rain with only matting offering protection.

There was talk of a pitch inspector given 20 wickets falling in 2 days (by 18:45 day 2), but the pitch was the same for both sides and it offered consistent bounce throughout, it just nibbled about.

A most welcome win and 19 points against our arch enemy – fabulous!

In a low scoring match, Somerset conceded 20 extras in each innings, so 294 runs & 40 extras = 13.6%. By contrast Essex scored 294 runs and conceded 20 extras = 6.71%. Somerset must, moving forward, cut out or at least reduce the number of extras, especially no balls and the skipper is the worst offender overstepping 25 times (50 runs).

A week off for R&R – everyone can have a few days off.

6 – Kent, Taunton F-M 17-20 May 2024 – Won by 8 wickets - 24 pts, 5 batting, 4 bowling, Kent 2. 2nd in table.

Pre-match: A welcome week off. Nothing from the club about Abell or Leach. TKC still carrying drinks in the IPL – a complete waste – the club may have to consider a white ball contract only when his current one expires at the end of the 2025 season.

Teams: **Somerset:** Renshaw, Dickson, Lammonby, Umeed, Banton, Rew†, Gregory*, Overton, Pretorius, Davey, Leach. Bashir, Ball and Aldridge left out of the 14 man squad.

Kent: Crawley, Compton, Bell-Drummond*, O'Riordan, Denly, Finch†, Evison, Swanepoel, Stewart, Gilchrist, Garrett. Quadri and Parkinson left out of the 13.

Toss: Kent – field.

Umpires: Neil Mallender and Rob White.

Match referee: Simon Hinks.

Day 1: After being inserted, Somerset found themselves 0-1 when Dickson swished at the 4th ball he faced to be caught behind for 0. Lammonby was dropped by Crawley on 0 but battled through the new ball which seamed a little early on. Renshaw made a pleasant 40 but with the sore on 75, he caught in

the slips. Umeed made a pleasant 25 before being caught in the slips. Meanwhile, Lammonby continued his early season form striking some delightful drives and fit was a surprise when he was out for 69 as he dragged a pull onto his stumps. This brought together Banton and Rew, the latter being short of runs this season after his prolific 2023. Both were circumspect at first, but as the Kent attack tired they both made hay. Garrett pulled up injured, so the attack was restricted but Somerset managed to score at 4.8/over as the two batsman put on an entertaining 205 in 42.4 overs and took the score to 377 before Banton who made his 2nd First Class century - a brilliant 133 was caught behind attempting a one day shot over the keeper. Rew then brought up his 7th before being LBW for 114 - 402-6 from 89.3 overs.

Day 2: Somerset progressed the first innings adding 114 in 24.1 overs to reach 554 all out. Gregory making a fine 77 with Pretorius (19), Davey (27), and Leach (21*) keeping him company. It was nice to welcome Leach back to Taunton and he received a wonderful round of applause as he walked to the wicket.

Having amassed 554, Somerset's highest score v Kent beating the previous highest score of 503 scored in 1898, the pressure was on Kent and Overton duly trapped Crawley LBW for a first ball duck - a bittersweet moment for all those in the crowd wanting to see him bat, but that would be carried over until the 2nd innings. Pretorius and Overton reduced Kent to 55-3 before Compton and Denly put on 39, but when Leach induced an edge to Rew, Kent subsided to 95-4 and finished the day on 108-5 from 33 overs. Kent definitely under the pump.

Day 3: Resuming on 108-5 under beautiful blue skies, Kent struggled as Evison was bowled by a beauty from Pretorius for 11 and Swanepoel guided a Gregory delivery to Umeed in the slips for 6. Meanwhile Denly stood firm and reached a well-deserved 50 from 79 balls. Stewart and Gilchrist perished for 1 run between them as the innings closed on 178 all out in 48.1 overs, Denly making 61 before being brilliantly caught by Rew off an inside edge.

With a deficit of 376, Gregory enforced the follow on and the Kent openers had to negotiate 30 minutes batting before lunch which they duly did - 47-0 from 13 uneventful overs.

The afternoon session saw 150 runs scored in 30 overs at 5 runs/over as Crawley and Compton bedded in on what was now a really flat pitch. Gregory used seven bowlers but not including Davey as he was on and off the field all day with a stomach bug and was unable to bowl. Some funky fields were witnessed as the skipper tried to wrinkle out the batsmen. Eventually it was Renshaw who got the breakthrough as Compton missed a straight one and was LBW for 65 and the openers had put on 194 for the first wicket. At tea the score was 197-1 from 43 overs.

The evening session produced 212 runs in 42.4 overs - 5/over. Crawley was excellent throughout and punished anything short, wide or off length smashing a brilliant 238 from 267 balls with 31x4 and 4x6. He milked the tiring attack scoring 148 in boundaries but was eventually out caught behind off Pretorius. Bell-Drummond made a fine 62 but the Somerset bowlers stuck to their task and managed to take 5 wickets as Kent closed on 409-5. Leach, in his first bowl for Somerset in 12 months, manfully bowled 26 overs taking 2-109 and Pretorius, always giving everything in the face of adversity, 2-62.

The pitch remains very flat offering little or no assistance to the seamers or the spinners and with a quickening outfield, runs come easily. Kent are 33 in front with 5 wickets remaining - an interesting day in prospect on day 4.

Day 4: Resuming with a lead of 33, it was a question of how many would Somerset have to make in their 2nd innings. As it turned out Finch and Evison were removed by Davey (finally able to bowl after a sickness bug hit him on day 2) but Stewart put bat to ball to made 37 from 41 while Denly completed his 2nd half century of the match and was last out for 67. Kent's finally amassed 564 all out, a lead of 188. Wickets shared between Gregory 2-103, Leach 2-119, Pretorius 3-110, Davey 2-40 and Renshaw 1-45..126 overs in 511 minutes (8 ½ hours) - a long hard slog on basically a still flat pitch.

189 to win - can could Somerset chase down the required in 54 overs. Dickson went early, strangled down the leg side for 6. Lammonby made a breezy 30 from 24 balls but it was Renshaw(82*) and Umeed (73*) who produced the match winning partnership of 134 to take Somerset over the line with 10 overs to spare. The crowd as usual went wild!

Summary: A fantastic win. To roll Kent out in the 1st innings was brilliant and then to have such a massive lead (378) was equally brilliant but on such a flat and unresponsive pitch, it was always going to be difficult to bowl Kent out cheaply again. Crawley's innings will go down in Taunton history and an absolute pleasure to watch but their poor first innings showing ultimately cost Kent the match. Dickson's form is indeed a worry and it would not be a surprise if he was not in the squad at Riverside at the end of the week.

7 - Durham - Riverside F-Sa 24-25 May 2024 - Lost by an Innings and 6 Runs - 3pts, 3 bowling, Durham 20. 3rd in table.

Teams: **Somerset:** Renshaw, Abell, Lammonby, Umeed, Banton, Rew†, Gregory*, Overton, Pretorius, Davey, Leach. Dickson dropped and not in the 13, Bashir & Ball left out of the squad, Aldridge not included. (Ball later included in side after Pretorius tested positive for concussion).

Durham: Lees, Borthwick*, Ackerman, Bedingham, Robinson†, Stokes, Clark, Coughlin, Raine, Parkinson C, Siddle.

Toss: Durham - field

Umpires: Peter Hartley & Jack Shantry

Match Ref: James Whittaker

Day 1: After losing the toss on a green pitch, Somerset struggled against some accurate Durham bowling but managed to add to their own downfall. Abell's return to open the innings was a surprise as Lammonby or Umeed could have opened with Renshaw but the powers that be decided to stick Abell right into the firing line even though he hadn't batted since March in South Africa's t20 competition. He has had success batting down the order. All the bowlers caused problems and the writing was on the wall at lunch with the score at 84-5 with Abell (out to the 6th ball he received), Renshaw (5 from 39 balls), Lammonby (22 from 48), Umeed (9 from 11) and Rew (13 from 27) all back in the hutch for a collective score of 53. After lunch, Banton played sensibly for 36 from 63 but wickets kept falling – Gregory and Overton both made 0, the latter being bowled first ball by former Somerset overseas Siddle and the prospect of being shovelled out for under 100 appeared a real possibility at 84-7, but enter Pretorius, who has definitely become a good acquisition. He hits the ball in unusual places and squirts the ball through the off side well. He doesn't hang about either and made 61% of the runs whilst he was at the crease. 87 scored and his contribution was a pleasing 53 as Somerset were bowled out for 171 in 52.1 overs – it could have been a lot worse, but was it a big enough first innings score? Will the pitch flatten out? Pretorius was found to have been concussed by the medical team, so was replaced by Ball for the remainder of the match.

With 43 overs left, the Somerset faithful were hoping for a score of 120-8 at the close or thereabouts and at 19-3, Somerset were well on track. Lees, luckily was run out backing up as Overton got a finger on a drive by Borthwick and he also accounted for Borthwick and Ackerman for 9 and 1 respectively. What they hadn't banked on was David Bedingham. Coming in off the back of 3 consecutive hundred's, Somerset needed to get rid of him quickly. But the bowling lacked penetration after the effects of the new ball wore off, he milked anything off line and length and is clearly a very good batsman. The partnership between him and Ollie Robinson of 114 was brilliant. Once Robinson had departed for a well-made 46 from 77, caught by Rew, Ball bowled excellently to trap both Stokes and Clark LBW – 161-6 and just before the close Bedingham sauntered to his 4th consecutive First Class century from just 105 balls with 13 4's and 2 6's. Parkinson, as night watchman and Bedingham saw the score to 177-6 at the close – a lead of just 6.

Day 2: This match could be decided on day 2, and so it came to pass but in the worst possible way. Bedingham was caught by Rew for 101 off Ball but the tail wagged considerably as Somerset's bowlers failed to drive that nail home. Durham at 199-9, really should not have made more than 210 (a lead of no more than 39) as Raine (46) and Siddle (31) enjoyed a 10th wicket partnership of 65 in 11.2 overs. Ball bowled his best for Somerset taking 5-62 from 20 overs, but Gregory was expensive going for 49 in 6.5 overs. So a lead of 94 was massive in the context of the match and one that was potentially, at this stage one that needed to be knocked off with ease and not many wickets down. But the worst was yet to come. 75 overs remaining in the day – how would Somerset fare? Answer: very badly.

33.4 overs (202 balls) later and at 15:34 on day 2, Somerset were packing their bags to make the 6 hour journey back to HQ. Let's just say that Durham's bowlers were brilliant – Stokes was excellent taking 4-23 to add to his 1st innings 4-54 (8-77 in the match at 9.62/wicket) and Raine took 3-26 and Somerset were bundled out for 88 – yes a paltry 88, so Durham did not have to bat again. The batting however, was, well, very poor, despite good bowling, there was no fight, resilience or application to keep the Durham bowlers out. Of the 9 actual wickets to fall, 6 were either caught by the 'keeper or in the slip cordon, the exceptions being Renshaw who was bowled by a grubber, Gregory who was LBW and Leach who was bowled neck and crop. Top scorer - Umeed – 16. Only Lammonby 14 and Leach 13 reached double figures and the innings lasted 202 balls. Sadly Banton was unable to bat due to the bug that effected Davey in the Kent match and allegedly Gregory also suffering from same bug

Summary: A dismal performance all round. Somerset conceded a lead of 94 - far too many and the bowling was yet again inaccurate at times. The batting was dreadful and it seemed that the players had conceded before the 2nd innings. Why did Abell open? The only positive was the bowling of Ball who was excellent.

After the euphoria of victories against Essex and Kent, Somerset were definitely brought down to earth with a massive bump in a match that Somerset only managed to bat for 85.5 overs (505 balls) in the entire two innings.

Now the white ball stuff starts as Somerset try to defend the t20 title. Red ball returns on 23rd June at Trent Bridge – a 29 day red ball break.

8 – Nottinghamshire, Trent Bridge Su-W 23-26 June 2024 – Drawn 15 pts, 4 batting, 3 bowling, Nottinghamshire 13. 3rd in table.

Pre-match: The first of 2 CC matches shoe-horned in the middle of the t20 competition – not good for the players. Gregory has a groin injury which may explain why he only bowled 2 overs v Gloucestershire in the t20 match on Friday 21st June, so Overton will captain side. Squad of 14 but Meredith not included even though he was allegedly available for selection. Pretorius returned to the squad after 3 weeks back in South Africa. Dickson not included in the 13. Davey and Green left out.

Teams: **Somerset:** Kohler-Cadmore, Umeed, Lammonby, Abell, Umeed, Banton, Rew†, Aldridge, Overton*, Pretorius, Leach, Ball.

Nottinghamshire: Hameed*, Slater, Young, Clarke, Haynes, Moores† James, Harrison, Stone, Pennington, Paterson.

Toss: Nottinghamshire - bat

Umpires: Neil Mallender & Ben Debenham

Day 1: A glorious summers day finally! After winning the toss, Notts made a decent start against some mediocre bowling from the Somerset seamers. Hameed was first to go for bowled by Overton for 15, then Young LBW to Aldridge for 19. At 71-3 Clarke and Haynes then put on 108 in 23.2 overs on what had become a flat pitch with little assistance for the bowlers. Both were out to consecutive balls and Moores and James also departed cheaply to leave Notts 190-7 after 50.5 overs and the Somerset fans in the crowd were thinking of 210-220 all out, but there followed a magnificent partnership of 112 in 39 overs between Stone and Harrison. Both circumspect at first they ground out a very valuable period as the bowlers tired in the hot afternoon sun. Harrison was finally bowled for 35 by Pretorius and Pennington made it through to the close scoring all his 18 runs in the unattended third man area before the close 326-8, with Stone 74*.

Day 2: Stone added 9 to his overnight score before being caught at slip by Overton off Pretorius and Pennington and Paterson added 15 as Somerset finally dismissed Notts for 360 in 105 overs – Aldridge claiming the last wicket to take 5-94, his 2nd 5 wicket haul.

A new opening combination entered the field and to the surprise of the Somerset supporters it was TKC and Umeed who were pushed out to take the new ball. Umeed was well caught by Young off Pennington for 4. Lammonby joined TKC and the pair put on 60 before TKC was strangled down the leg side making 30 of his 38 in boundaries from 64 balls. Abell and Lammonby then embarked on a splendid partnership of 50.2 overs before Lammonby missed a straight one to be LBW for 87, missing out on a well-deserved 2nd century of the season. Banton soon followed, caught behind for 0, but Rew supported the ex-captain admirably and Abell duly completed a first century of the season and his 17th First Class as Somerset ended the day 293-4 from 85 overs.

Day 3: Another fine sunny day and Somerset made hay. Rew missed out on a 50 by 1 run, Aldridge perished for 0, but Pretorius took the initiative with some firm blows to the short boundary – the first batsman to really make use of it. Overton made a quick 20 and Leach, in decent batting nick after his 105 in the 2nd XI prior to this match, made an excellent 37. It was indeed a shame that Ball could not keep the bowling out to guide Pretorius to his 2nd First Class 10 which he so richly deserved. He was last stranded on 95* from 71 balls with 8x4 and 6x6 – 141 runs scored whilst he was at the crease in 22.5 overs at 6.52/over. 470 was an excellent effort and at least Somerset managed 4 batting points and deprived Notts of a 3rd bowling point.

The pitch showed no demons at all and Notts finished on 177-1 in 58 overs as all the bowlers struggle to get anything out of the pitch – no swing, seam or turn – the odd ball kept low but it was hard work and looks like Day 4 will be a long day as it seems unlikely they Notts will be able to post a big enough score to think that they could bowl Somerset out.

Day 4: And so it turned out – by now the pitch was well, turgid to say the least. Anybody attending may well have decided the bar was more interesting as Notts batted the day out – 325 runs in 96 overs and only 2 wickets fell. Nothing of interest happened except that TKC kept wicket after tea for 25 overs, Banton bowled 3 overs and Rew bowled the final over at 16:47 as the players shook hands finally at 16:50

Summary: In the end this was a bore draw – days 1 and 2 were interesting, days 3 & 4 were not. However, Somerset took 15 points to Notts' 11 and that's all that can be said other than that Trent Bridge is a lovely place to watch cricket, friendly locals, nice food and the best scoreboard with NO averts during play.

9 – Warwickshire Su-W 30 June-3 July 2024 – Won by 5 Wickets 20 pts, 1 batting & 3 bowling, Warwickshire 7. 2nd in table.

Pre-match: Green sent out on loan to Leicestershire again. Dickson not included in the squad of 14 which now included Bashir who finished his loan spell. Squad same as last match plus Gregory who is now fit allegedly but Ball left out of squad, presumably rested.

Somerset: Kohler-Cadmore, Umeed, Lammonby, Abell, Banton, Rew†, Aldridge, Overton, Pretorius, Davey, Leach.

Gregory still unfit, Bashir and Ball left out, but it could have been that England may have demanded Bashir play as he was selected for England instead of Leach, despite being thrashed for 38 off one over by Dan Lawrence in the previous round of matches playing for Worcestershire, who have now signed Virdi from Surrey on a loan basis.

Warwickshire: Davies*, Yates, Rhodes, Hain, Mousley, Barnard, Bethall, Burgess†, Woakes, Booth, Hannon-Dalby. (Rushworth & Norwell injured)

Toss: Somerset - field

Umpires: Mark Newell & Rob Bailey

Match Referee: Mike Smith

Day 1: The pitch looked very green at the toss and after winning the toss and inserting Warwickshire, the Somerset bowlers reduced the visitors to 40-4 after 14.4 overs – Davies (9), Yates (15), Hain (0) and Mousley (2) all back in the hutch - Pretorius claiming three wickets. The pitch did seam about but not enough balls were put in the right place as Rhodes (63) and Barnard put on 104 in 26.4 overs before

Rhodes (35) and then Bethall (1) perished – 145-6 in 42.3 overs and the decent Somerset crowd were expecting Warwickshire to be 220 or thereabouts all out. But Barnard, Burgess and Woakes had other ideas. Tea came with the visitors on 214-6 (Barnard 79*, Burgess 33*) and the game was evenly poised but in the evening session of 323 overs, the three batsmen scored 159 runs in 32 overs at 4.96/over despite the new ball being taken and play ended on 373-8. Barnard (92) thoroughly deserved a century, Burgess batted brilliantly to get to his own hundred and ended on 126* and Woakes chipped in with 39 as the Somerset bowlers tired. It must be said that the pitch had flattened out completely – no assistance to any of the bowlers. Hopefully Somerset will knock over the remaining 2 wickets on Day 2 and post a decent score – the prospect after Day 1 suggests that the pitch will win and this will be yet another bore draw. Let's wait and see.

Day 2: No play before lunch due to rain.

Play commenced at 13:10 - 82 overs to bowl. Booth was dismissed by Pretorius to give him 5-104 which was well deserved and Burgess added an additional 26 and was last out for a brilliant innings of 146 from 208 balls – batting at number 8, this was an incredible performance. Warwickshire's last 4 wickets achieved 267 runs.

Kohler-Cadmore and Umeed again opened the innings. Umeed hit his 2nd ball for 6 into the graveyard and was caught at 3rd slip off the 4th ball. Meanwhile TKC hit 2 superlative drives through cover and mid-on but all the other scoring shots were unconvincing – it seems he is better facing an older ball. Both he and Lammonby were caught behind for 26 and 23 respectively as Somerset slipped to 57-3. Banton joined Abell and slowly they picked off the singles and finally compiled a partnership of 139 before Banton wedged to slip for an excellent 79 – he deserved a century but received a good ball from the never reliable Hannon-Dalby. Then, in typical Somerset fashion, two night watchmen were quickly dispatched – Davey and Leach fell in consecutive balls to OHD, LBW and caught at the wicket as he ended the day with 4-43. Somerset ended on 208-6 still 204 runs behind and 54 short of the follow on target.

208-3 sounds far better than 208-6 and Somerset will really have to bat well on Day 3 to match Warwickshire's score or at least get within 50 runs of it, otherwise it may be difficult to save the match.

Day 3: After just 3 balls Abell was LBW to a booth full toss without adding to his overnight 61 which included just 3 4's. Aldridge looked good until he followed a wide ball that didn't require playing to give Yates his 3rd catch. Overton played positively for 35* from 36 balls but Pretorius, batting at 11, could not produce his form of last week as Somerset were all out for a disappointing 284 adding only 66 in 17.2 overs by 12:10 conceding a lead of 128. Yates and Davies started slowly against the new ball but sadly Somerset did not get the breakthrough requires as the put on 106 in 31.4 overs, both making half centuries. Hain and Rhodes continued in similar fashion, Hain facing 40 balls for just 3 runs as Leach and Overton bowled tight spells. Barnard and Mousley quickly departed but Bethall batted in the perfect manner pouncing on anything short and wide to make a pleasant 66 from 83 balls striking 8x4 and 2x6. The lead kept creeping up and by the close Warwickshire were 409 ahead and whether they declare overnight or bat on, that total is at this time far too many for Somerset to chase given the slow nature of the pitch, the quality of the bowling and Somerset's method of batting – so only 2 results possible – a Warwickshire win or a draw – all to play for but can Somerset bat it out for 96 overs on Day 4?

Day 4: Wow, what a day! How can such a momentous victory be described in a coherent fashion? To chase 410 in 96 overs on, it must be said, a unresponsive pitch was an outstanding achievement. The overnight declaration was not really expected as most pundits thought that Warwickshire would bat on for half an hour or so to stretch the lead, but it became obvious that they thought they needed the full 96 overs to try and bowl Somerset out.

Umeed started in a positive fashion striking a pleasant 30 from 26 while the ball was hard, TKC playing second fiddle and also unusually playing the anchor role. Lammonby, who hasn't failed in the Championship this season, played a brief cameo making 26 from 43 but was out at 77-2 from 18.4 overs (333 needed from 78.2 overs). At lunch, Somerset were 117-2 from 30 overs – 293 needed from 66 overs. TKC and Abell put on 67 in 21.4 overs before TKC had a massive hack and skied the ball – Barnard taking a fine catch at third man. 144-3 from 40.2 overs (266 needed from 57.4). There then followed an excellent partnership between the in form Banton and ex-skipper Abell of 138 in 32.1 overs. At tea Somerset were 230-3, Abell 74*/Banton 50* from 63 overs, so 180 needed from 33 overs.

The final session – game on. Warwickshire stuck to their task admirably using 8 bowlers, but there was no assistance from the pitch. Banton was then well caught at slip by Yates off Barnard for an excellent 81 from 109 balls with 7 4's and 2 6's and he thoroughly deserved a century but it wasn't to be. 282-4 from 72.3 overs – 128 needed from 23.3 overs at 5.44/over. Pretorius was sent in to increase the tempo but after a couple of lusty blows was caught in the deep for 14 from 10 balls – 299-5 from 75.4 overs – 111 needed from 20.2 overs and the victory was in sight as Rew joined Abell on 98*. The left handed Rew clearly upset the bowlers line and length and he pounced on anything short which probably persuaded Warwickshire to take the 2nd new ball with 11 overs remaining. This became a crucial decision as the new ball, being harder, flew off the bat easier and generally to the boundary. Rew and Abell finally saw Somerset home with a partnership of 114 in 16 overs at 7.1/ over. Abell smashed 4466 from Booth's 10th over to win the match with 4.2 overs remaining.

Batting sequence:

300-5 – 109 needed off 19, Abell 98, Rew 1

307-5 – 103 needed off 18, Abell 99, Rew6

310-5 – 100 needed off 17, Abell 101, Rew 7
325-5 – 85 needed off 16, Abell 104, Rew 20
329-5 – 81 needed off 15, Abell 104, Rew 23
335-5 – 75 needed off 14, Abell 109, Rew 24
341-5 – 69 needed off 13, Abell 110, Rew 29
348-5 – 62 needed off 12, Abell 115, Rew 29
356-5 – 54 needed off 11, Abell 121, Rew 31 (new ball taken)
360-5 – 50 needed off 10, Abell 122, Rew 34
367-5 – 43 needed off 9, Abell 123, Rew 40
376-5 – 34 needed off 8, Abell 127, Rew 45
378-5 – 32 needed off 7, Abell 128, Rew 46
388-5 – 22 needed off 6, Abell 129, Rew 55
393-5 – 17 needed off 5, Abell 132, Rew 57

413-5 – 4466 - VICTORY! Abell 152, Rew 57

Summary: In the first innings, the Warwickshire bowling was far more accurate than Somerset's. It is obvious to see that far too many 4 balls are bowled as Warwickshire hit 51x4 and 3x6 (54 boundaries) – Somerset bowled 471 dot balls – 8.2%. In the Somerset innings only 26x4 and 2x6 were scored – 5.6%. In the Warwickshire 2nd innings the bowling did tighten up considerably – Overton was excellent and was well supported by Leach although achieved little turn. Runs were made difficult to come by. But the overall achievement of chasing down 410 on Day 4 was simply outstanding and those that were there and watching the stream were naturally overjoyed!

There now follows a 49 day red ball cricket break until 22nd August for part 2 of the Championship – the run in.

10 – Warwickshire, Edgbaston, Th-Su 22-25 August 2024 – Drawn 11 pts, 3 bowling, Warwickshire 13. 2nd in table

Pre-match: Pretorius with South African squad, but membership not informed whether he may even be available for later rounds. Meredith – again club have failed to communicate the position, but on Day 3, it was announced that he had been dragged into Australian t20 squad v Ireland (a needless series), so was unavailable until possibly the t20 QF on 5th September.

Gregory allegedly has a groin strain – unconfirmed by the club as usual, but he was left out of the final XI. Goldsworthy was also left out of squad of 13.

Meanwhile, Ogborne has gone on loan to Kent for 2 CC matches, Green to Leicestershire for the remainder of the season other than the 2 white ball matches and potentially the t20 finals on 15th September and Leonard has gone to Glamorgan for the rest of the season. This loan business is ridiculous – there are many issues surrounding this and Somerset members generally not happy about the situation, but management seem to be.

Teams: Somerset: Kohler-Cadmores, Umeed, Lammonby, Abell, Banton, Rew†, Aldridge, Overton*, Davey, Leach, Ball.

Warwickshire: Davies*, Yates, Rhodes, Sheik, Mousley, Barnard, Bethell, Burgess†, Rae, Rushworth, Hannon-Dalby.

Umpires: Steve O'Shaughnessy & Alex Wharf.

Match Ref: Steve Davis.

Toss: Somerset – field.

Day 1: Play began at 12:30 due to rain – 76 overs to bowl and after an hour lunch was taken with the score at 53-1 from 15 overs – not the best start with the new ball. Between lunch and tea, only 27 overs bowled with Warwickshire progressing to 145-5. A much better session for Somerset in taking 4 wickets including Yates for a classy 69 from 119 balls. The bowlers bowled much better and duly got rewards. Mousley was out 7.2 overs after tea with the score on 165, but Burgess joined Bethell and both played very well to take Warwickshire through to the close at 277-6. The bowling was ok, but far too many 4 balls were served up – Burgess was particularly severe on Leach whose 7 overs cost 44 runs. Sadly his length was either too short or too full and he paid the price.

Day 2: Bethell and Burgess perished with in 4 balls of each other for 69 and 64 respectively to Overton and Davey. The tail wagged too much as Rae and the tail added an additional 50 runs to enable Warwickshire to reach 337 all out. Davey, 4-80 and Overton 4-88, were the pick of the bowlers. Aldridge still conceding at least one 4 ball per over.

Somerset's start was a disaster. Kohler-Cadmores advanced down the track first ball of the innings and missed – he did the same 2nd ball and got a nick off Hannon-Dalby for a 2nd ball duck. Umeed followed 7 balls later when Rushworth, who was playing for the first time since April, nipped one off the seam to take the off stump out of the ground. A cracking delivery, one which Umeed couldn't believe. Worse was to come as Abell was adjudged LBW by Wharf (looked too high to this reporter) and Banton guided a Bethell delivery to Rhodes at slip – 56-4 and 281 behind. Lammonby who hadn't played a meaningful innings for 47 days, held firm. His batting this season is much improved and he has been the most reliable batsman in the team. He was joined by Rew, who had just completed a successful campaign in the 50 over competition, but Lammonby was caught by OHD on the boundary for 44. An innocuous ball and an equally innocuously gifted wicket – 65-5. Aldridge joined Rew and together they put on 87 in 22

overs before the later was caught behind for 49. Aldridge batted very well and whilst he was in the middle 174 runs were scored – he was last out for 84 but he thoroughly deserved a hundred as Somerset were bowled out for 239 a deficit of 98 which may well prove crucial.

Warwickshire ended up having to bat for 10 overs and reached 27-1, Overton inducing an edge to get Yates caught behind. 8 overs were lost to bad light.

Day 3: Rain curtailed play until mid-afternoon – 53 overs to bowl. In those overs, Warwickshire extended their lead to 277 by the close. Davies registering his 11th First Class century ending the day on 106*, although Rew missed a stumping when he had scored 35 or so – that would have made a very different perspective on the match. The hosts ended on 179-5 – Barnard registering a pair and an interesting possible declaration to come on day 4, but more likely is that Warwickshire will bat the day if possible to obtain the draw and take 10 points.

Day 4: Somerset bowled much better in the 2nd innings on the bland surface. Davies progressed to 131 before being bowled by Leach who mopped up the tail taking 5-77 in 24 overs, figures he was undoubtedly pleased with. Warwickshire were all out for 270 setting Somerset a notional 366 to win in 66 overs at 5.57/over. Rain intervened and chopped 15 overs out of the match. It was no longer a feasible option but Rew entertained the few remaining spectators with a cameo 55 not out from just 24 balls before rain took the players from the field at 17:30.

Summary: Had the weather not intervened, this match could have produced an interesting finale, but it wasn't to be. The pitch however did little to encourage the bowlers and was very bland. Not a great experiment opening with TKC and Umeed – they lasted 11 balls in the first innings, but did put on 56 in the 2nd innings. Opening the batting is still an issue.

11 – Durham, Taunton, 29 Aug – 1 Sept 2024. Won by 293 Runs. 24 pts, 5 batting, 3 bowling, Durham 4. 2nd in table.

Pre-match: Gregory back in squad, but has a “serious groin and abdomen injury” so may not be fit. Pretorius picked up an injury whilst not playing for South Africa so is now out for the rest of the season. Three players still out on the loan trail. Vaughan added to squad to make 14 and no overseas. Meanwhile Somerset sign Brett Randell, a New Zealand bowler who hasn't played since November 2023.

Teams: Somerset: Umeed, Goldsworthy, Lammonby, Abell, Banton, Rew†, Vaughan, Aldridge, Gregory*, Overton, Leach.

Durham: Lees, McKinney, Borthwick*, Robinson†, Turner, de Leede, Carse, Raine, Drissell, Hogg, Parkinson C.

Toss: Somerset - bat

Umpires: Rob Bailey & Mike Burns.

Match Ref: Will Smith.

Day 1: Winning the toss, Somerset found themselves 68-3 from 15.5 overs with Umeed (out first ball of the match), Lammonby (9) and Goldsworthy (38), back in the hutch within the first hour. Goldsworthy became the 6th opening batsman to be pushed out to face the new ball and did a half decent job. After the early loss of the 3 wickets, Abell and Banton put on an excellent 185 in 35.5 overs before Abell was out for an excellent 124, but Banton soon followed 9 balls later for 73. Two new batsmen at the crease – why do Somerset more often than not lose both batsmen who have had a stand of 100 or more? Rew and Vaughan, making his First Class debut, put on 68 of which Vaughan made a very good 30 in 55 balls. Rew (89*) and Aldridge (12*) saw the day out to 395-6 from the full quota of overs.

Day 2: Rew and Aldridge (44) continued their stand to put on 89 before Rew, just having completed his 2nd century of the season but was out immediately afterwards for a fine 103. The tail wagged sufficiently to take the score to 492 all out with Gregory, batting at 9 (31) and Overton (at 10) 19, striking some lusty blows.

Somerset's bowlers applied themselves well, but lacked penetration but 96 overs were bowled in the day by 17:30 which must be some kind of record. At 170-6, there were thoughts of gaining a large first innings lead, but Raine (51*) and Carse (59*) put on 102 as Somerset went wicketless after tea, which saw Durham through to the close at 272-6.

Day 3: Resuming on 272-6, Somerset had to capture the remaining 4 wickets. Carse and Raine added an additional 15 runs until Raine was caught at slip by Overton for 62 from 107 balls – their partnership realised 117 runs in 35.3 overs. Carse, meanwhile continued as he left off the previous evening, severe on anything loose which was dispatched powerfully to the boundary and he reached his 2nd First Class century from 149 balls. Aldridge returned to the attack and accounted for both Drissell and Hogg, before Leach wrapped the innings up at 336. Leach claimed 5-124 from 41.1 overs – a commendable effort. With Somerset 156 in front, the follow-on was unsurprisingly not enforced.

With 75 overs remaining in the day, Somerset started the 2nd innings in a positive fashion, Umeed striking the first ball for 4. He continued in similar vein making 28 from 31 before once again giving his wicket away, caught on the deep long off boundary. Lammonby continued his rich vein of form with a fluent 36 from 34, Abell 56, Banton 46 from 28, Rew 33 from 28 pushed the score along at 5/over to take the score to 263-5 when at 16:54 bad light stopped play with 23 overs remaining. All the spectators left assuming that that was the end of play as umpires are generally reluctant to return in these circumstances.

But, all of a sudden, with the light no worse than when they went off the field, the umpires deemed that play could resume, but only spin could be bowled. Somerset immediately declared setting Durham 420 to win in what was effectively 110 overs – 3.8/over to win.

Durham were understandably not happy at all as Somerset opened with Leach and Vaughan with the floodlights on. No man and no dogs witnessed what turned out to be 13 overs – in that time Durham lost 3 wickets – McKinney needlessly run out by Lees, Lees himself caught by Overton's buckets at slip for 6 from 31 and finally Borthwick bowled by Vaughan for 4 from 22 – 15-3, 5 of those being extras. Leach 7-4-3-1, Vaughan 6-3-7-1.

Day 4: Play began on time, Durham requiring 405 from 96 overs but rain intervened at 11:18 chopping 9 overs off with play resuming at 11:55 – 82 overs remaining. Somerset secured 3 more wickets before the lunch interval – nightwatchmen Drissell (33) and Parkinson (18) produced the largest partnership of 48 of the innings as Vaughan had Drissell caught at cover by Goldsworthy and Leach captured Parkinson caught at slip by Gregory as Durham reached lunch at 94-6 from 44 overs.

After lunch rain intervened again chopping another 8 overs off the day's play – 38 remaining. But thereafter Durham capitulated to the accurate Leach as they were bowled out for 126 in 60.3 overs – Leach 30.3-13-50-7, Vaughan 21-10-40-2. De Leede batted for 83 balls for 16 not out.

Summary: A brilliant and much needed victory if Somerset have any Championship aspirations which there obviously is. Maximum points takes Somerset to 2nd in the table on 153 points, 18 behind Surrey. The umpires decision to return to the field on day 3 was a major factor and a most unusual one but this sort of thing has happened to Somerset in the past, so that's the rub of the green and for once it was in Somerset's favour.

12 – Surrey, Taunton, M-Th 9-12 September 2024. Won by 111 runs, 21 points, 2 batting, 3 bowling. Surrey 5. 2nd in table.

Pre match: Brett Randell added to squad. Pretorius playing for South Africa A, Leonard with Glamorgan and Green with Leicestershire but “rested” for the t20 Finals or hopefully working on his bowling. Surrey signed Shakib Al Hasan for 1 match – **a ringer!** Not illegal, but against the spirit of the Championship – how much have the Bank of Surrey shelled out for 4 days work? Probably paid over £20k. And how did other spinners on the Bank of Surrey payroll think of bringing in an overseas ringer for one match? Umeed, Ball and Davey left out of squad of 14, Ball and Davey shoved aside for new overseas Randell – this is another whole conversation.

Teams: Somerset: Goldsworthy, Vaughan, Lammonby, Abell, Banton, Rew†, Aldridge, Gregory*, Overton, Randell, Leach.

Surrey: Burns*, Sibley, Patel, Geddes, Foakes†, Shakib Al Hassan, TK Curran, Clark, Steel, Roach, Worrall.

Toss: Somerset – bat.

Umpires: David Milnes & Steve O'Shaughnessy.

Match Referee: Simon Hinks.

Day 1: Somerset won the toss and batted, a decision that may have a major bearing. Vaughan was pushed up the order to open as Umeed dropped to accommodate a second spinner, but it was Goldsworthy who perished first bowled by Roach 2nd ball for 0. Lammonby joined Vaughan who was circumspect but knew where his off stump was as he left anything he did not have to play. Lammonby was next to depart caught in the slips from Clark's 2nd ball that bounced and left him. Abell and Vaughan put on 60 before Vaughan was caught behind for a polished 44 – he thoroughly deserved a maiden half century but that will soon come. Banton joined Abell and the pair put on 62 in 20.1 overs but Abell perished to Shakib Al Hassan who managed to turn one past his outside edge. Banton and Rew then put on 107 in 25.2 overs – Banton playing some delightful drives and pulls and his rich vein of form continued to bring up a magnificent century from 132 balls with a lucky Harrow drive that sped to the fine leg boundary for 4. Rew perished for 38 and Somerset were well placed at 262-5, but then it went completely pear shaped as Banton unexpectedly departed for 132 from 172 balls (his 3rd First Class century and the 2nd of the season) – Somerset then contrived to lose Aldridge for 15 having a wild swish at Shakib, Overton given out stumped (replays suggested he was not out), Gregory and in the last over of the day Randell for 3 from 19 balls – 5 wickets for 12 runs in 7 overs or 42 balls. A position of strength was squandered and 2 potential batting points missed as Somerset were bowled out for 317. All the 5 batsmen got themselves out – they were not got out by the Surrey bowlers. Shakib ended with 4-97 from 33.5 overs – his contribution in Somerset's 2nd innings may prove telling.

Day 2: Only 70 overs were possible, 53 of which were bowled by Leach and Vaughan for 105 runs, the remaining 17 cost 54. All the Surrey batsmen got in but only 3 wickets were obtained – Sibley for 16, Burns for 21 (an LBW decision at last) and Geddes for a well made 50 but Patel was content to bat long taking 154 balls to reach 61* and Foakes 63 for 11*. There was no intent to push the score along as Surrey really don't need a win, they just need not to lose, so in a way it was a pleasant release when the rain came at 14:58 and continued for the rest of the day, Surrey standing on 169-3 from the 70 overs.

Day 3: What a fascinating days cricket! Surrey progressed from the overnight 169-3 to 321 all out in 42.2 overs with Archie Vaughan claiming an additional 3 wickets to finish with the excellent figures of 37-7-102-6 – a maiden 5 wicket haul. Leach was not to be out-done and claimed 4-105 from a mammoth 48.2 overs. Foakes crept to 37 before being caught by sub Green, Shakib-Al-Hasan was caught and

bowled by Leach, Clark perished for 1 and Steel for 0, but it was Tom Curran who produced one of two outstanding innings of the day. He struck 6x4 and 8x6, most well over the boundary, smiting 86 from 75 balls before holing out on the boundary. He was severe on anything short or wide and Roach supported him well as the pair put on 54 in 9.4 overs before Roach was out and then Curran added a further 39 in 7.2 overs with Worrall. The last 2 wickets adding 93 in 17 overs - this gave Surrey a lead of just 4. Somerset under pressure - both Goldsworthy and Vaughan were out with just 12 on the board. Lammonby came in and played well until LBW to Clark's 2nd ball for 24 and then Abell also suffered from the umpire's finger for 18. Aldridge came in at 5 as Banton had injured his ankle playing football in the warm up (why do they persist in playing before a cricket match - far too much risk involved) but he soon departed for 10 bowled by Clark. Rew played nicely as he has done all season but Surrey's ringer struck twice having Rew caught and bowled Gregory adjudged LBW for 13. Randell hardly troubled the scorer (1) and Leach hung around making 13 from 38 before inexplicably dancing down the track to be caught behind - 153-9 from 46.2 overs. At this point Banton returned to the field with Lammonby as a runner. A brave thing to do as he was clearly in pain and could only hobble using his bat as a prop to walk to square leg. There then followed an entertaining partnership between him and Overton of 41 in 7.4 overs as Somerset ended the day on 194-9, a lead of 190. If these two could squeeze out another 30-40 runs, the Surrey chase will go one of two ways - an easy win for Surrey or a remarkable victory for Somerset, but that will be dependant on the weather, umpire decisions, how many Surrey need to win and most importantly, how well Leach and Vaughan bowl. An equally fascinating day in prospect on day 4. or

Day 4: What a day! Banton hobbled to the crease in the morning and added a valuable 30 runs with Overton who ended up on 49* as Somerset were all out for 224, leaving Surrey 221 to win in 76 overs - a decent chase. But it seemed clear that Surrey were not really interested in chasing 221 down as they seemed intent on a draw and this was reflected in the lunch score of 18-0 from 13 overs. During the afternoon session, Surrey scored 45 runs from 28.1 overs at 1.59 runs/over, 63-3 from 41.1 overs - absolutely nothing happening and players and spectators were expecting a 16:50 declaration and Surrey retain the Championship. Foakes guided a ball to Gregory for 20 from 100 balls (95-4) but it was Sibley's wicket that was crucial, and Leach managed to turn one which he guided to Gregory at slip for a well-made 56 from 183 balls 148 of which were dot balls - not pretty, but mightily effective - 96-5. Hasan was next to depart for 0 caught at slip by Gregory - 96-6 and then Curran departed bowled by Vaughan for 5 (always nice to get him out cheaply). From this position, Surrey dug deep as Clark faced 47 balls for 0 - a really uncharacteristic innings from him. Meanwhile Steel departed LBW to Vaughan and so claimed a pair. Roach dug in with Clark who between them chewed up 77 balls for no runs. Clark was caught behind with 4 minutes and 8 balls remaining. Worrall took forever to enter the field of play using the full 2 minutes to ensure that there were only 8 balls left. The first ball he let go, but the second was bang on target from Leach which Worrell missed to in front of all 3 and comprehensively LBW.

The players and the crowd went wild! Surrey beaten and the prospect of a first Championship still in sight.

Summary: Cricket's a funny game. Nothing happened at all in Surrey's 2nd innings except in the last 65 minutes when Surrey went from 95-3 from 57 overs to 109 all out in 78 - 18.1 overs for 14 runs. Curran's 86 in the first innings was enterprising but Somerset didn't bowl well to him and he exploited that. Banton's 2nd innings effort effectively put the match out of Surrey's grasp especially as they only wanted to play for a draw. It also brought back memories of Hildreth's century with a broken ankle in 2018. A fabulous victory and one of the most memorable in Somerset's history and will remain in the memory for a long time.

Next week's trip to Old Trafford remains crucial. Lancashire need a result as they are staring down the barrel of relegation.

* see below for ECB's assessment of Shakib Al Hasan's bowling action in this match.

13 - Lancashire, Old Trafford, Tues-Fri, 17-20 September 2024 - Lost by 168 Runs, 3pts, 3 bowling, Lancashire 19. 3rd in table.

Pre match: Squad of 14, but no Bashir. Abell included but not Banton who will be out for the season. Goldsworthy, Davey and Ball left out of squad of 14

Teams: Somerset: Umeed, Vaughan, Lammonby, Abell, Banton, Rew†, Aldridge, Gregory*, Overton, Randell, Leach.

Lancashire: Jennings*, Singh, Bohannon, Flintoff, Hurst†, Wells, Bell, Balderson, Bailey, Phillip.

Toss: Somerset - field.

Umpires: Steve O'Shaughnessy & Martin Saggars.

Match Referee: Dean Cosker.

Day 1: On a used pitch, Somerset won the toss and invited Lancashire to bat and should have taken full advantage first ball, but Aldridge spilled the chance offered by Jennings off Overton. To bowl Lancashire out for 140 was a great effort, but as Jennings made 40 more runs than any other batsman, a total well under 100 should have been achieved. This drop was the 13th catch Somerset have dropped in the Championship this season - 2nd only to Kent who have dropped 14. Overton with 4-32 and Gregory. 4-50, were the chief bowlers but Aldridge chipped in with 2-25. Randell remains wicketless and on evidence seen so far, Davey and Ball are arguably more effective and the question arises yet again about the necessity to sign an overseas bowler.

When Somerset batted, Umeed was again out to the first ball of the innings for the 2nd time to a ball he should have left alone. Vaughan (21) and Lammonby (36) put on 58 in 19.1 overs but then a procession of wickets tumbled in true Somerset fashion against some decent bowling from Bailey, 4-36 and Balderson 4-50 as Somerset only achieved a lead of 6.

With 12 overs remaining Somerset captured the prized wicket of Jennings caught by Umeed at slip for 4. Nightwatchman Williams and Singh saw Lancashire through to the close at 16-1. 21 wickets in the day for 302 runs at 3.14/over in 96 overs and not a single over of spin as a sharp contrast to last week's famous victory at Taunton.

Day 2: A whole day of batting for Lancashire. The pitch had certainly dried and flattened out from day 1 and wickets became harder to find as the day wore on. Somerset stuck to their task but the accuracy from most was lacking and some poorly directed balls gifted Lancashire runs and in addition, 44 extras were gifted – 10 byes, 9 leg byes (can't stop these), 20 no balls and 5 penalty runs when Aldridge was alleged to have made a dummy fielding slide – this was totally ridiculous as Vaughan already had the ball in hand. To add insult to injury O'Shaughnessy failed to give Balderson run out on 5 when he was well over a yard out, the stumps having been thrown down by Overton. The umpire clearly was not looking or attentive – a blatant mistake that has yet again cost Somerset dearly. Balderson had made 5 at the time and Wells, batting at 7 remained not out on 78 as Lancashire amassed 298-7 at the close – a lead of 292. Sadly, unlike last week against Surrey, Leach was unable to extract any turn although he did bowl tidily – 22 overs for 43 is very commendable and he only conceded 2 fours and 1 six in 132 deliveries.

Three quick wickets are required on day 3, to give Somerset any chance of victory but as the pitch is at its best, this seems unlikely.

Day 3: Early wickets failed to materialise as Lancashire added an additional 100 before the final wicket was taken at 12:40 as Lancashire made 398 all out setting Somerset 392 to win in 5 sessions or roughly 158 overs. Wells completed an excellent century and made 130 from 231 balls and Balderson in his 2nd innings of the innings made 47 (so 42 extra runs made after O'Shaughnessy's blatant error). Leach, 3-54, and Randell 3-64 took the most wickets but Overton was unlucky beating the bat regularly but with no luck.

Umeed slashed the first ball of the innings through the covers for four and to his second ball from Bailey he advanced again to have his off stump removed – completely brainless! Vaughan and Lammonby restored some sensibility until Lammonby was bowled through the gate by [part time spinner Wells for 49 – 109-2. Abell was adjudged LBW to Phillip for 5 (120-3) and Vaughan played really nicely to register his maiden First Class 50 before being caught by Bell in the slips for an excellent 68 from 121 balls – 146-4. Kohler-Cadmore, restored to the number 5 slot due to the absence of Banton, made a 23 from 38 before being caught by Bell in the slips – 155-5, still needing 237 to win. Rew dug in as did Aldridge until he managed to get himself out in the last over of the day for 19 from 53. A wicket in the last over before a break or in the last session, is just typical Somerset. 204-6 at the close and staring down the barrel of a large defeat – or can Gregory, Rew and Overton make significant contributions.

Day 4: Somerset lasted just 34 minutes. Gregory was out to his first ball and the first ball of the day, bowled through the gate by Wells – a great start. Overton comprehensively LBW to Phillip, Randell bowled by Wells going back when he should have gone forward and then Rew was last out driving at Phillip leaving Leach not out – 224 all out and thrashed by 168 runs. Game over at 11:04.

Summary: Fair play to Lancashire – to win by 168 runs after being bowled out for 140 on day was a magnificent achievement. Twenty one wickets fell on day 1 but Somerset only managed 6 in 96 overs on day 2 after the pitch flattened out. Somerset's bowlers are still not accurate enough, bowling too many balls that the batsman does not have to play or throwing too many down the leg side. Leach did not get any purchase out of the pitch in either innings but there were a number of umpiring decisions that definitely went against Somerset and the appalling not out decision against Balderson cost Somerset a much larger target than should have been.

Somerset's batting once again, let them down in the first innings despite how well Lancashire bowled and in the 2nd innings only Vaughan and Lammonby made a respectable score, and only one half century in the match – Vaughan's 68. 109-1 to 224 (115-9) all out is not good enough to win matches or the Championship and it appears that whenever Somerset have a sniff of glory, performances dip and wickets are simply gifted to the opposition. It also seems that Somerset will forever be 2nd best or even chokers. To lose by 168 runs is basically a stuffing and with the match being level after two innings, there has to be an explanation as to why Somerset lost so badly, but sadly Jason Kerr did not offer any such explanation except to say he was frustrated – weren't we all! So how come other counties manage to overcome adversity?

Davey should have played in this match ahead of Randell and had Aldridge held Jennings first ball of the match, then the result may have been different.

14 – Hampshire, Taunton Th-Su 26-29 September 2024 – Lost by 5 Wickets, 3 pts, 3 bowling, Hampshire 19. Final place in table - 3rd. (And a loss of several thousand £)

Pre-Match: Surrey have already won the Championship, so the Holy Grail is still awaited. After last week's poor performance, there is still 2nd place to play for and there is a £100k difference between the two so all to play for. Squad of 15 selected. Overton not selected for some unknown reason along with

Ball, Davey and Somerset's overseas, Randell - how much did his period of employment cost? Was it necessary? Was it effective? No. Was he selected over Davey, Ball, Ogborne, Leonard and Green? Yes. Could the Club please explain the thinking behind signing him and why Somerset are wasting money on signing him. He's no Henry.

Teams: Somerset: Lammonby, Vaughan, Umeed, Abell, Kohler-Cadmire, Rew†, Aldridge, Gregory*, Ogborne, Leach, Bashir.

Hampshire: Middleton, Albert, Gubbins, Vince, Prest, Dawson, Organ, Brown†, Fuller, Abbott, Mohammad Abbas.

Toss: Somerset – bat.

Umpires: Peter Hartley & James Middlebrook.

Match Referee: Wayne Noon

Day 1: A very pale pitch greeted the Somerset batsmen for this final match. Vaughan and Lammonby faced the skills of Abbott and Abbas – two fine bowlers who bowled 11 balls without the 3 batsmen laying a bat on any of them – a lesson for Somerset's bowlers. Lammonby was LBW to Abbott for 0, followed 2 balls later by Umeed caught behind and 2 balls later – 4-2 and the usual Somerset start. So far this season, Somerset have used eight opening batsmen and still can't find the right combination. Abell managed 10 from 27 before being bowled by Abbas – 29-3 in 10.5 overs. TKC and Vaughan then shared a partnership of 34 which became the largest of the innings before Vaughan, who again batted well for such a young player was LBW to Dawson in his first over, the 15th of the innings. TKC was in belligerent mood and attacked the bowling to score 20 of just 11 balls before settling in and Somerset sure needed someone to anchor the innings. Rew departed 2nd ball guiding the ball to second slip for 0 (3rd 0 of the innings). Aldridge was LBW to Dawson sweeping for the 4th 0 of the innings, Hartley giving the decision because of the shot he played rather than the decision being the right one. Gregory unfurled several nice shots but was comprehensively LBW to Dawson for 16, the ball keeping low. Leach ran down the pitch to be caught at slip and Bashir became the 5th 0 of the innings, leaving Ogborne not out on 1 from 24 balls. TKC's 63 from 135 was vital and without nit, Somerset may not have made 80. Some great bowling from Abbott 4-37, Abbas 2-44 and Dawson 4-26, but still a poor batting display again.

When Hampshire batted, Aldridge again dropped what may prove a crucial catch – Albert on 0 was missed to a regulation slip catch.

Several rain breaks upset the rhythm of the game through the day with 15 overs lost.

Day 2: No play before lunch and not a great day for Somerset, who failed to take early wickets. Albert batted well but was fed some really poor balls to hit away but it was Organ who was first to depart being caught by Aldridge (at last) off Leach for 13 from 41. Brown, batting ridiculously low at 8 swept his first ball for 4 and was intent on almost sweeping every ball from the spinners and he played it well. Yet another fielding blemish as Aldridge again dropped a straightforward chance at square leg as Brown on 11 swept at Leach. Another costly miss as he made an additional 24 caught by Vaughan at mid-wicket off Leach. Albert finally departed for a polished 77 from 162 balls as he followed yet another wide long hop from Aldridge and was caught behind. So, Aldridge's two drops have cost 101 runs in this innings. Fuller chipped in with a run a ball 25 giving Vaughan his only wicket. Bashir did not bowl at all well and asked no questions of the batsmen at all, meanwhile Leach plugged away. Bashir also dropped Fuller on 8 but finally Somerset took the 10th wicket with the score on 196 from 60.4 overs – a lead of 60, which was far more than Hampshire should have made, Leach taking his 5th 5 wicket haul of the season – 5-52.

Question was – how many wickets would Somerset lose in wiping off the deficit? The answer sadly four and with that potentially any chance of winning the match and claiming 2nd place. It has to be said that Abbott and Abbas and Dawson were so much more accurate that all the Somerset bowlers and the opening pair were metronomic with the new ball. Lammonby failed again and missed the chance of making 1000 runs caught behind off Abbas, then Abbott got to work trapping Vaughan LBW for a well-made 25, Umeed for 5 and Abell for 2, both caught in the slips for 5 and 2. Kohler-Cadmire and Rew saw Somerset to the close at 60-4 and parity (scores level) and these two, Gregory and Aldridge hold the key to whether Somerset can either hold out for a draw or save the match. Abbott ended the day with the remarkable figures of 8-2-11-3 and now has taken 67 wickets v Somerset at 16.88 and 3.49/over – remarkable. So can Somerset save the match? At this point it's unlikely. Time will tell.

Day 3: The day did not start well. Kohler-Cadmire was out to the 20th ball of the day – 3.2 overs with only 2 runs added, so effectively 2-5. Aldridge soon followed, Abbott taking his 4th wicket of the innings – 75-6 or 15-6. Gregory played a positive innings but then he had little option as the game was gone. Rew hung around for 58 balls but only scored 11 – 108-7 or 48-7. Leach gave good support to Gregory putting on 55 but Gregory became Abbott's 5th victim bowled for 59 – 163-8 or 103-8. 17 more were added but Ogborne and Bashir only contributed 3 between them, Leach ending on 33 not out. 180 all out and that left Hampshire 121 to win. Abbott, again excellent registered his 6th 5 wicket haul for Hampshire v Somerset since 2017. He has taken 69 wickets for 1157 runs in 334 overs at an average of 16.76. He has played 13 matches, bowled in 22 innings, 3 times taking no wickets, 6 times taking 1 wicket, so in 13 innings has taken 63 wickets – outstanding and an object lesson for Somerset's wayward bowlers. Abbot and Abbas give the batsmen nothing and bowl an immaculate line and length and Somerset's bowlers must aspire to this accuracy.

Summary: Hampshire should not have had a first innings lead of 60 and Somerset should not have been shuffled out for 136 – a poor batting display – Kohler-Cadmore excepted, but why do Somerset’s batsmen not go on to make a significant score rather than an ok one?
A poor end to the season yet again – more of this in the Championship summary.

* declared

§ - v Durham away – Pretorius replaced by Ball as concussion replacement. Banton ill in 2nd innings and did not bat – innings deemed closed and 10 wickets lost.

Shakib Al Hasan’s Bowling Action

On the **13th December 2024**, Shakib Al Hasan was banned from all domestic ECB competitions indefinitely or until he has passed an independent assessment due to his bowling action exceeding the 15 degrees allowed by the ECB rules. He took therefore, 4 illegal wickets in the first innings at Taunton in September and then 5 illegal wickets in the 2nd innings – match figures of 9-193 all of which were achieved illegally.

The ECB have not indicated any penalty to Surrey who ultimately fielded a player with an illegal action. As a minimum the 3 bowling points gained should be deducted. Additionally, this reporter believes that Surrey should also have some kind of points deduction for 2025. If Somerset, or any other county, had employed Shakib for just one match and had taken 9 wickets in the match with an illegal bowling action, rest assured that points deduction and penalty points for 2025 would have been forthcoming from the ECB.

It will be interesting to see if there is any further fallout from this misdemeanour.

Somerset CCC – County Championship Final Batting Averages 28/09/2024														
	Player	Mat	Inn	NO	Runs	Balls	H'st	Ave	SR	100	50	0's	4s	6s
1	TB Abell	8	15	2	658	1200	152*	50.61	54.83	3	2	0	70	2
2	T Banton	12	19	1	891	1305	133	49.50	68.27	2	5	1	104	14
3	TA Lammonby	14	25	1	941	1714	100	39.20	54.90	1	5	2	125	2
4	MT Renshaw	7	12	1	414	836	87	37.63	49.52	0	3	0	48	3
5	JEK Rew	14	23	3	726	1092	114	36.30	66.48	2	3	1	84	9
6	AM Vaughan	4	8	1	236	457	68	33.71	51.64	0	1	0	30	1
7	M Pretorius	8	11	1	324	338	95*	32.40	95.85	0	3	0	38	8
8	C Overton	11	16	5	356	464	95*	32.36	76.72	0	2	2	42	4
9	T K-Cadmore	5	9	0	233	434	63	25.88	53.68	0	1	1	29	4
10	L Gregory	11	17	2	385	651	80	25.66	59.13	0	4	3	44	5
11	LP Goldsworthy	5	8	0	191	445	58	23.87	42.92	0	1	1	21	1
12	ARI Umeed	10	19	1	410	635	73*	22.77	64.56	0	2	4	54	7
13	KL Aldridge	10	14	0	306	629	84	21.85	48.64	0	2	3	32	3
14	MJ Leach	9	13	6	146	270	37	20.85	54.07	0	0	1	15	2
15	JH Davey	7	8	2	116	267	45	19.33	43.44	0	0	0	14	0
16	SR Dickson	6	10	0	173	280	72	17.30	61.78	0	1	3	22	2
17	JT Ball	6	7	3	43	105	29	10.75	40.95	0	0	2	5	1
18	S Bashir	4	6	2	14	50	10*	3.50	28.00	0	0	2	1	0
19	BG Randell	2	4	0	13	40	9	3.25	32.50	0	0	1	2	0
20	ARJ Ogborne	1	2	1	2	35	1*	2.00	5.71	0	0	0	0	0
21	EO Leonard	1	1	0	1	10	1	1.00	10.00	0	0	0	0	0

Bowling															
	Player	Overs	Balls	M	Dots	Runs	W	BBI	Ave	Econ	SR	5	10	Ct	St
1	Vaughan	127.4	766	37	609	302	15	6/102	20.13	2.36	51.0	2	1	1	
2	Leach	395.2	2372	102	1845	1025	45	7/50	22.77	2.59	52.7	5	1	2	

Bowling															
	Player	Overs	Balls	M	Dots	Runs	W	BBI	Ave	Econ	SR	5	10	Ct	St
3	Gregory	204.3	1227	38	815	771	31	4/50	24.87	3.77	39.5	0	0	13	
4	Davey	158.0	948	29	726	496	16	4/80	31.00	3.13	59.2	0	0	1	
5	Ogborne	14.0	84	6	68	32	1	1/12	32.00	2.28	84.0	0	0	0	
6	Ball	141.5	847	24	625	498	15	5/62	33.20	3.51	56.7	1	0	0	
7	Overton	354.1	2125	77	1775	1067	32	4/32	33.34	3.01	66.4	0	0	13	
8	Aldridge	200.1	1201	19	878	851	24	5/64	35.45	4.25	50.0	2	0	8	
9	Pretorius	236.4	1420	31	1000	907	23	5/104	39.43	3.83	61.7	1	0	1	
10	Goldsworthy	45.0	270	4	175	203	5	2/73	40.60	4.51	54.0	0	0	4	
11	Randell	41.3	249	9	196	136	3	3/71	45.33	3.27	83.0	0	0	0	
12	Renshaw	34.0	204	6	136	135	2	1/40	67.50	3.97	102.0	0	0	2	
13	Leonard	20.0	120	2	86	92	1	1/47	92.00	4.60	120.0	0	0	1	
14	Bashir	113.0	678	22	497	377	4	2/97	94.25	3.33	169.5	0	0	1	
15	Umeed	30.1	181	4	122	123	1	1/3	123.00	4.07	181.0	0	0	7	
16	Lammonby	24.0	144	3	76	72	0	-	-	3.00	-	0	0	12	
17	Banton	5.0	30	1	21	16	0	-	-	3.20	-	0	0	11	
18	Rew	1.0	6	0	5	1	0	-	-	1.00	-	0	0	43	2
19	Abell														8
20	Dickson														2
21	K-Cadmore														1

Somerset County Cricket Club LV County Championship Division 1 Stats 2024

Only Play Essex (H), Worcestershire (A), Lancashire(A) and Hampshire (H) once

Opposition	Taunton		Result	Away		Result Points
	Somerset	Opposition		Somerset	Opposition	
Essex	128-10	156-10	Won by 3 Wickets 19 pts			
	170-7	138-10				
Durham	492-10	336-10	Won by 293 Runs 24 pts	171-10	265-10	Lost by an innings & 6 Runs 3 pts
	263-5d	126-10		88-10§	-	
Hampshire	136-10	196-10	Lost by 5 Wickets			
	180-10	121-5				
Kent	554-10	178-10	Won by 8 Wickets 24 pts	403-10	284-10	Drawn 15 pts
	194-2	564-10		-	290-4	
Lancashire				146-10	140-10	Lost by 168 Runs 3 pts
				398-10	224-10	
Nottinghamshire	454-10	193-10	Drawn 15 pts	470-10	360-10	Drawn 15 pts
	-	440-2		-	425-2	
Surrey	317-10	321-10	Won by 111 Runs 21 Pts	285-10	428-10	Drawn 11 pts
	224-10	109-10		351-10	123-5	
Warwickshire	284-10	412-10	Won by 5 Wickets 20 pts	239-10	337-10	Drawn 11 Pts
	413-5	281-8d		206-4	270-10	
Worcestershire				309-9*	451-9*	Drawn 11 pts
				190-4	-	
Total Runs/Wkts	3809-109	3571-125		3256-107	3597-100	
Average RPW	34.94	28.56		30.42	35.97	
Total Runs Home & Away	7065-216				7168-225	
Average RPW	32.70				31.85	

Somerset & Surrey Opening Partnerships Comparison 2024

Match	Opening Batsmen	Partnership	Overs	Opposition	Burns/ Sibley Partnership	Burns	Sibley	Overs
1 Kent (A)	Renshaw 66/-	25	12.3	1 Lancashire (A)	15*	5*	6*	8.3
	Dickson 17/-	-	-		-	-	-	-
2 Surrey (A)	Renshaw 87/16	18	3.3	2 Somerset (H)	167	75	100	51.1
	Dickson 10/0	0	1.2		-	-	-	-
3 Nottinghamshire (H)	Renshaw 34/-	111	30.3	3 Kent (A)	150	69	150	30.0
	Dickson 72/-	-	-		-	-	-	-
4 Worcestershire (A)	Renshaw 30/12	24	7.6	4 Hampshire (H)	4	113	4	1.5
	Dickson 17/-	4	1.2		-	-	-	-
5 Essex (A)	Renshaw 1/10	3	1.2	5 Warwickshire (H)	88	40	64	27.3
	Dickson 35/42	75	15.4		65	30	46*	16.0
6 Kent (H)	Renshaw 40/82*	0	1.4	6 Worcestershire (H)	9	8	1	3.2
	Dickson 0/6	24	7.5		79	70	29	28.4
7 Durham (A)	Renshaw 5/6	4	1.6	7 Hampshire (A)	36	33	11	9.4
	Abell 4/2	8	4.1		26	17	20	16.5
8 Nottinghamshire (A)	Kohler-Cadmore 38/-	8	5.3	8 Worcestershire (A)	0	0	76	0.3
	Umeed 4/-	-	-		-	-	-	-
9 Warwickshire (H)	Kohler-Cadmore 22/49	6	1.4	9 Essex (H)	41	26	24	14.3
	Umeed 6/30	44	7.3		13	8	11	4.1

10 Warwickshire (A)	Kohler-Cadmore 0/18	0	0.2	10 Lancashire (H)	86	227	39	23.4
	Umeed 0/38	56	10.3		-			
11 Durham (A)	Umeed 0/28	0	0.1	11 Nottinghamshire (A)	26	161	9	9.5
	Goldsworthy 38/38	37	9.2		8	71	8	3.2
12 Surrey (H)	Goldsworthy 0/9	0	0.2	12 Somerset (A)	41	21	16	16.2
	Vaughan 44/3	8	5.2		31	15	56	21.3
13 Lancashire (A)	Umeed 0/4	0	0.1	13 Durham (H)	87	55	26	22.3
	Vaughan 21/68	4	0.2		25*	13*	7*	-
14 Hampshire (H)	Vaughan 29/25	4	1.4	14 Essex (A)	29	16	125	9.1
	Lammonby 0/5	11	2.4		-			
Totals		449	135.2	Totals	997	1068	828	330.2
Average		17.96	5.4	Average	47.47	56.21	46.00	15.7
Innings			25	Innings			21	
Unbroken/NO			0	Unbroken/NO			2	
25 Partnerships 5 partnerships of 0 15 Partnerships under 10 1 100 Partnership 2 50 Partnerships 3 Total Partnerships over 50 8 Opening batsmen Played Lancashire (A), Worcestershire (A), Essex (H) and Hampshire (H) once only				21 Partnerships 1 partnerships of 0 4 partnerships under 10 2 100 partnerships 5 50 partnerships 7 total partnerships over 50 Burns – 3x100, 3x50, 6 innings over 50 Sibley – 3x100, 5x50, 8 innings over 50 Played Kent (A), Warwickshire (A), Nottinghamshire (A) and Durham (H) once only				

Championship Summary

This could be a really long section, but in the interest of holding attention, it is an edited version.

The opening batsmen problems are still ongoing, but Renshaw and Dickson were sadly not the answer. Renshaw did ok, but Dickson kept getting out early. Abell is not an opener and neither is Kohler Cadmore. Goldsworthy may in the future become one, Umeed – frustration all round. He goes hard at the ball and he paid the price, so is he an opener in the CC? Well who knows – he may need a longer run. TKC was frenetic at the crease. Lammonby had a good season but only made one century (and then got out) but fell away in the last 2 matches thereby missing out on scoring 1000 runs which he richly deserved. Vaughan – what a debut period in September and 236 runs at 33 was a fabulous effort for an 18 year old.

Somerset were well placed coming into the final 4 CC matches – stats on this are in the document below, but two fantastic wins v Durham and Surrey were followed by two abysmal losses to relegated Lancashire and a poor performance against Hampshire at Taunton. The Lancashire loss was marred by an umpiring decision where Steve O’Shaughnessy failed to give Balderson run out when he had made 5 (he went on to get 47) – he was 2 yards out and anyone watching could see he was out by a mile but O’Shaughnessy was clearly not looking and gave him not out and did not even consult his colleague Martin Saggars – this ultimately could have cost Somerset the match.

Gregory showed to be a positive captain always trying to win matches despite at time being under to cosh, but Somerset **still do not perform consistently enough in September** to seriously challenge Surrey for the Championship and results, as in the stats tables show, a pretty poor record.

The pitch at Taunton at least produced 5 wins, one boring draw v Nottinghamshire on a pitch as flat as the M5, and one loss v Hampshire in September. Somerset failed to win an away match and lost 2 – not a great record and again if the Championship is to be won, then away victories are essential. Yes, it is really difficult to achieve these, so again, other teams manage it so why can’t Somerset?

The Kookaburra ball, used for 4 matches, produced 2 draws at the start of the season, whilst the 2 at the back end at Taunton, produced 2 victories when Vaughan and Leach bowled Durham out twice plus that incredible victory v Surrey. To get the ball to turn is just what the ECB want, so it was nice to see that Somerset did not get points deducted like the last time a turning pitch was produced. The facts are that English batsmen struggle to deal with the turning ball as was found out in Pakistan in the 2nd and 3rd Test matches. Imagine if Somerset had raked both ends for 5 days and put an industrial dryer at both ends to produce a result! Somerset would have been banned for a season – maybe that’s what it will take to win the Championship.

Somerset CCC – September Championship Matches 2015-2024					
2015	Yorkshire Hampshire Sussex	Headingley Taunton Hove	Lost Drawn Drawn	Innings & 126 runs	Trescothick

	Warwickshire	Taunton	Won	17 Runs	
2016	Lancashire Warwickshire Yorkshire Nottinghamshire	Old Trafford Taunton Headingley Taunton	Drawn Won Won Won	31 Runs 10 Wickets 325 Runs	Rogers
2017	Essex Warwickshire Lancashire Surrey Middlesex	Chelmsford Edgbaston Taunton The Oval Taunton	Lost Won Won Lost Won	179 Runs 169 Runs 7 Wickets 6 Wickets 231 Runs	Abell
2018	Essex Yorkshire Lancashire Hampshire Surrey Nottinghamshire	Taunton Headingley Taunton Rose Bowl Taunton Trent Bridge	Won Won Tied Lost Drawn Won	45 Runs 224 Runs 6 Wickets Innings & 46 Runs	Abell
2019	Warwickshire Yorkshire Hampshire Essex	Edgbaston Taunton Rose Bowl Taunton	Won Won Lost Drawn	5 Wickets 298 Runs 136 Runs	Abell
2020	COVID				
2021	Nottinghamshire Yorkshire Lancashire Warwickshire	Taunton Scarborough Taunton Edgbaston	Lost Lost Lost Lost	Innings & 160 Runs Innings & 33 Runs 10 Wickets 118 Runs	Abell
2022	Gloucestershire Warwickshire Northamptonshire Kent	Taunton Edgbaston Taunton Canterbury	Drawn Drawn Won Lost	352 Runs Innings & 151 Runs	Abell
2023	Hampshire Kent Warwickshire	Rose Bowl Taunton Edgbaston	Lost Drawn Drawn	185 Runs	Abell
2024	Durham Surrey Lancashire Hampshire	Taunton Taunton Old Trafford Taunton	Won Won Lost Lost	293 Runs 111 Runs 168 Runs 5 Wickets	Gregory

Somerset CCC Championship Results Summary 2015-2024					
	P	W	D	T	L
Taunton	19	10	5	1	3
Away	19	5	4	0	10
Total	38	15	9	1	13
2021-2024	14	3	4	0	8

Deductions/Comments

- When Somerset lose, it's a bad loss, i.e. never by under 50 runs or less than 5 wickets.
- **2021-2024 – 4 seasons. This period has been particularly poor - Played P14, W3, D4, L8.**
- All 8 losses have pretty much been an absolute thrashing.
- All of the losses have been comprehensive, by an innings (4), over 100 runs (5) or 5 wickets or less (4), none have been close e.g., less than 5 wickets or under 100 runs.
- Really poor record away from home – 10 losses
- Interestingly, more wins than losses but 10 have come at Taunton.
- Only 3 losses at Taunton which is also interesting.
- The tied match v Lancashire in 2018 was the match where Leach tried to slog the ball out of the ground when 9 down with 1 to win chasing 84 to win.
- 2021's record – 4 losses (and all comprehensive thrashings) out of 4 was really dreadful – players returned from the dreaded 100 and failed to perform miserably as a unit, being stuffed in all 4 matches.

- Most successful season was 2016 when Rogers was captain and Somerset were pipped at the post when Chanderpaul gave his wicket away for Lancashire, thereby handing Nottinghamshire the title on a silver platter.
- This table does not show the variables of the final stages of the Championship season which include: the toss and decision, pitches, umpiring decisions, the weather, overseas player availability, England call-ups, injuries, opposition player availability and overseas players etc.
- To actually win the Championship, not only do teams have to be in the top 4 coming into the second part of the Championship season, but the team has to keep the level of performance up and perform. It is tough for sure but other counties manage to find a way, **so why can't Somerset?**

Wouldn't it just be absolutely fantastic to WIN the Holy Grail in our **150th season**. Anyone up for a small wager on that?

White Ball Cricket 2024 T20 Vitality Blast

T20 Blast Prize Money 2024 (2023)*		
	County	£
Winners	Gloucestershire	260,000
Losing Finalists	Somerset	117,000
Losing semi-finalists	Sussex/Surrey	32,000
Losing quarter-finalists (each)	Northamptonshire/Durham/ Lancashire/Warwickshire	8,000
Total		473,000

*ECB refused to release 2024 Prize Money

30/04/24

All counties waiting for the announcement of international t20 squads for the World Cup due to start in the West Indies and U.S.A on 4/6/24, to see what players are left for signing for the t20 Blast. Van Der Merwe likely to be selected for the Netherlands and would therefore miss the campaign, but he chose, allegedly, to play for Somerset.

25/5/24

Somerset signed Australian Riley Meredith for the whole of the t20 and extended Pretorius's contract to include the t20 and the 2 Championship matches in June v Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire.

1/6/24

Goldsworthy sent on loan to Leicestershire for whole of t20 tournament.

Somerset T20 Results 2024							Extras Conceded		
	Opposition	Venue	Toss	Decision	Result	Pos	Opposition score	Som	Opp
1	Essex	Taunton	Somerset	Field	Won by 4 Wkts	3=	193-6	16	5
2	Surrey	The Oval	Somerset	Field	Lost by 57 Runs	8	163-10	6	1
3	Kent	Canterbury	Kent	Field	Lost by 4 Wickets	8	198-6	6	8
4	Hampshire	Taunton	Somerset	Field	Won by 63 Runs	6	178-10	3	12
5	Middlesex	Lords	Somerset	Field	Won by 9 Wickets	5	78-10	3	2
6	Kent	Taunton	Kent	Field	Won by 14 Runs	2	46-5	9	4
7	Glamorgan	Taunton	Glamorgan	Field	Won by 108 Runs	1	85-10	2	5
8	Gloucestershire	Bristol	Gloucestershire	Field	Lost by 5 Wickets	3	190-5	6	8
9	Essex	Chelmsford	No toss	-	Abandoned	3			
10	Gloucestershire	Taunton	Gloucestershire	Field	Lost by 5 Wickets	4	196-5	16	11
11	Surrey	Taunton	Surrey	Bat	Won by 6 Wickets	3	182-5	8	13

12	Hampshire	Rose Bowl	Hampshire	Bat	Won by 9 Wickets	3	157-7	11	7
13	Sussex	Taunton	Somerset	Field	Won by 6 Wickets	2	158-9	2	11
14	Glamorgan	Cardiff	Glamorgan	Bat	Lost by 120 Runs	4	243-4	7	8
15	Northamptonshire	Northampton	Northampton	Field	Won by 17 Runs		198-5	11	18
16	Surrey	Edgbaston	Somerset	Field	Won by 6 Wickets		153-9	10	6
17	Gloucestershire	Edgbaston	Gloucestershire	Field	Lost by 8 wickets		129-2	9	2
							2547	125	121
Average							159		

T20 Blast Matches

T20 Vitality Blast 2024

South Division - Match by Match

1 – Essex – Taunton Friday 31st May 2024 18:30 – Won by 4 Wickets

Pre-match: Pretorius's contract extended to include t20 and the 2 CC matches in June v Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire. Riley Meredith signed late on to replace Matt Henry who is at the t20 World Cup in West Indies and USA. VD Merwe chose to play for Somerset rather than the Netherlands at the World Cup – some commitment. Goldsworthy shoved out on loan to Leicestershire for the whole of the t20 competition, but can be recalled at any time. Presumably informed that he will not be required by Somerset. What message does that show to a young player? Renshaw returned to Australia – not required for t20 despite playing in the Big Bash in every match.

Teams: **Somerset:** Smeed, Banton†, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory, Green, Overton, VD Merwe, Ball, Meredith. (Lammonby & Davey left out of 13).

Essex: Rossington, Elgar, Pepper, Cox, Walter, Sams, Critchley, Harmer*, Benkenstein, Allison, Beard.

Toss: Somerset - field

Umpires: Ian Blackwell & Paul Pollard.

Match Ref: Simon Hinks

Match Report: Good to get this match out of the way against last season's beaten finalists. And what a great win it was despite Essex making 193 with Elgar unexpectedly in the Essex team and scoring 77 from 51 – not the Elgar that played for Somerset in 2016. Vd Merwe and Meredith (making his debut for Somerset) were the pick of the bowlers all the others being expensive. The latter was decidedly slippery. Somerset chased down the par Taunton score with 5 balls to spare with Abell top scoring with 55 from 36, well supported by Smeed's 39 from 16, Gregory's 44 from 20 and Dickson's 26 from 19.

Summary: The death bowling is still an issue.

2 – Surrey – The Oval Sunday 2nd June 2024 18:00 - Lost by 54 Runs

Pre-match: Gregory unfit as he jarred his hand in the turf at Taunton but failed a late fitness test. Lammonby replaced Gregory, which meant only the 5 bowlers.

Teams: **Somerset:** Smeed, Banton†, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Lammonby, Green, Overton*, VD Merwe, Ball, Meredith.

Surrey: Lawrence, Evans, Roy, Pope*, Smith, Abbott, Curran T, Steel, Clark, Atkinson, Johnson.

Toss: Surrey – field.

Umpires: Jack Shantry & Rob Bailey

Match Ref: Phil Whitticase

Match Report: Somerset got off to a good start against a as usual strong Surrey side removing Lawrence, Evans and Roy (who looked decidedly unconvincing) for 28 in the 4th over. Overton (1-30) bowled much better than at Taunton on Friday but conceded a 6 off the last ball he bowled. Meredith early beat Roy for pace and his pace was between 86-89 mph, while Overton has now throttled back to 76-80 mph. There followed a fabulous partnership of 111 between Smith and Pope. Smith batted magnificently making 50 from just 22 balls and 87 from 38 with 7x4 and 7x6. He was brutal on any loose deliveries making 70 in boundaries (80%) but when Pope was out at 139-4, Surrey lost their way losing 6 wickets for 24 runs in 5.5 overs to be all out for 163 in 19 overs when a score of 200+ looked likely. Green bowled his fist 2 overs for 28 and his last 2 for 5 runs and 4 wickets a game of two halves!

Chasing a sub-par score, Banton played out a maiden to Johnson but Smeed (20) and Banton (11) were both out by 4.2 overs and then Abell (4) easily caught off a poor shot. TKC (25), who still looked out of sorts, smashed 3 large 6's before Abbott ran him out with a direct hit 62-4 from 7.3 overs. 12.3 overs to get 101. Sadly, this reporter surmised at this point that Somerset would capitulate to 120 all out due mainly to the fact that the top 3 had failed and Surrey have 8 good bowlers. Well, it was worse than that!

A dreadful batting performance saw yet another collapse as Somerset limped to 106 all out in 15.4 overs having lost 6 wickets for 44 in 8.1 overs.

Summary: The question has to be asked, why did Lammonby play when a bowler/all-rounder was needed? Why didn't Aldridge, Davey or Pretorius replace Gregory? An abysmal response to a mediocre Surrey total but Jamie Smith was the difference as no Somerset batsman could make a partnership or stay at the crease. 4 days off before travelling to Canterbury. Forget this match and move on but some better batting is needed if a genuine challenge of defending the title is expected.

3 – Kent – Canterbury, Friday 7th June 2024 18:30 – Lost by 4 Wickets.

Pre match: Davey ruled out through illness and replaced by Baker, the first time he has been included in a t20 squad for his t20 debut. Meredith “rested” after bowling 8 overs – 48 deliveries (how much does that cost when related to his salary?) It is a mystery why he needs to be rested after 2 matches, maybe he has a niggle, but no communication on this issue as always. Lammonby retained in squad and Leach added to squad. Meanwhile Bashir has gone on loan to Worcestershire for 5 t20 matches and 1 Championship match – how many more players are Somerset going to let play for other counties. So far we have had Green (Leicestershire), Goldsworthy (Leicestershire, but hasn't featured yet) and now Bashir.

Teams: Somerset: Smeed, Banton†, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, Overton, VD Merwe, Ball, Baker.

Kent: Crawley, Bell-Drummond, Muyeye, O'Riordan, Billings, Denly, Evison, Stewart, Swanepoel, Bartlett, Parkinson.

Toss: Kent - field

Umpires: Ian Blackwell & Ben Debenham

Match Referee: Simon Hinks

Match Report: The first time Somerset had to bat first in this campaign and Smeed was awesome in partnership with Banton – 67-0 in the Power Play. After making his 50, Smeed thrashed 2646 and was then out next ball for 68 from 30 – a brilliant innings but he really did not need to be so frenetic. He was out to the last ball of the 8th over 98-1 and all Somerset supporters will feel that he should have gone on as a big 100 was on the cards. After he departed, Banton perished 2 balls later running down the pitch to be stumped by a yard, Kohler-Cadmore made 42 from 30, Dickson 26 from 18 to push the total to a respectable 197-6, 35 being scored in the last 4 overs.

Somerset got off to the best possible start as Overton induced Crawley into an injudicious shot to be caught first ball by VD Merwe, then Bell-Drummond was bowled in Overton's 2nd over for 3 despite the over going for 17. The result of this match was always going to revolve around the Kent captain Billings. And not for the first time, Billings delivered in spades as Somerset's bowlers failed to bowl a tight line to him. However, it must be said that he batted brilliantly and while he was at the wicket 156 runs were scored in 15.4 overs (947 balls) and it was a shame that he was not undefeated but perished with just 6 to win for 106 from just 58 balls – a brilliant innings and one all cricket lovers should enjoy despite playing for the opposition.

Summary: A decent total posted and just above par at Taunton, but get Billings out, win the match – and Somerset didn't.

4 – Hampshire, Taunton, Sunday 9th June 2024 – Won by 63 Runs

Pre match: 15 man squad including Davey, Meredith, Leach and Baker. No news on Ball unsurprisingly, which is typical Somerset.

Teams: Somerset: Smeed, Banton†, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, Overton, VD Merwe, Davey, Meredith.

Hampshire: Vince*, McDermott†, Weatherley, Albert, Howell, Dawson, Fuller, Nesar, Gubbins, Wood, Turner.

Toss: Hampshire - field

Umpires: Nigel Long & Mike Burns

Match referee: Phil Whitticase

Match Report: After losing the toss on what looked like a really good pitch, Somerset managed to lose 3 wickets and all three of the traditionally quick scorers. Smeed (12), Banton (17) and TKC (9) all back in the hutch with the score on 54-3 after 5.5 overs. But there followed a record partnership of 144 in 14.3 overs between Abell and Dickson. It was great to see both batsmen take their time initially and the longer they batted, the more fluent they became. Dickson, so short of runs in the Championship, clearly enjoyed his innings of 65 in 32 balls striking 8 4's and 3 6's. Abell knocking the ball into the gaps, was brilliant and so deserved a century but fell 4 runs short scoring 12 4's and 3 6's from 47 balls. The total of 241-5 was formidable despite Taunton being the highest scoring ground Worldwide in the t20 format.

Hampshire had an uphill battle and relied on Vince and McDermott who put on a very good 77 in 7.2 overs, but then they were both out for 46 and 30 respectively within 3 balls 78-2 and any realistic hope of winning pretty much dashed. 163 required in 13.2 overs at 13.21 – a massive ask and in fact no batsman made more than 19 as Hampshire were all out in 19.3 overs for 178 – Green had remarkable figures of 3.3-8-29-5. A comprehensive win.

Summary: Somerset's 3rd highest ever t20 score was always going to be a tough chase. What a contrast the Taunton pitch is to the Rose Bowl where it's a big field, boundaries are hard to find and 165-170 is a fantastic score batting first, but will the selection committee select 3 spinners? Doubtful.

5 – Middlesex, Lords, Tuesday 11th June 2024 18:30 – Won by 9 Wickets

Pre match: Same squad as Hampshire match minus Baker. No news on Ball which is par for the course from management but Sky informed all viewers that he has a slight injury but should return to the squad for Friday's match v Kent at Taunton – why can't the Club make the effort to tell members?

Teams: Somerset: Smeed, Banton†, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, Overton, VD Merwe, Davey, Meredith.

Middlesex: Eskinazi*, Andersson, Cracknell, Holden, Higgins, Davies†, Hollman, de Caries, Helm, Cullen, Cornwell.

Toss: Somerset - field

Umpires: Rob Bailey, Rob White.

Match Referee: Phil Whitticase

Match Report: After inserting Middlesex on what looked like a belter of a pitch, Somerset put Middlesex's top order to the sword. Overton and Meredith complemented each other perfectly and Gregory decided to bowl them both through the power play and into the 8th over when the score stood at 34-6 – all caught. Meredith was excellent – 17 dots and 4-12 and Overton was equally excellent – 16 dots 2-21. The batsmen couldn't cope with the pace, angle or accuracy. At this point the game was over and the Lords crowd slinked off to the bar. Middlesex managed to get to 55-9 until a final wicket stand of 28 between Helm and Cornwell made 15 apiece which took them to 78 all out in 16.3 overs. Green took 2 wickets with his first 2 balls, Davey bowled a wicket maiden (Overton also bowled a maiden) as the bowlers bowled 61 dots – 61.61%, only 8x4's and 1x6.

A Target of 79 was never going to be enough. Smeed mistimed a typical shot to be caught in the first over and then TKC (30*) and Banton (48*) plodded along on what turned out to be the most dreadful pitch for a t20 match to win the match in the 13th over. All they needed to do was knock the ball around and take the singles and hit the bad ball to the boundary, which they eventually did. Both batsmen hit one enormous 6 and 9 4's between them.

Summary: The pitch was really poor. 130 may have been a winning score. The ball seemed to stop in the pitch and deviated from both ends. Banton & TKC were lucky on occasions to keep their wicket intact but this is not the sort of pitch to play home t20 matches on and Middlesex must be very unhappy about what their groundsman has produced and they have to play on the same pitch of Friday – interesting to see the scores.

This win moves Somerset to the top of the table on run rate, but it's really tight.

6 – Kent, Taunton, Friday 14th June 2024 – 18:30 – Won by 14 runs (D/L Method)

Pre-match: Leach dropped from squad but replaced by Aldridge and Ball returns but Overton "rested".

Teams: Somerset: Smeed, Banton†, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, VD Merwe, Davey, Ball, Meredith.

Kent: Crawley, Bell-Drummond, Muyeye, O'Riordan, Billings, Denly, Evison, Stewart, Stobo, Bartlett, Gilchrist.

Toss: Kent - Field

Umpires: Ian Blackwell & Mick Newell

Match referee: Simon Hinks

Match report: Having been inserted Banton and Smeed took 11 off the first over. The rain then came and delayed the match for 2 hours and 24 minutes and the match was almost abandoned but the umpires deemed a 5 over slog could be squeezed in, so Somerset had an additional 4 overs to bat. This became a lottery and only TKC with 24 from 11 balls reached double figures as the rest of the batsmen perished trying to slog the ball out of the ground or sneak an extra run. A total of 55-6 was at half-time deemed not enough given the way Billings batted in the reverse fixture at Canterbury.

The rapid pace of Meredith troubled all the batsmen as Kent lost 3 wickets after 1.5 overs with Crawley, DBD and O'Riordan all back in the hutch but Kent were reliant on Billings to win the match but even he struggled making only 16 off 10 before being run out by Abell. Denly swatted 3 fours but the game was done and the crowd that remained went home happy.

Summary: These matches are dreadful for both teams and both sides would have settled for a point each, but a 5 over slog is a complete lottery and luckily Somerset came out on top on this occasion.

7 – Glamorgan, Taunton, Sunday 16th June 2024 15:00. Won by 8 Wickets. Top of the South Group.

Pre-Match: Rew added to squad after making 150* (14x4, 14x6) for Taunton St. Andrews in a club t20 match.

Teams: Somerset: Smeed, Banton†, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, VD Merwe, Overton, Ball, Meredith.

Glamorgan: Carlson*, Byrom, Northeast, Labuschagne, Ingram, Cooke†, Douthwaite, Vd Gugten, Gorvin, Crane, McIlroy

Toss: Glamorgan - field

Umpires: Mike Burns and Jack Shantry

Match Ref: Mike Smith

Match Report: After being inserted, Somerset were held in check by van der Gugten and onmly made 39-1 in 5 overs – Banton departing for 14 in 7 but Smeed finally delivered with a blistering 86 in 48 balls with 5x6 and 8x4 (62 in boundaries), but he was out after 13.5 overs when a yet again a big century loomed. When he was out the score was 123-7 as the middle order failed – TKC 9, Abell & Dickson 4 apiece, Gregory 2 and Green 0 (1st ball). 92-1 from 9.4 overs subsided to 123-7 from 13.5 overs – 31 runs in 25 balls for the loss of 6 wickets. Thankfully Overton produced his highest t20 score and with VD Merwe, the pair put on 59 in 5.4 overs before Overton was out for 42 from 24 with 3 balls remaining. Meredith swiped his only ball so far in the t20 for a huge six to take the score to 193-8.

Glamorgan are a dangerous side, but with a wicket in both of the first two overs (Meredith's was a wicket maiden, and you don't get many of those in t20), they were under the cosh. Two of the three trump cards for Glamorgan, Labuschagne and Ingram were dismissed for 9 and 4 and only Northeast made a few runs – 24 from 15 and when Douthwaite was out after 10.1 overs at 59-6, the game was almost won. Glamorgan limped to 85 all out in 13.2 overs and Somerset clinched another victory to go top of the table.

Summary: Comprehensive win – some good lower order batting and good collective bowling – Ball was excellent 2-6-9-2 as was skipper Gregory 3-13-11-3.

8 – Gloucestershire, Bristol, Friday 21st June 2024 18:30 – Lost by 5 Wickets

Pre-match: At least 2 spinners required at Bristol – Aldridge, Ball & Leach in squad, but Overton “rested” ahead of the Championship match at Trent Bridge on 23rd June.

Teams: Somerset: Smeed, Banton†, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, VD Merwe, Davey, Leach, Meredith.

Gloucestershire: Hammond, Bancroft, Bracey, Webster, JMR Taylor, Charlesworth, OJ Price, Shaw, De Lange, MD Taylor, Payne

Toss: Gloucestershire - Field

Umpires: Paul Baldwin & Ben Peverell.

Match Ref: James Whittaker.

Match Report: After being inserted, Smeed threw his wicket away to the first ball of the 2nd over and after 4 overs, Somerset were 15-1 and heading for their worst Power Play score for a while. However, TKC & Banton managed to squeeze 35 from the next 2 overs to take the score to 50-1. TKC was out in the 9th over for 25 from 21 balls whilst Banton paced his innings well along with Abell who knocked the ball about on the big Bristol field. Big hits are not the order of the day on this tump and when Banton was out for a fabulous 79 from 53 balls after 15.5 overs with the score on 146, a score of 175 was looking about par. Abell perished in the 18th for a well made 39 from 23 and it was left to Dickson and Gregory to take the score to 188-4, a decent score on this turgid pitch.

An excellent opening over from Davey conceded 1 run and Meredith's went for 5, so 6-0 after 2, but then Davey conceded 4x4 in his 2nd over but Meredith stuck in his 2nd as Bancroft fell LBW for 9.. The Power Play scores were level as Gloucestershire reached 50-1. The weather had deteriorated as drizzle had set in but the umpires kept the players out on the pitch (in hindsight a proper down pour would have suited Somerset). Bracey batted well for 44 and Hammond for 39 and after 14 overs Gloucestershire were 114-5, needing 78 off 6 overs at 13/over – an impossible task on this Bristol pitch. Ollie Price had just reached the crease and he and Charlesworth assaulted Green's 3rd over taking 24 from it – 54 from 5 at 10.8. Leach's final over was slogged for 21, 33 from 4 at 8.25 and then Meredith's final over going for 12 left Gloucestershire needing 21 from 3 overs – game over. The 18th bowled by Davey went for 10 so only 11 required from 2 overs. Green again was slogged and Gloucestershire won at a canter with 8 balls to spare. Green's last 10 balls went for 6161646114 (36). When he gets it wrong he goes round the park sadly. Price batted brilliantly scoring 43 in 15 balls – 11616464.641111 – Charlesworth made 36 from 19 – Somerset conceding 79 runs in just 34 balls, 2.32 per ball.

Summary: A game Somerset contrived to lose in poor weather – bowing with a wet ball is never easy. Price rode his luck for sure and he came off but a massively disappointing loss.

9 – Essex – Chelmsford Friday 5th July 2024, 19:00. Abandoned – rain.

Pre-match: Overton due to be rested and Ogborne brought into squad, but no place for Aldridge in the 14.

Somerset:

Toss:

Umpires:

Summary: Rained – match abandoned at 20:00.

10 – Gloucestershire – Taunton, Sunday 7th July 2024, 14:30. Lost by 5 Wickets

Pre-match: After a t20 break for two CC games in the middle of the t20 season (how ridiculous is that?), the teams returned to t20 duty after 16 days.

Teams: Somerset: Banton†, Smeed, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, VD Merwe, Davey, Ball, Meredith.

Gloucestershire: Hammond, Bancroft, Bracey†, Webster, JMR Taylor, Charlesworth, OJ Price, Payne, de Lange, Shaw, MD Taylor.

Umpires: Mark Newell & Alex Wharf.

Match Ref: Wayne Noon

Toss: Gloucestershire – field.

Match Report: Another toss lost and batting first again. The pitch clearly did not allow the ball to come on to the bat and as a consequence the top 3 struggled. Smeed managed a 4 and a 6, three swishes and 2 leaves and then was caught at cover. He seems to be all or nothing this season which is both frustrating and disappointing – if he could be a bit more consistent then Somerset really could put the opposition under pressure like in 2023. TKC smashed 22 from 11 balls with 2x6 & 2x4 and then Abell was out for 9 from 9 and Somerset were 53-3 from 6.2 overs. Banton meanwhile, hung in there but he struggled too – during his innings he was dropped 3 times on 11, 13 and 20 by Matt Taylor, Ollie Price and Jack Taylor as he tried to push the score on but luckily for Somerset he remained at the crease and made 50 from 33 balls. Dickson & Gregory came and went as Webster bowled his 4 overs for 23 and previous Taunton favourite, Marchant de Langer took 2-23 from his 24 deliveries. Two bowlers, 48 balls, 48 runs – excellent in today's modern t20 context. After 16 overs, Somerset were 119-5. Green arrived at the crease at 13.2 overs – 105-5. The scores after each over were:

16 overs – 119-5

17 overs – 134-5 – 15 scored

18 overs – 148-5 – 14 scored

19 overs – 162-5 – 14 scored

20 overs – 194-5 – 32 scored

Green blitzed away and slogged 47 from 25 - ...1.111.61116.1644246. After 19th over, Somerset were in danger of posting a sub-par total and luckily Shaw had a nightmare – no ball for height went for 6, free hit went for 4, another 4, then another height no ball 2 runs (20 runs), but removed from the attack – Price had to bowl the remaining 4 balls – 46xW1 – 194-6 a par score but only by default.

Davey started by bowling 3 wides in his first over – not a good start, Meredith went for 4 in his first and Gloucester progressed to 55-1 in the Power Play. Although none of the Gloucestershire batsmen got a big score, they all contributed bar Bancroft who got a duck – Hammond (42), Bracey (31), Webster (39), Jack Taylor (27), Charlesworth (24*) and Price (17*), a feat that Somerset rarely achieve. It is sad to say that the Somerset bowling was certainly off target despite skipper Gregory taking 3-34. Davey took 1-24 from 3 and VD Merwe 1-29 from 3 and afraid to say, he is not the bowler he was. But it was Ball and Green that got clobbered – 7.5 overs (59 balls), only 9 dots, 86 runs and no wickets. Gloucestershire won with 1 ball to spare and whilst this was a close match for the Sky cameras, it was not a result that the partisan locals wanted but 13 needed from the last over bowled by Green was in the end dead easy as he went for .1616 – game over.

Summary: Everyone has an off day and these two managed it on the same day. When Green is good, he's very good and hard to get after, but when he's bad, he goes round the park and so far this season is going at 10.83/over. But let's hope he can pull it around for the next match. Some work to do. The question remains is why Pretorius has not even featured in the squad – he's a good cricketer and well suited to this format, but as usual, no explanation as to why he keeps being left out and the same applies to Aldridge.

11 – Surrey – Taunton, Friday 12th July 2024, 18:30. Won by 6 Wickets

Pre-match: A week off – golf, relaxing days and a bit of training perhaps. The day before the match the membership are informed VD Merwe has a back issue, Davey is ill and Smeed has a hamstring injury (will he be fit for the 100 on 23/7?), so Pretorius is finally at last brought into the 13 man squad with Lammonby and Leach, but no place for Aldridge again – why?

Teams: Somerset: Banton†, Smeed, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, VD Merwe, Davey, Ball, Meredith.

Surrey: Jacks, Sibley, Evans, Burns†, SM Curran, J Overton, Jordan*, Clark, Steel, Lawes, Worrall.

Toss: Surrey - bat

Umpires: Ian Blackwell & Ant Harris.

Match Ref: Simon Hinks

Match Report: Table toppers Surrey have looked a class side all t20 season, so their visit to Taunton was one of trepidation. They had no overseas in their XI but still fielded 6 international players. Surrey won the toss and batted, a decision that Somerset were happy with and even more so as they were reduced to 23-3 after 3.3 overs with Jacks (9), Sibley (3) and Evans (10) all back in the hutch. Leach bowled an excellent 2nd over conceding 4 runs and accounting for Sibley, Meredith then got Jacks well caught on the fence by Dickson and Overton had Evans caught by Leach. Thereafter Burns and Sam Curran proceed to rebuild the innings and batted very well batting 12.4 overs to put on 107 until Curran fell to Gregory for 59 from 42. Jamie Overton then provided the impetus striking 30 not out from just 13 balls (11216246124) to take the Surrey total to 182-5. Burns played well for his 62 from 44 and he was the designated wicketkeeper for this match as Smith was away with England (good job too) as was Pope and Foakes was injured. All of the bowlers took 1 wicket except Green who was again expensive 0-38 from 3 and only 1 dot ball. 16x4 and 5x6 were scored by Surrey, Somerset bowled 37 dot balls.

Five dot balls to Thomas in Worrall's first over was then followed by Banton striking 4x4 in Lawes' 1st over and then Worrall's 2nd went for 22, 42-0 from 3 – a good start. Banton was then caught for 17 from 9 which was disappointing, but TKC joined Thomas who put on 34 in 4.1 overs when Thomas was caught for a splendid 40 from 25 balls. He may be Smeed's replacement, but he did a decent job. A perfect

platform for Abell as he and TKC put on 67 in 7.3 overs until TKC was caught behind for 51 from 32, Abell followed an over later for 30 – 149-4 from 16 overs and 34 required from 4 overs. Dickson 20* and Gregory 12* saw Somerset home with an over to spare much to the delight of the full house in attendance.

Summary: An excellent win and a good debut for George Thomas. A quarter final place looks possible with 3 matches to go v Hampshire (A), Sussex (H) and Glamorgan (A).

12 – Hampshire, Rose Bowl, Sunday 14th July 2024, 14:30. Won by 9 wickets.

Pre match: The trip to the Rose Bowl needs two if not three spinners, but not this time.

Teams: Somerset: Banton†, GW Thomas, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, Pretorius, Leach, Ball, Meredith.

Hampshire: Vince*, McDermott†, Prest, Weatherley, Howell, Fuller, Dawson, Albert, Wood, Jack, Wheal.

Umpires: Ben Debenham & Jack Shantray

Match Referee: Dean Cosker

Match Report: Playing at the Rose Bowl is the same almost as playing at Bristol or Cardiff – 2 or 3 spinners required and pace off as the pitch is generally turgid and it's hard to find the boundary and even harder to hit the ball over the boundary – 165 is a decent score. On this occasion it was Leach who bowled an excellent 4 over spell on the bounce for 23 runs and 2 wickets. Hampshire chose to bat – probably the right decision as the pitch becomes slower the longer the match goes on, but their batting has not been the same as in previous years as both Vince and McDermott have struggled. Today was no different – Vince perished for 14 and McDermott found the rope 4 time in his 35 before stepping away to cut Leach and missed. Prest was the pick of the batsmen hitting 51 off 32 balls before becoming Pretorius' 2nd wicket on debut t20 for Somerset (why this is the case still remains a mystery). At 120-4 after 16, Hampshire managed to squeeze 37 from the last 4 overs to total 157-7. Overton 1-25 from 4 bowled well as did Pretorius (2-22 in 3).

Somerset made a positive start as always – Banton & Thomas reaching 56-0 in the Power Play and continued their partnership until Thomas was caught behind for 29 from 29. This brought in TKC and for once, both he and Banton picked off the singles and murdered the bad balls. No further wickets fell and Somerset completed a 9 wicket victory in 18 overs with Banton on 79* from 52 and TKC 43* from 28. A comprehensive and professional win and one that propels Somerset towards the quarter finals.

Summary: A very good win away from home on not very good pitch.

13 – Sussex, Taunton, Thursday 18th July 2024. Won by 6 wickets.

Pre match: Overton returns to squad – vd Merwe & Smeed still injured, but still no place for Aldridge. A must win game to qualify for the quarter finals – 2 wins will result in a home tie.

Teams: Somerset: Banton†, GW Thomas, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, Overton, Leach, Ball, Meredith.

Sussex: Ward, Hughes, Clark, Coles, Simpson†, Alsop, Lamb, McAndrew, Robinson, Mills*, Currie.

Toss: Somerset – field.

Umpires: Mike Burns & S. Shanmugam

Match Ref: Simon Hinks

Report: After winning the toss, Overton's first over went for 1 run, Meredith's first leaked 4 fours as did Overton's 2nd over – 25-0 after 3, but Ball induced Hughes to slog one up in the air to be caught by Overton for 13 - the next 3 overs went for 24, 49-1 at the end of the Power Play. Somerset then pulled Sussex's scoring back as Ward, Clark & Simpson were all sent back to the hutch, Green finding his old mojo taking two wickets in his first over 68-4 after 9. Somerset's ground fielding was again up to its excellent standards save Thomas dropping (and palming the ball over the rope for 6) Coles, but it made no difference as next ball he slogged Green to Overton who rarely spills an opportunity. Sussex continued to struggle, McAndrew tried to increase the tempo and the batsmen tried to squeeze two runs when there really wasn't more than one and as a result there were 3 run outs as Sussex limped to 158-9. Ball was expensive (1-48 and only 2 dots), missing his yorker and providing too many scoreable options, so Sussex probably got 15 more than they should have.

For once this season, Banton failed with the bat, but Thomas stepped up against Robinson & Mills and at the end of the Power Play, Somerset had posted 56-1, 103 to win in 14. When Thomas was caught for a career best t20 score of 42 at 70-2, this brought Abell to the crease. TKC needlessly slogged one up in the air to be caught for 20 from 13 in the 10th, but the stage was set for Abell to do what he does best – nudge and push the ball around the field (just like Hildreth used to do) and put the poor ball away. He and Dickson, who hit his 2nd ball for a large 6 into the Somerset stand, then put on 69 in 6.2 overs to push Somerset to victory. Dickson was needlessly run out for 28, but Abell saw Somerset home with an excellent 47 not out and 14 balls to spare.

Summary: Another clinical performance and one that meant quarter final qualification, but a home tie will be secured if Glamorgan beaten at Cardiff on Friday, tomorrow. The only concern was Ball leaking runs. Leach bowled well again and it's a shame to say that he should, on current form, be selected over vd Merwe who has not been at his best for most of this season.

14 – Glamorgan, Cardiff, Friday 19th July 2024, 19:00. Lost by 120 Runs

Pre-Match: Rew and vd Merwe added to squad of 14. Two spinners required at Cardiff, but will the management be bold enough to play them or will Gregory's selection override Kerr who is not keen on 2 spinners.

Teams: Somerset: Banton†, GW Thomas, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, Overton, Leach, Ball, Meredith.

Glamorgan: Carlson*, Smale, Labuschagne, Ingram, Kellaway, Bevan, Cooke†, Douthwaite, Vd Gugten, Gorvin, Crane.

Toss: Glamorgan - bat

Umpires: Paul Baldwin & S. Shanmugan

Match Referee: Dean Cosker

Report: How do you report on this match? With difficulty. Let's start by saying that Glamorgan were brilliant and Kiron Carlson's 135 was a truly fabulous innings which included 14x4, 8x6 (108 in boundaries) in 64 balls and he only failed to score from 13 balls he received.

Will Smale (a King's Taunton lad) was equally impressive striking his highest t20 score of 59 in 34 balls with 5x4 and 3x6 and only failed to score off 9 balls. The opening stand of 169 in 14 overs (84 balls) at 12.07/over was a Glamorgan record. A high total was likely after the Power Play, 66-0 in which Somerset failed to take a wicket and only bowled 10 dot balls out of 36, 3 of which came in Overton's first over (he

Carlson's 135			
Score	Balls	4	6
0-50	28	8	1
51-100	19	4	4
101-135	17	3	3
Total	64	15	8

bowled 5 in all). Carlson was out after 17.2 overs with the score at 213-2 – 12.28/ over whilst he was at the crease. Ingram and the other batsmen pushed on to add an additional 30 runs in the remaining 16 balls. In all, Glamorgan hit 23x4 and 13x6 – 36 in all conceding 170 in boundaries. 243-3 was indeed a challenging target and yet somehow all Somerset fans knew that it was never going to be chased down.

To get anywhere near this massive total, all the top 3 had to make a large contribution. Banton started brightly and although Douthwaite's first over went for 25 and at 36-0 from 2 overs, there was a glimmer but when Banton slogged one in the air for 28 from 13 and then TKC was out first ball caught at cover, all the Somerset faithful knew it was game over after 2.5 overs. Abell hung around for a bit to make 29 from 20 but he is not a big striker like Banton, Thomas or TKC. The introduction of spin in the form of Kellaway, Crane and Labuschagne proved what this correspondent has said for many years – that teams need at least 2 if not 3 spinners in any side in any match at this ground. Somerset's refusal to do this cost them the match potentially. (More in the summary). After the Power Play, Somerset had reached 66-3 – not bad considering but those 3 wickets were Banton, TKC and Thomas and with little explosive firepower left, it was a match to get over as soon as possible. 36 runs came in the next 4 overs but for the loss of another 3 wickets – Dickson for 12, Abell and Gregory for 7. Somerset collapsed in a heat to be bowled out for 123 in 13.3 overs. After the PP, Somerset scored 57 runs in 45 balls for the loss of 7 wickets, 5 of which fell to Labuschagne's leg spin which completely bamboozled Somerset's batsmen to take 5-11 from 2.3 overs – that's 15 balls!

Summary: This was truly an absolutely abysmal performance in every respect and although qualification was not on the end of this result, to be so poor in every department of the game, was worrying. The Club missed out on a lucrative home Quarter Final worth in the region of £220k (all pay match at £40/ticket approx. 5500 tickets) and with the Club penny pinching in so many directions, Jamie Cox must rue such a poor performance.

Cardiff's pitch is traditionally a slow and low one and pace off is the way to go. This have been proven over many years and yet Jason Kerr it seems does not pay any attention to these facts and goes with pace. Three spinners required, so why was Goldsworthy not recalled from Leicestershire and was VD Merwe still injured? Allegedly he failed a match day fitness test – well if so, why not communicate that fact? Could Archie Vaughan have played? Why did Meredith play on such an unresponsive and slow pitch? The bowling was truly awful. All the bowlers missed the correct length which is full – if bowlers bowl short then they get pumped square and if too full lashed into the river or the stand straight. It's a big field square of the wicket but Somerset still managed to concede boundaries square of the wicket. Leach's first over was good – 4 runs, but then his next 12 balls went for 35 (416621/116.61), only 1 dot and he did not turn one ball and had figures of 0-39 from 3. Crane, Labuschagne and Kellaway all extracted turn. Green (2-48 from 3) again missed his length conceding 4x4 and 3x6. Overton 0-32 from 3 bowled 5 dots, Meredith was inconsistent 1-47 from 4, Ball was the only bowler to concede under 10/over – 0-38 from 4 and Gregory's length was off as well – 0-38 from 3.

Management will just sweep this one under the carpet and move on. However, this is not a one-off performance. How can Somerset be so poor in all 3 departments of the game is a mystery. Were they too cocky having qualified? Did they think that Glamorgan were a push over? Did they misread the pitch (again)? What was discussed re selection? Did they look at historical results? Craig Overton's fielding was brilliant and he was still up for it even though Somerset got thrashed.

There are now 47 days until the away encounter in the quarter final v Northamptonshire on Thursday 5th September, but in the meantime, 11 Somerset players (and 7 who played in this match) now swan off the dreaded 100 and then return for the remaining 5 County Championship matches starting on 22nd August at Edgbaston, then Durham at Taunton on 29th August before reverting to short form cricket for that one-off match.

15 – (Quarter-Final) - Northamptonshire, Northampton, Thursday 4th September 2024, 18:30. Won by 17 Runs.

Pre-Match: Meredith unavailable as included in Australian squad for t20 matches v Scotland. Vd Merwe flown back from South Africa specifically for this match. Squad of 15 which included Goldsworthy, Lammonby, but George Thomas left out completely as Smeed allegedly fit – he played in 2nd XI making 73 last week. TKC included despite indifferent form. None of the players has played a t20 match since 19th July, although some have played in the 100.

Teams: Somerset: Banton†, Smeed, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, Overton, VD Merwe, Davey, Ball.

Northamptonshire: Vasconcellos, Bartlett, Willey*, Broad, Zaib, Agar, McManus†, Miller, Sanderson, Heldreich, White.

Toss: Northamptonshire – field.

Umpires: Paul Pollard & Russell Warren.

Match Referee: Will Smith.

Report: Having lost the toss, Smeed, who hadn't played since 7th July due to a hamstring injury, replaced George Thomas (rather luckily) but poked around for 8 balls before being caught behind for 6 from 8 balls. TKC joined Banton and really struggled despite hitting the first ball he received for four. From 15 balls he had scored 9 runs - very uncharacteristic but the power play (ridiculous name) yielded 49 runs and after 10 overs the score was 87-1. TKC was beginning to find his touch and Banton was making the most of Agar's and Heldreich's bowling. Banton continued his good form and was severe on anything short or wide and it was a shame when he was caught on the fence by George Bartlett for 75 from 43 in the 14th over when a big century was there for the taking. Such is the nature of t20. Abell was left in the hutch and out came Dickson. After 15 overs the score was 150-2 and 200 on the cards. TKC was brilliantly caught by Zaib in the 17th over for 63 also from 43 balls but the skipper and Dickson then took 40 from the last 3 overs as Somerset posted a formidable 215-3. Sanderson bowled really well bowling his 4 overs for just 23 and only conceding two 4's.

Northamptonshire's response got off to a dreadful start as Somerset's former batsman, George Bartlett was dismissed 3rd ball. And the first 4 overs only yielded 26 runs but the next two bowled by Overton and Ball went for 26 – 52-1 in the power play, with Willey and Vasconcellos going well. The latter was out for 30 after 7.4 overs but Broad 29 from 18 and Zaib 32 from 16, kept Northants in the game along with Willey unusually deprived of the strike. Green was again expensive, his 3 overs going for 16, 12 and 20 (48) and only 3 dot balls. He has sadly lost his accuracy of previous seasons – very fine margins in t20. VD Merwe bowled a solitary over which went for 12 – he was preferred to Leach but has struggled this season, so Leach should really have played having bowled well previously. When Willey was caught of Ball for 57 from 39 after 16.5 overs with 56 required from 19 balls, the game was almost won but Ashton Agar and McManus took the score to 198-5 and Somerset were through to finals day.

Summary: A good job Somerset made 215 as the bowling was not great – Overton was the pick with 1-22 from his 4 all bowled up front, so 176 scored from 16 overs at 11/over. Somerset do not have two death bowlers – even with the game won Green bowled the last over and conceded 20. At least there is only a 9 day wait until Finals Day

16 – (Semi-Final) - Surrey, Edgbaston, Saturday 14th September 2024, 11:00. Won by 6 Wickets.

Pre-Match: Meredith unavailable and Banton's football injury has ended his season, so Rew comes in for his t20 Blast debut. Leach left out as VD Merwe selected in front of him and no place for Aldridge. Jamie Overton injured for Surrey.

Teams: Somerset: Smeed, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Rew†, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, Overton, VD Merwe, Davey, Ball.

Surrey: Lawrence, Sibley, Pope, Smith†, Burns, Evans, TK Curran, Jordan*, Clark, Steel, Worrall.

Toss: Somerset – field.

Umpires: James Middlebrook & Paul Pollard.

Match Referee: Peter Such.

Report: Sixteen off Overton's first over was not a great start, then Davey's first went for 10 but he did induce a rash shot from Lawrence who was caught for 19 from 11 – 26-1. Sibley of all batsmen, and Pope milked some loose deliveries to take the score to 62-1 in the power play but the introduction for VD Merwe, preferred to Leach, stemmed the flow as his first over only went for 5. But it was Gregory who stuck two major blows in his first over. From his 3rd ball he bowled Pope for 19 from 17, then produce a beauty which seamed away from the dangerous Smith to be also bowled first ball. 71-1 became 71-3 from 8 and Somerset were back on the match. Gregory was excellent bowling his 4 overs for 15 and taking 3 wickets, bowling 12 dots – outstanding.

154 to win was not a huge total but a good one on the relatively slow surface at Edgbaston. But when Worrall trapped Kohler-Cadmore LBW first ball of the Somerset innings and Abell departed to Curran 3rd ball of the 2nd over, Somerset were in trouble at 7-2. Worse was to follow as the out of form Smeed was caught behind 4th ball for 0 – 7-3 from 2.1 overs. Very few sides win any t20 match losing three wickets in the power play and the Somerset faithful were consigned to thinking that that was it – game over.

Worrall's first 2 overs went for 1 run and 2 wickets and 10 dots. But from the ashes of this predicament, Rew, making his t20 Blast debut and Dickson proceeded to manoeuvre the ball around the field to produce an amazing match winning partnership of 144 in 17.2 overs at 8.3/over. The Surrey attack apart from Worrall (4-14-15-2) all conceded runs and for once Jordan's 4 overs went for 40 runs, Steele's two for 27 and Clark's 3.4 for 36. The sequence of scores from the 4th over onwards were: 7,6,9,8,9,17,8,18,11,13,7,8,7,3 and 13. Dickson unfortunately got out with 9 to win for a brilliant 78 from 57 balls whilst Rew's maiden unbeaten t20 62 from 44 produced the match winning innings. Skipper Gregory finished the game with a 6 in fine style off Clark, much to the disappointment of the Surrey players and fans.

Summary: A brilliant win and one of the best victories for Somerset in the history of the t20.

The pitch at Edgbaston is not conducive for expansive shots and the spectators are always deprived of seeing very few 6's and minimal 4's. Big shots are not rewarded, so a score of 165-170 in the first match is a good score. Surrey's 153-9 was not huge but at 7-3 after 2.1 overs, the odds were definitely on Surrey. The scheduling of international matches, did not allow the Surrey England players, Pope, Atkinson, Jacks, SM Curran to play which was good for Somerset, but not for the game of cricket – a major Domestic Final without the best players is not a good advertisement for the game.

17 – (Final) - Gloucestershire, Edgbaston, Saturday 14th September 2024, 18:45. Lost by 8 Wickets.

Pre-Match: Somerset retained the same XI, failing to select Leach on an slow turgid pitch (as always) and getting slower and lower as the day wore on as it always does.

Teams: Somerset: Smeed, Kohler-Cadmore, Abell, Rew†, Dickson, Gregory*, Green, Overton, VD Merwe, Davey, Ball.

Gloucestershire: Hammond, Bancroft, Bracey†, OJ Price, JMR Taylor*, Charlesworth, TJ Price, Shaw, MD Taylor, Payne, Smith.

Toss: Somerset – field.

Umpires: James Middlebrook & Paul Pollard.

Match Referee: Peter Such.

Report: Somerset's 6th final and looking to retain the t20 Cup which had not been achieved before. This was Somerset's chance to make history, but Somerset almost chose the final to produce the 2nd worst performance of the campaign. After losing the toss, Smeed and Kohler-Cadmore started well enough but that was down to TKC striking two sixes off Payne's 2nd over – 28-0 from 3 overs, but the introduction of Matt Taylor in the 4th over accounted for TKC (21 from 15) and the out of form Smeed (8 from 7), then Rew departed for off Matt Taylor for 6. In the only over bowled by Tom Price, Dickson, the hero of the semi-final decided to reverse sweep his first ball and was horribly bowled 42-4 after 6.2 overs. Abell and Gregory restored matters for a while putting on 42 in 6.2 overs, but the Gloucestershire bowlers were excellent, giving nothing away and bowling a tight line something that Somerset have not done consistently all season and making it very difficult for the batsmen to get the ball away, let alone hit boundaries. Abell hit one 4 in 24 balls before being caught on the fence off Tom Price for 19. Gregory played a captains innings but had no support at all from the lower order, striking 53 in 37 balls with only three 4's and two 6's. A score of 124 all out from 19.4 was a really poor effort but take nothing away from the opposition bowlers Payne was excellent as was Matt Taylor.

Payne 4-8-27-3

Shaw 3.4-12-20-2

MD Taylor 4-8-18-3

OJ Price 1-3-7-1

TJ Price 4-11-22-1

Smith 3-2-29-0

Defending 125 to win despite the turgid nature of the pitch was always going to be tough, but Somerset's bowlers failed miserably to find the right line or length and the match could easily have been lost by 10 wickets, but luckily two wickets fell with 13 to win. Hammond and Bancroft put on an excellent partnership of 112 in 13.1 overs at 8.5/over.

Summary: Somerset went into the match with only one spinner and 4 specialist batsmen and none of the batsmen apart from Gregory was able to cope with the stranglehold that the Gloucestershire bowlers imposed on them. Somerset really did not look like getting a wicket and it seems that Overton is not particularly effective in this format plus no death bowlers have been identified. Somerset were completely out played in batting and bowling and Gloucestershire thoroughly deserved their win and it was the third victory of the season over their closest rivals.

Power Play Stats 0-6 over 36 balls				
Match	Opposition	Venue	Somerset	Opposition
1	Essex	Taunton	64-2	56-0*
2	Surrey	The Oval	52-2	50-3*
3	Kent	Canterbury	67-0*	50-4

4	Hampshire	Taunton	58-3*	65-0
5	Middlesex	Lords	27-1	23-4*
6	Kent‡	Taunton	55-6*	46-5
7	Glamorgan	Taunton	51-1*	37-2
8	Gloucestershire	Bristol	50-1*	50-1
9	Essex	Chelmsford	Abandoned	
10	Gloucestershire	Taunton	53-2*	55-1
11	Surrey	Taunton	44-3	57-1*
12	Hampshire	Rose Bowl	56-0	52-1*
13	Sussex	Taunton	56-1	49-1*
14	Glamorgan	Cardiff	66-3	66-0*
15	Northamptonshire	Northampton	49-1*	52-1
16	Surrey	Edgbaston	29-3	62-1*
17	Gloucestershire	Edgbaston	42-3*	49-0
	Totals – runs-wickets		819-32	819-25
	Overs		95	95
	Runs per over		8.62	8.62
	Runs per wicket		25.59	32.76
	Average runs/PP		51.18	51.18
‡ 5 over match * side batting first				

It is indeed bizarre that Somerset and the opposition scored exactly the same number of runs – 819 in the power play and therefore had the same strike rate of 8.62 in the power play, but Somerset lost 7 more wickets across the campaign which is why the oppositions average runs/wicket is higher, but the average of 51 runs per power play is interesting. These matches have such very fine margins.

It was fabulous to reach finals day for the 3rd successive season, but Somerset again failed at the final hurdle. Two t20 Winners medals in 22 campaigns is not a great return when Somerset have been losing finalists on 4 other occasions (2009/2010/2011/2021) and semi-finalists 3 times (2012/2018/2022) and have been to finals days on 10 occasions – more than any other county, so Somerset are pretty consistent in this format, but just can't **WIN** on a more consistent basis.

For 2025 there are a few things that need addressing:

- Smeed's indifferent and inconsistent form.
- A replacement for VD Merwe - Vaughan/Leach/Sodhi?
- How to fit Rew into the side and where does he bat and does he take the gloves from Banton?
- To stop leaking runs at the death.
- TKC to find more consistent form.
- Play two spinners when the pitch dictates – Cardiff, Bristol & Rose Bowl.

Metro Bank 50 Over Cup 2024

Metro Bank Prize Money 2024 (2023)*		
	County	£
Winners	Glamorgan	182,000
Losing Finalists	Somerset	91,000
Losing semi-finalists (each)	Leicestershire/Warwickshire	26,000
Total		325,000

With 11 players, or they could be called mercenaries, snapped up in the dreaded 100, Somerset's resources were severely stretched and down to 16 players - this included 2 Academy players, Archie Vaughan and Thomas Rew. Riley Meredith was drafted into the 100 as a "replacement" for Joe Root whilst he was playing for England against the West Indies. This is likely to mean the Meredith will miss three 50 over matches. That is obviously a like for like replacement! Green and Baker were "Wild Card" picks. Pretorius was also unavailable as he was called up for South Africa's "2nd XI" squad, so no overseas player for possibly 3 matches.

Metro Bank 50 Over Cup 2024

Group A - Match by Match

1 – Kent – Taunton, Friday 26th July 2024, 14:00. Won by 4 Wickets

Pre-match: With 11 players lost to the 100, there are 16 remaining players including Thomas Rew and Archie Vaughan from the Academy. Davey was still unwell and Meredith was at the 100, but Somerset handed a professional debut to Archie Vaughan, son of Michael of course.

Teams: Somerset: GW Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Vaughan, Dickson, JF Thomas, Aldridge, Leach, Ogborne, Leonard.

Kent: Swanepoel, Evison, Singh, Leaning*, Finch†, JK Denly, Stobo, Stewart, Hamidullah Qadri, Gilchrist, MW Parkinson.

Toss: Kent - bat

Umpires: Paul Baldwin & Ben Peverell

Match Ref: Peter Such

Match Report: Leonard opened and was clocked at 88.7mph – impressive, however, his radar was off or the new white ball swung too much and he was unable to control it. He bowlers bowled well, with Goldsworthy the pick taking a career best of 4-44 from his 10 overs. He and Leach exerted good control as none of the Kent batsmen could find the boundary. The pair only conceded 6 fours and 2 sixes in 20 overs. Vaughan on debut for Somerset bowled 6 overs of respectable spin for 16 runs. Ogborne got some tap later on but bowled well for his 3 wickets as Kent reached 267 all out in 49 overs.

Thomas and Goldsworthy were dismissed in 9 overs for 18 and 7, which allowed Umeed and Rew to post an excellent partnership of 121 in 18 overs, both displaying their full range of shots. Rew was bowled by former Academy bowler Gilchrist for 69 with 105 still required from 20 overs. Five balls later, Umeed played a glorious straight drive off Stobo, the only problem was that the bowler touched the ball and it then hit the stumps, so Vaughan had to depart without facing a ball – a sad start to his batting career with Somerset. It was left to Umeed, who reached fine century from 119 balls and Dickson (23) plus Leach to take Somerset to victory with 3.3 overs remaining.

Summary: An excellent win and another ton for Umeed (114*) and another 50+ score for Rew who should have made a century.

2 – Hampshire – Rose Bowl, Sunday 28th July 2024 11:00 - Lost by 5 Wickets

Pre-match: Davey still not quite fit. But George Thomas pulled out on the morning of the match also feeling unwell, so a professional debut was handed to fast bowler Joe Heywood from Bath.

Teams: Somerset: JF Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Dickson*, Vaughan, Aldridge, Leach, Ogborne, Leonard, Heywood.

Hampshire: Middleton, Gubbins*, Prest, Brown†, Albert, Eckland, Organ, Abbott, Jack, Wheal, Kelly.

Umpires: Neil Bainton & Sam Hollingshead

Match Ref: Phil Whitticase

Toss: Somerset - bat

Match Report: On a blisteringly hot day, Josh Thomas was pushed up the order to open to replace his ill brother and did a fine job and it was a shame when he was dismissed for a very good 41 from 57 balls. The opening partnership realised 85 and when Umeed was out for 84 from 103, the score stood at 154-4 with Goldsworthy (3) and Rew (13) back in the hutch with 15 overs to go. As always, the turgid pitch was not one for expansive shots plus it's a big field but Somerset looked like posting a well below par score until Leonard smashed 28 from 16 as he pushed Somerset to 242 all out in 49.4 overs.

Gubbins was caught behind off Leonard's 4th legitimate ball, then Prest departed for 12 again caught by Rew. The dangerous Brown became Rew's 3rd victim this time off Goldsworthy, which left Hampshire 61-3 after 14.4 overs with 182 required in 35.2 overs. Meanwhile Middleton stroked the ball around nicely but upon reaching 50 in 62 balls he threw his wicket away, much to the delight of the Somerset fans. Thereafter Albert and Eckland put on 42 before Organ joined Albert to make an unbroken stand of 100 in 16.5 overs as the Somerset bowlers didn't bowl badly, but equally didn't look like taking a wicket as Hampshire overhauled the 242 needed for victory with 3.5 overs to spare. No bowler took more than 1 wicket.

Summary: Another 20 runs might have made the game a bit tighter, but in the end the final well-crafted partnership between Albert (96*) and Organ (46*) was the difference.

Poor Heywood though – debut for Somerset, but Dickson didn't bring him on to bowl until the 42nd over when the game was almost over – sadly his only over was slogged for 20. He really should have had a bowl after the opening pair had bowled or well before the 42nd over. Let's hope it doesn't knock his confidence.

3 – Durham, Riverside, Wednesday 31st July 2024, 11:00. Won by 133 Runs.

Pre match: Somerset signed Charlie Cassell – a Scottish international, though he has only played two ODI's. The purpose of this signing allegedly is to replace Pretorius and Meredith (whose availability is increasingly hazy) but Leonard was dropped to allow his inclusion. Surely, Somerset should be using talent from within, not importing players at additional cost. Vaughan also made way for George Thomas. Davey finally played having recovered from his unknown illness.

Teams: Somerset: GW Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Dickson, JF Thomas, Aldridge, Davey, Leach, Ogborne, Cassell.

Durham: Lees*, McKinnon, Ackermann, Borthwick, Jones, De Leede, Bushnell, Mustard†, Coughlin, Drissell, Hogg.

Toss: Somerset - bat

Umpires: Jack Shantry & Michael Gough

Match Referee: Phil Whitticase

Match Report: The long trip to the Riverside was rewarded with an emphatic win and a match Jack Leach will remember for a while. His career best List A figures of 6-26 in 10 overs including 43 dot balls was outstanding. However, it must be said that the used pitch suited him down to the ground – slow but some purchase. Some balls did just enough, some turned prodigiously which was wonderful to see after the flat decks at Taunton. Durham had no answer to his line and length or the spinning ball. When he entered the attack at 47-2 in the 12th over, he bowled through to bowl his 10 over quota as Durham lost 8 wickets for 61 runs in 19.3 overs as they were bowled out for 108 after 30.3 overs and the match ended at 16:49.

Earlier in the day, Somerset posted 241-9 – a total based around Lewis Goldsworthy's 93 from 134 balls, George Thomas' 48 from 80 and Dickson's 37 from 36. The pitch was definitely not one for expansive stroke play as boundaries were increasingly difficult to find. Only 24x4 were scored and no 6's which is rare in today's modern cricket. Davey and Aldridge chipped in with 20 and 24 respectively which compensated for two 1st ballers – Rew and Josh Thomas. Coughlin was the pick of the Durham bowlers taking 3-47 in 10 overs.

The total at the half way stage looked slightly under par but as it turned out, 241 was a decent score.

Summary: This was a perfect pitch for the spinners. There was some movement with the new ball, but once the shine had gone, the spinners were in business. How refreshing it would be to have a similar sort of pitch at Taunton to make use of Somerset's international spinner instead of the turgid one that are presented for both red and white ball matches. But Somerset couldn't possibly do that as the ECB are waiting in the wings to pounce.

A fabulous result, but only one gripe from this reporter is that some of the young lads have to sharpen up on their fielding, both in the circle and on the boundary.

4 – Lancashire, Taunton, Friday 2nd August 2024, 14:00. Won by 8 wickets.

Pre match: Charlie Cassell signed for no apparent reason, at least not one communicated by management.

Teams: Somerset: GW Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Dickson, JF Thomas, Aldridge, Leach, Ogborne, Leonard, Cassell.

Lancashire: Bell†, Singh, Bohannon*, Balderson, Iyer, Flintoff, Green, Blatherwick, Aspinwall, Stanley, Barnard.

Toss: Somerset – field.

Umpires: S Shanmugan & Simon Widdup.

Match referee: Steve Davis

Match Report: This match was dominated by two brilliant performances, one by Aldridge with the ball and the other by George Thomas with the bat. Having invited Lancashire to bat, the npower play realised just 29 runs. Ogborne bowled two maidens on the bounce and Leach bowled his 10 over on the bounce, conceding just 30 runs. Bell batted well for 56 from 81 but didn't play a shot in anger. The other Lancashire batsmen struggled and did so even more when Aldridge was introduced into the attack in the 31st over with the score on 125-3. He took 6 of the remaining wickets for 33 runs from 7.1 overs as Lancashire slumped to 218 all out in 49.1 overs. That score was mainly due to Chris Green who had no choice but to play a few shots as the wickets tumbled – he hit 4 large 6's and 4 4's to smite 65 from 54 and Lancashire were glad of his contribution.

Not a big total to chase and a perfect opportunity for George Thomas to make a big score. To start he took it steady and played sensibly after Umeed was caught behind for 5 in the 2nd over. Thomas and Thomas put on 63 in 11.5 overs before Goldsworthy was bowled for 38 from 34. That brought Rew to the crease and the pair proceeded to knock off the remaining runs putting on 147 in 27.2 overs. Rew ended up on 60* from 63 and Thomas made a brilliant maiden professional century from 134 balls – in all he hit 13 4's and 2 6's. The crowd were naturally thrilled when he reached the milestone – let's hope he can kick on from here.

Summary: A fabulous and clinical victory and The Taunton faithful were so delighted for George Thomas posting his maiden century.

5 – Derbyshire, Taunton, Sunday 4th August 2024, 11:00. Lost by 1 Wicket

Pre match: Bashir added to squad to make 15. The 4 left out were Ogborne (allegedly rested), Heywood, Vaughan & Leonard. Cassell retained in starting XI.

Teams: Somerset: GW Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Dickson, JF Thomas, Aldridge, Davey, Leach, Bashir, Cassell.

Derbyshire: Reece, Came, Guest†, Lloyd, Lamb, Patel*, Dal, Chappell, Wagstaff, Moore, Connors.

Toss: Derbyshire – field.

Umpires: Ian Blackwell & Mohammed Waseem.

Match Referee: James Whittaker

Match Report: A beautiful Sunday afternoon and a great game of cricket...except that it wasn't from Somerset's perspective. To score 316 after being 122-2 at the half way stage was a very good effort. After the early loss of George Thomas (6) and Goldsworthy (4), Umeed and Rew built an excellent partnership of 121 in 29.2 overs until Umeed unexpectedly dished up an easy catch to Patel at cover for 58. Rew followed 40 runs later being caught of a skier – the first ball he showed some aggression to, for a fine 88 from 105 balls. 181-4 from 37.1 overs – 12.5 overs remaining. Dickson, 86 from 64 (8x4, 3x6) and Josh Thomas (6x4, 1x6) who made an excellent 54* from 41, propelled Somerset to 316-5 – a total that was definitely a tough total to chase down.

Derbyshire's openers got off to a flyer and were 34 from 4 overs after Cassell conceded 6 fours in his first 2 overs leaking 25 runs. Dickson had no choice but to turn to George Thomas who bowled tidily and claimed the wickets of Came, LBW for 19 and Guest, caught behind for 15. Umeed then effected the run out of Reece with a direct hit for 44, Leach bowled Lamb and Patel was caught and bowled by Thomas for 0 – 90-5 from 19.5 overs. Somerset needed to keep taking wickets but Lloyd and Dal then produced what became a match partnership of 145 in 21 overs (6.9/over). Dal was busy at the crease and he and Lloyd milked Somerset's two international spinners who sadly failed to deviate one ball in 17 overs. Aldridge was introduced in the as Thomas had by now bowled out and was kept on for 4 overs which cost 29 runs. Lloyd perished reverse sweeping for 71 from 80 balls off Davey who also had Chappell caught in the same over for a duck. Meanwhile Dal was still nudging the good balls and hitting the bad balls for 4 (and there were many). Seventeen year old Harry Moore joined Dal and the pair put on 52 in 4.3 overs (27 balls) as Somerset's bowlers leaked runs like a cullender. Dal reached a very well deserved century from just 69 balls and was finally yorked by Davey for 115 from 75 with 10x4 and 2x6. The game was nearly won but Moore was excellent and smashed the remaining 13 runs with a six into the Botham stand and two edged fours to bring an unlikely victory for Derbyshire.

Summary: Difficult to know where to start. Definitely a match that Somerset snatched defeat from the jaws of victory, but Lloyd, Dal and Moore batted brilliantly and Derbyshire deserved the win. Somerset's batting was very good and a total of 317 was certainly challenging. However, the bowling was not up to the mark. Aldridge really needs to tighten up on line and length and the group bowled too many 4 balls. The ground fielding, something that Somerset prides themselves on, was well below standard and needs improvement from a few players but especially the two Thomas'.

A game that should have been won, but hopefully the group will learn something from this defeat.

6 – Northamptonshire, Northampton, Wednesday 7th August 2024, 11:00. Won by 7 Wickets.

Pre-match: Riley Meredith finally in the 15 man squad which also includes Bashir, Cassell and Heywood.

Teams: Somerset: GW Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Dickson*, Vaughan, JF Thomas, Davey, Leach, Ogborne, Meredith.

Northamptonshire: Shaw, Vasconcelos, Bartlett, Sales, Zaib, McManus, Miller, Broad, Finan, Sanderson, Heldreich.

Toss: Northamptonshire - bat

Umpires: Neil Bainton & Rob White

Match referee: Peter Such

Match report: A used pitch greeted Somerset, but Northamptonshire chose to bat after winning the toss in the match reduced to 49 overs – hardly worth reducing by 1 over and a needless piece of unwanted administration. Ogborne struck first inducing Shaw (who made 244 last season in this fixture) to edge behind for 9, Davey then yorked his old team mate George Bartlett for the same score and Sales followed 16 balls later, also yorked by Davey for 6 – 33-3 from 9 overs. Vasconcellos and Zaib put on 36 and when the former was LBW to Vaughan, McManus and Zaib put on 46 – the highest partnership of the innings. Wickets kept falling with all the bowlers taking either 1 or 2 wickets including Goldsworthy who snaffled Zaib (57) and Sanderson from 2 overs. A total of 155 all out in 37.3 overs was not huge but the bowlers bowled very well collectively.

Somerset in the form of Umeed and Thomas put on 58 in 6.3 overs setting up a commanding position from which there was no way back for Northants. Thomas made 28 from 22, Goldsworthy 20 from 26 and Umeed 63 from 66 was out with the score on 135 from 21.2 overs. Somerset only requiring 21 additional runs which Rew and Dickson duly completed.

Summary: Somerset's bowlers were excellent as a group in this match, which restricted Northants to a poor score. To win in 24.2 overs was brilliant.

7 – Worcestershire – Taunton, Friday 9th August 2024, 11:00. Won by 5 Wickets

Pre-Match: Green returned from the 100 – at last a player returns! Josh Thomas & Davey “rested.” Assumed that Cricket Australia limiting Meredith's appearances but it's ok for him to play in the 100. Nonsensical and frustrating.

Teams: Somerset: GW Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Dickson*, Vaughan, Green, Aldridge, Leach, Ogborne, Leonard.

Worcestershire: Roderick†, Pollock, Jones, Libby, EA Brookes, Edavalath, Taylor, Singh, Hinley, Sturgess, Darley.

Toss: Somerset - field

Umpires: Ant Harris & Simon Hollingshead

Match Ref: Simon Hinks

Match Report: Roderick & Pollock had been batting well in this competition, so it was imperative to get them both out after winning the toss and inserting the opposition. The first wicket fell at 54 when Pollock was caught by Green at mid-wicket for 30 from 25 and Roderick followed at 66 caught by Leonard on the fence for 35 from 41 in the 13th over. Wickets steadily fell as Leach bowled his 10 overs for 37 and conceded just 3 fours. Vaughan and Goldsworthy also kept it relatively tight taking a wicket apiece, Green took 3-54 all the other bowlers took one each as Worcestershire were bowled out for 263 in 47.3 overs. That score was mainly thanks to Tom Taylor who top scored with 73 from 65 with 6x4 and 3x6 – and although 4 other batsmen reached 30, none made more than 35.

Somerset's innings got off to the worst possible start as George Thomas (Brent Engineering's finest) was bowled by Taylor shouldering arms to a ball than nipped back to take his off stump out of the ground. Umeed and Goldsworthy then put on 96 in 18.4 overs before Umeed was unexpectedly caught for 44 – another opportunity of a large score missed. He looks in such decent form but keeps getting out when least expected. Rew joined Goldsworthy and the pair put on 116 in 17.5 overs, Rew unfurling glorious cover drives and his beloved reverse sweeps. It was indeed a shame that Goldsworthy perished on 95 from 108 as he yorked himself trying to negate any spin from Singh. Archie Vaughan then entered the middle and made a delightful 31 not out from 24 balls to see Somerset home with Ben Green (23 from 19).

Summary: A beautiful day and another clinical victory. Worcestershire were riding high in the table, so victory was not a given by any means. Sadly Dickson made a first ball duck – it's only a matter of time before he gets a big score. A victory against Middlesex on Sunday could lead to qualification for either a quarter or semi-final place.

8 – Middlesex, Lords, Sunday 11th August 2024, 11:00. Won by 8 Wickets.

Pre-match: Bashir not included in squad of 14 but Davey & Meredith return and Green retained.

Teams: Somerset: GW Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Dickson*, Vaughan, Green, Aldridge, Leach, Davey, Meredith.

Middlesex: Cracknell, Fernandes, Robson, Stoneman*, Davies†, Andersson, Hollman, De Caires, Roland-Jones, HJH Brookes, Bamber.

Toss: Somerset – field

Umpires: Steve O'Shaughnessy & Bil Shafayat

Match Ref: Simon Hinks

Match Report: Winning the toss at Lords is crucial and Somerset duly won and inserted Middlesex on what turned out to be a poor pitch. But the pitch had nothing to do with Cracknell's dismissal as George Thomas swooped from mid-on to effect the run out – a suicidal run. Davey and Meredith, playing his 2nd match of the campaign, proved difficult to get away as both bowled a tight line and length. The Power Play yielded 39 runs and 4 wickets for Somerset – Fernandes LBW to Meredith, Robson, bowled by a beauty from Davey and Stoneman bowled by a yorker from Meredith for 23. From here on, Middlesex struggled as only Andersson (34) and Hollman (38*) made double figures. Green bowled 2 consecutive maidens – the pitch suiting his pace and variations perfectly, Leach was as miserly as ever, but it was Meredith who was excellent throughout taking 4-27 from 8 overs as Middlesex were shuffled out for a paltry 135 in 39.3 overs.

No pressure on the batsmen really, other than to see the new ball off which Thomas and Umeed did until Thomas was adjudged stumped for 11 in the 7th over. Replays suggested that he was not out but he was run out and given not out earlier, so swings and roundabouts. Umeed gave his wicket away yet again for 22, but then Rew joined Goldsworthy and although circumspect for quite a few overs, produced a partnership of 81 in 14.5 overs. Rew unfurled some exquisite cover drives and then in one over from Fernandes, smashed 20 to take Somerset over the line to win by 8 wickets and a place in the next round.

Summary: Another clinical performance on a very poor pitch – the home of cricket seems unable to create a surface that provides a decent balance between bat and ball. This one was slow and low with variable bounce and certainly favoured the bowlers – 230 may have been a difficult target. Richard Johnson, the Middlesex Head Coach, confirmed that 180 is a par score in 50 over cricket – really? At the Home of Cricket? That's really shocking and shows that even the home side are at a disadvantage.

With this win, Somerset qualify for the knock out stages although results in the matches on Wednesday 14th August will have a bearing on whether Somerset play a home quarter final on Friday 16th or go straight into a semi-final on Sunday 18th August.

9 – Semi-Final – Leicestershire, Sunday 18th August 2024, 11:00. Won by 23 Runs

Pre-match: 12th August - Rew and Aldridge selected for England Lions v Sri Lanka which will be played at the same time as this match – madness. Options include Thomas Rew to keep wicket or get TKC back from the 100 as his team has not qualified. No idea how this works or what the outcome will be and no doubt communication will not be forthcoming quickly.

14th August - Luckily, Somerset qualified for the Semi-final, rather than playing a QF, so Rew and Aldridge both available.

Somerset: GW Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Dickson*, Vaughan, Green, Aldridge, Leach, Davey, Meredith.

Leicestershire: Holland, Budinger, Hill*, Rahane, Hanscomb, Cox†, Kimber, Trevaskis, Scriven, Walker, Wright.

Toss: Leicestershire – field.

Umpires: Ian Blackwell & Jack Shantry.

Match Referee: Phil Whitticase

Match Report: Goldsworthy produced a career best 115* including five 6's and six 4's and batted brilliantly. Not known for expansive shots which he reached 50 in 52 balls before scoring 65 from 34 balls. He didn't unfurl any expansive shots until he had reached 52. This set up a big total along with Umeed's 57, Thomas' 47 and Rew's 71 from 57 balls – his 6th score of 50+ in 9 innings. After 40 overs the score stood at 215-2, an excellent platform and from the final 10 overs Somerset plundered 119 as Dickson and Green chipped in with 18 and 17* to reach 334-4 in the allotted overs.

Goldsworthy 115*	Balls	4's	6's
0-50	52	3	1
51-100	27	1	4
101-115	7	2	0
Total	86	6	5

On a good pitch, the total was definitely achievable, but it would take two or three batsmen to get a decent score. Budinger and Holland put on 54 from 8.2 overs before Davey dismissed the former for 33 from 28. Hill then took the score to 96 from 17 overs before he was caught by Thomas off Green for 19 – Rahane, on whose shoulders Leicestershire rested much of their

hopes was then dismissed by Green for 3 – 106-4 and it would seem that the game was more or less won as Leicester needed 229 in 30 overs. Hanscomb, who is a quality batsman, and Cox produced an excellent partnership of 131 in 20.2 overs and the breakthrough finally came when Aldridge induced Cox to edge to Rew for a fine 49 from m55 balls. Leicestershire were still in with a shout whilst Hanscomb was at the crease and he duly completed a magnificent century from 75 balls but when he was caught by Umeed off Davey for 111 from 86 at 293-8, Leicestershire's chances slipped away as they still needed 41 from 2.3 overs. Green was the pick of the bowlers with 3-63.

Summary: It was odd that Leach having bowled so well in this format all season only bowled 6 overs – nevertheless an excellent win which took Somerset to an unexpected final at Trent Bridge in 35 days' time.

10 – Final – Glamorgan – Trent Bridge, Monday 23rd September 2024, 13:00. Lost by 15 Runs (20 Over match).

Pre-match: Meredith unable to play due to Cricket Australia calling him back, so no overseas player.

Due to incessant rain on Sunday, the match was postponed at about 13:30 with the reserve day being used on Monday 23rd September.

Sadly, the weather was so bad and the forecast was dreadful so it was agreed by both sides and the umpires to play a 20 over match starting at 11:00.

Leach included in the team.

Teams: Somerset: GW Thomas, Umeed, Goldsworthy, Rew†, Dickson*, Vaughan, Green, Aldridge, Leach, Davey, Ogborne.

Glamorgan: Carlson*, Smale†, Bevan, Northeast, Ingram, Root, Douthwaite, Kellaway, VD Gugten, Gorvin, McIlroy.

Umpires: David Milnes & Rob White.

Match Ref: Dean Cosker

Toss: Somerset - field

Match Report: The squad of players remained as it had for all the Group matches, which was quite correct. After winning the toss and inviting Glamorgan to bat, Ogborne's first over (second of the match) produced 2 wickets – the dangerous Carlson was bowled and Bevan was out first ball – 9-2. Smale slogged 12 off Davey's 2nd over plus a wide and a leg bye. Smale continued to blaze away with Northeast playing second fiddle. He was finally caught by Dickson off Aldridge for 28 from 14 – 47-3 from 5.4 overs. The power play score of 49-3 was encouraging but the dangerous Northeast and Ingram were at the crease. Green bowled two excellent overs for 9 and Aldridge two overs for 16. Thomas' 3rd ball snaffled Ingram who made 11 from 11 65-4 from 8.3 overs. The introduction of Leach was expected as he had bowled well in every other 50 over match but it didn't come. At 10 overs, Glamorgan were 71-4 and at 14 over mark 105-4 – 6 remaining and a score of about 155-160 was looking on the cards. Unfortunately Aldridge was deployed to bowl the 15th over and it could be argued that this over turned the match. The scoring in the over was 6146.4(no ball)6 – 29 runs.

16th bowled by Green – 5 runs

17th over Thomas 6 – runs

18th over Ogborne 13 runs

19th over Green 11 runs

20th over Davey 17 runs

52 runs in the last 5 overs to take Glamorgan from 105-4 after 14 to 186-7 in 20 – 81 in 6 overs at 13.5/over. It's really tough bowling those last 6 overs and Northeast (63* from 49) and Root (39 from 29) fully exploited the wet ball and outfield to plundered 4 6's and 7 4's – 52 in boundaries in the last 6 overs and compile a partnership of 78 in 8.1 overs (49 balls). Van Der Gugten then slogged 26 from 9 balls

(4x4, 1x6). The score of 186-7 was 25-30 more than Glamorgan should have made, but well done to them, they played the situation very well. Thomas was the pick of the bowlers with 2-23 at 5.75/over. Chasing 187 to win was always going to be a tough ask given the conditions. The power play yielded 28 runs for the loss of Thomas for 13 from 15 and then Goldsworthy was dismissed for 11 from 132. The Rew/Umeed partnership was crucial but Umeed was then caught at the wicket for 45 from 36. Somerset really needed him to stay at the crease and bat through but it wasn't to be – 89-4 after 12.4 overs, so 82 needed in 7.2 overs – a tall order. Vaughan was pushed in at 5 when everyone expected Dickson to come in but to be fair he did ok but didn't get much of the strike, but Dixon was brilliant striking 44 from 20 as he and Vaughan put on 66 in 5 overs but when the skipper was out for 44 from 20, the game looked lost. Vaughan (32* from 18, 2x4 and 2x6) tried his best but when Green was out for 3 trying to reach the fence the game really was lost as Somerset fell 15 runs short.

Summary: A disappointing loss, but fair play to Glamorgan who had pretty much a full t20 side including the vastly experienced Ingram, Northeast, Root and Van Der Gugten, meanwhile Somerset fielded 3 t20 regulars and there was possible the difference. The other major factor was Aldridge's 4th over, which could easily have been bowled by Leach, cost 29 runs. Even if Leach had bowled an over for 10 it would have made a big difference. So the question is, why did Leach not bowl? And surely Dickson should have batted at 5.

It was a pity that this match was played on the Monday in a 20 over format in front of 2 men and 2 dogs and not televised by Sky, so all those that travelled on Sunday, were not even able to watch the match on Monday.

Somerset Metro Bank 50 Over Cup													
Final Averages 24/09/24													
Batting													
Player	M	I	NO	Runs	BF	HS	Ave	SR	100	50	0	4s	6s
JEK Rew	10	10	3	464	459	88	66.28	101.08	0	6	1	58	7
ARI Umeed	10	10	1	492	581	114*	54.66	84.68	1	4	1	40	9
LP Goldsworthy	10	10	2	427	493	115*	53.37	86.61	1	2	0	43	6
BGF Green	4	3	2	43	27	23*	43.00	134.37	0	0	0	3	2
AM Vaughan	7	4	2	72	62	32*	36.00	116.12	0	0	1	7	2
GW Thomas	9	9	1	277	379	106*	34.62	73.08	1	0	1	39	3
SR Dickson	10	8	1	238	178	86	34.00	133.70	0	1	1	24	9
JF Thomas	6	4	1	97	104	54*	32.33	93.26	0	1	1	11	1
EO Leonard	4	1	0	28	16	28	28.00	175.00	0	0	0	3	1
MJ Leach	10	3	2	23	31	11	23.00	74.19	0	0	0	2	1
JH Davey	6	1	0	20	17	20	20.00	117.64	0	0	0	1	0
KL Aldridge	9	5	2	54	65	24	18.00	83.07	0	0	0	4	0
ARJ Ogborne	7	2	0	8	7	7	4.00	114.28	0	0	0	0	1
JP Heywood	1	1	1	0	5	0*	-	0.00	0	0	0	0	0
S Bashir	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CAA Cassell	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RP Meredith	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Bowling													
Player	Ovrs	Balls	M	Dots	R	W	BBI	Ave	Econ	SR	5	Ct	St
ARI Umeed	2.0	12	0	6	6	1	1/6	6.00	3.00	12.0	-	6	-
MJ Leach	81.3	489	5	317	333	15	6/26	22.20	4.08	32.6	1	7	-
AM Vaughan	15.0	90	0	50	63	3	1/7	21.00	4.20	30.0	-	0	-
JF Thomas	5.0	30	0	16	23	0	-	-	4.60	-	-	0	-

Bowling												
Player	Ovrs	Balls	M	Dots	R	W	BBI	Ave	Econ	SR	5	Ct St
GW Thomas	29.0	174	1	93	141	7	3/41	20.14	4.86	24.8	-	4 -
JH Davey	41.0	246	2	148	205	9	3/46	22.77	5.00	27.3	-	0 -
RP Meredith	25.0	150	1	83	128	6	4/27	21.33	5.12	25.0	-	0 -
LP Goldsworthy	40.3	243	3	131	213	11	4/44	19.36	5.25	22.0	-	4 -
EO Leonard	27.0	162	0	97	142	2	1/36	71.00	5.25	81.0	-	2 -
ARJ Ogborne	48.3	291	5	177	259	10	3/58	25.90	5.34	29.1	-	5 -
BGF Green	27.0	162	3	71	160	8	3/58	20.00	5.92	20.2	-	2 -
KL Aldridge	54.1	324	1	165	347	12	6/33	26.69	6.40	25.0	1	4 -
CAA Cassell	14.0	84	1	49	90	0	-	-	6.42	-	-	0 -
S Bashir	7.0	42	0	10	45	0	-	-	6.42	-	-	1 -
JP Heywood	1.0	6	0	0	20	0	-	-	20.00	-	-	0 -
SR Dickson												4 -
JEK Rew												14 -

Summary

What a season in the 50 Over Cup! At the start, nobody gave Somerset a chance of finishing in the top 4, let alone winning the group stage after winning only 4 matches from 16 matches in 2022 and 2023.

So, what was the reason for the success? Well, all the younger players were a couple of years older and had played a lot more top class cricket and those experiences stood them all in good stead. Dickson was again captain and had another year's experience under his belt of captaining the side.

Seventeen players were used, but the signing of Cassell was a mystery and not required and he failed to take a wicket in the 3 matches he played. Umeed and Rew had bumper seasons as did Goldsworthy and who will ever forget his brilliant 115* v Leicestershire. Leach was brilliant throughout and how nice was it to have him available all season rather than ECB "resting" him when he doesn't even play.

Brief Review of Players

Tom Abell

Missed first 6 CC matches with hamstring injury, but other than being asked to open v Durham (4 & 2), he was brilliant and consistent scoring 595 runs in 8 innings at 87.54 in 5 matches until the last 2 matches when he scored 39 runs in 4 innings. But overall 658 runs at 50.61 was a brilliant return. Didn't bowl at all during the CC probably down to his weak hamstring, but hopefully it can be resurrected in 2025 as he does take wickets.

Top class fielder in any position and the glue in the t20 side – never particularly flashy until victory is sight but very good at manoeuvring the ball around the field. The standout innings of 96* v Hampshire produced 12x4 and 2x6 and won the game for Somerset. Strike rate over the campaign was 138.58.

Kasey Aldridge

Bags of promise in all 3 disciplines – fabulous fielder (except for the two he dropped v Hampshire in the Championship), both in the slips and as an outfielder. Improves his batting season by season, but bowling wise, he needs to be more economical but he does take wickets. Missed 3 CC matches in a row and for no apparent reason. Did not feature in the t20 and again, no explanation for this. Can field and bat, so why not selected? Or was he "rested"? who knows. Took 12 wickets at 25.08 in the 50 Over Cup but 6 came v Lancashire where all 6 were caught, so the other 6 came in 8 matches. Looks like he will be the replacement for Gregory when he hangs up his boots.

Sonny Baker

Sadly, Sonny decided his future lay elsewhere and signed a One Year contract with Hampshire. Good luck to him and to Hampshire in getting him on the field of play. A shame as he has massive potential but 3 years of mainly being injured, which Somerset have fully supported, led to his decision. Somerset offered a deal (unknown), but presumably he will receive more money from Hampshire. Made his debut in the t20 this season taking 1-41 in 4 overs.

Jake Ball

In a way, great to have an ex-international bowler on the books, but in other ways blocking the development of Ogborne, Leonard, Baker and possibly Green as well. Played only 6 CC and 13 t20 matches. Fifteen wickets in the CC at 32.20 was not brilliant and five of those came in the Durham match at the Riverside –

where he replaced the concussed Pretorius. Nine innings, 10 wickets in the CC. In the t20, economy rate was no worse than anyone else at 8.97 but he consistently bowled at the death, which is incredibly hard. A good team man however and hopefully imparting his experience on the younger bowlers.

Tom Banton

A brilliant season for Tom and he produced a much more consistent performance throughout until the ankle injury playing football in the pre-match kick-about curtailed his season but 891 runs at 49.50 was very welcome. Made 5 scores over 75, all of which should have resulted in a 100, but we will all forgive him that! All the supporters know how good he can be and he can now only build on this seasons CC form. Fabulous in the t20 season, often struggling but rode his luck and scored 514 runs at 46.72 at a strike rate of 149.85 with four 50's. He has expanded his game to hit more balls on the off side rather than slogging to leg side and this has made a massive difference and long may it continue as it's a pleasure to watch him bat when he gets in.

Shoaib Bashir

As England's number one spinner, opportunities were few and far between for Somerset. Early season pitches were not conducive to playing two spinners as Leach was still "number 1" for Somerset. In all, his CC return of 4 wickets at 78.94 was disappointing. Whilst he has bags of potential, he has not yet run through a side to win a match for Somerset and seems to bowl better for England than Somerset. With an England Central Contract, it maybe that Somerset may not see his services and in any case how often will management decide to play two spinners? Vaughan was mightily effective in September where Bashir wasn't and Vaughan can bat as well which may be a major factor and long term he may decide to leave Somerset to get more opportunities. A familiar Somerset conundrum – Buttler/Keiswetter, Leach/Bess etc.

Charlie Cassell

Sorry to say this was another needless signing unless management just didn't want to play Somerset's own contracted bowlers. Again, probably a nice chap but 3 matches and no wickets was not what the Somerset faithful wanted. In the words of a famous coach "we wish him all the best for the future."

Josh Davey

Not quite the consistent bowler he was and it is unclear how fit he was all season, but should really have played more than he did. The signing of Ball and the needless signing of Randell limited his appearances to just 7 in the CC, taking 16 wickets at 31. When he's on song with the red ball, he really creates problems for the batsmen but the opening partnership with Craig Overton was not seen very often – they complement each other perfectly. There was no explanation from management as to why he didn't feature more. In t20 he was up there with the most economical – 7.82/over in the 8 matches he played and often bowled at the death. Had a good 50 Over Cup campaign but only played 6 matches – 9 wickets at 27.3 and 5/over which was excellent. An under-rated cricketer for sure but injuries seem to be occurring more regularly.

Sean Dickson

Another disappointing red ball season for him, but this reporter feels that he needs one big score and he'll be on his way to more consistent performances in the CC. Ever present in the t20 and put in some great performances especially in the semi-final. A brilliant fielder, except in one match v Glamorgan at Cardiff, but takes all the catches offered and is good on the ground too. Did an excellent job in captaining the 50 Over team and to get to the final was a brilliant achievement. Marshalled the troops well but should he have been opening the batting? Suspect that he thought that the team needed someone who could whack the ball around between overs 40 and 50. Red ball future however is a concern.

Lewis Goldsworthy

Little opportunity – played 3 CC matches at the start then was shovelled out on "loan" to Leicestershire for the t20 and 2 CC matches (131 runs at 32.75) but didn't play until asked to open against Durham at Taunton and bat out of position. Did an ok job, scoring 85 runs at 21.25 then got dropped and didn't play again.

An excellent number 3 in the 50 Over Cup and a brilliant innings v Leicestershire in the Semi-final – 115* from 86 balls with five 6's and six fours. Scored 427 runs at 53.37 with two scores in the 90's. Excellent fielder at cover and his left hand throwing deceived a few batsmen too.

Played for Leicestershire for the whole of the t20 campaign but thankfully signed a 2 year contract.

Ben Green

Pushed out on "loan" to Leicestershire for 4 CC matches as it seemed surplus to requirements for CC squad. T20 form was frustrating – when he was good he was excellent but when he got his line or length wrong he went round the park – some work to do but still took 21 wickets with a strike rate of 12, but at 10.85/over.

Wild card entry to the 100 – then didn't play and returned to Somerset for the 7th match v Worcestershire in the 50 Over Cup, playing 3 matches.

Lewis Gregory

A very good first year as official captain of the club and captained the side very well, in CC and t20. It can be assumed that he was not completely fit all season despite lack of club notification on this. He missed 3 CC matches in the middle of the season, but he still managed 204 overs and claimed 31 wickets at 24.87, so still extremely useful with the red ball in hand. Denied a first hat-trick when Aldridge dropped Vince first ball in Hampshire's 2nd innings.

Equally in t20 – missed 2 matches but 19 wickets with a strike rate of 14.2 is very commendable and he seemed to know just when to bowl himself.

Captaincy wise – a little more adventurous possibly than Tom Abell but led the side well throughout the season – 150th season in 2025 – could he be the skipper that wins Somerset's first Championship?

Joe Heywood

Drafted in to the team when George Thomas was ill v Hampshire and then was not brought on by Dickson until the 42nd over and bowled a 7 ball over that went for 20. Poor lad, he could have been managed better, but hopefully he will return.

Tom Kohler-Cadmore

Very disappointing season. After swanning off to carry drinks in the IPL (until Buttler returned to play in the t20 World Cup) playing only 4 matches and not troubling the scorers much, which meant that he missed 7 CC matches, he pretty much failed to find any red ball form, being frenetic at the crease when asked to open and was no better in the middle order. Was then dropped from red ball side missing 2 matches until Banton's footballing pre-match injury let him back into the side for the last 2 matches. He made a very good 63 v Hampshire when nobody else made more than 29 in a total of 138. But 233 runs at 25.88 from such a good player is really disappointing. Let's hope he does not go the IPL in 2025 to carry drinks and that he can find a decent run of form in all CC and t20. Not bothered how he performs in the dreaded 100.

Tom Lammonby

A great CC season and nearly 1000 runs, but made 5 & 0 in the last match v Hampshire needing 64 runs. Only made one 100 then got out but five 50's and only scored 4 scores under 10. A good number 3 and scored consistently but when he gets to 50 he must start making 100's then when he gets to 100 he must progress further and not lose concentration and then get out. An elegant batsman and there is plenty more to come from him as he has all the shots and the temperament to bat for long periods.

Lammonby is not a 20/20 batsman – let's leave him to hone his red ball skills and with any luck he won't get bought for the 100 in 2025 and he will be able to play in the One Day Cup.

Jack Leach

Missed first 5 CC matches due to injury and started playing on 17th May and it was great to have him back plus as Bashir was classed or became "England's Number 1 spinner", it meant that he actually played a lot of cricket this season for Somerset. He bowled Somerset to victory v Durham and Surrey and claimed 45 wickets at 23.54 in 9 matches – shame he missed the first 5.

He played 5 t20 matches and was effective for the most part – 6 wickets and an economy rate of 8.4 was ok Brilliant in the 50 Over Cup, 15 wickets at 4.08/over and generally difficult for the batsmen to get away, but why oh why did he not bowl in the final? One over would have decided whether he needed to bowl another over, but Aldridge then went for 27 in one of his overs.

Ned Leonard

Played in the first CC match without distinction but bowled with pace, just didn't take any wickets. Opportunities then became less and less as Pretorius and Randell were signed. He then was sent out on loan to Glamorgan and they obviously were impressed and offered a 2 year contract. It is unknown whether Somerset were going to offer a contract.

In white ball, his radar was at times off, bowling far too many balls down the leg side or equally bowling too many wides. However, he showed great promise and it is sad to see him leave. **It seems Somerset would rather sign an unknown overseas bowler than give experience to young bowlers already under contract.**

Riley Meredith

Certainly quick and caused some problems up front in the t20 and for the most part was economical too – 7.59/over throughout the season. 14 wickets was not a huge amount but he got more wickets for the bowlers at the other end. However, due to the dreadful scheduling was unavailable beyond the group matches – a problem that all counties experience when last group match to quarter final is nearly 7 weeks (47 days). Resigned for 2025 – a good move and if Henry could be signed as well, that would make a formidable pair.

Alfie Ogborne

Limited opportunity in the CC only managing to get selected for the final match v Hampshire but his left handedness creates rough which Leach can exploit which in turn creates doubt in the opposition batsmen's mind, but it seems again that Somerset would rather buy in an overseas bowler rather than giving contracted players experience. In the 50 Over Cup he bowled well and perhaps should have played more than the 7 matches he did play. Needs to work on his batting however as lower order runs can be useful.

Craig Overton

Not sure how fit he was throughout the season. Pace certainly down but he's now 30 and not as penetrating or fearsome as previously, at least on the evidence this season, however, the attack without him looks a bit spineless. Didn't take the number of wickets he should have but is still a vital member of the team. Batting improved and had Bashir not tried to slog the ball out of the ground when Overton was on 95 would have made a second First Class century which he thoroughly deserved.

In the t20, bowling him up front and not at the death has been a good ploy, sometimes very economical – 8.13/over but other times expensive. It is however tough bowling in the power play and at the death and the length he bowls is more suited to the power play. Brilliant fielder as always – does anyone in the country have bigger hands than him? Perhaps his brother.

Brett Randell

Nice chap undoubtedly, but did Somerset really need to waste money on him for 3 CC matches in September. Leonard, Ogborne or one of the other bowlers left out of the XI could have played. There was not a suitable explanation for his signing. Failed to take a wicket in the first two and only took 2 wickets v Hampshire.

Matt Renshaw

A solid if not outstanding 7 match period to cover for Kohler-Cadmores carrying drinks in the IPL. 414 runs at 37.63 is ok for an overseas player but not outstanding, however, he's a good cricketer and has a great outlook on cricket and an engaging personality. Maybe to return if deemed that top order resources are not up to the mark or not performing. The team needs characters like him.

James Rew

Another excellent season, even if he only scored two 100's and three 50's and he is only 20 and has a fabulous future. Eight First Class 100's and six 50's is an impressive record to date. Needs to brush up his skills standing up to the wicket when 'keeping to Leach, Vaughan and Bashir but that will come with time and experience.

Excellent in 50 Over campaign scoring 464 runs at 66.28 with six 50's in 10 innings which makes 9 List A 50's.

Drafted into the t20 team when Banton injured and what a debut t20 Blast innings scoring 62* in that brilliant partnership of 144 with Dickson. Question remains – how can he be fitted into t20 team as he certainly has all the attributes required to perform in the shortest format. Does he keep wicket as well? But Banton has done a brilliant job. Will it boil down to who is the better outfielder and who will drop out? Where should he bat? Questions for management over the winter.

Will Smeed

A really poor season for someone so talented. Only two scores above 39, both of which were brilliant innings – 68 v Essex in 30 balls and 86 v Glamorgan from 48. But didn't play from 7th July (missed the 100), until 5th September due to a hamstring injury and thereafter was woefully out of form as he'd not playing any regular cricket – 14 runs from 17 balls in 3 innings. Maybe he will consider his white ball only contract decision but he does not bat well against the seaming or swinging ball, so work to do in that direction.

Migael Pretorius

After a slow start he became a vital cog in both batting and bowling. Happy to bowl all day and an excellent lower order batsman who hit the ball in odd places and frustrated the hell out of the opposition. Made 3 50's and narrowly missed out on a century which he richly deserved v Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge. Only played one t20 match which was odd because his contract was extended to include t20, so why didn't he play more? As usual no explanation from management or coach.

George Thomas

Always likely to only play in the 50 Over Cup, but performed Ok and made an excellent maiden century (105*) v Lancashire at Taunton which was very popular with the crowd. However, in some matches he was a little guilty of a slow strike rate, but in that format, a slow rate can be made greater as the innings progressed, but he kept getting out at just the wrong time. His bowling, although not used in every match was effective when used and his economy rate was excellent at 4.94/over in 41 overs. He made his t20 debut when Smeed was injured, playing 4 matches and did not let the team down batting wise, but his fielding needs some sharpening up for sure.

Sadly he was not offered another contract which was disappointing as he certainly had promise. Another **“we thank him for his efforts and wish him all the best for the future”** – shame.

Josh Thomas

Limited opportunity but arguably could have made his t20 bow when VD Merwe got injured. A left hander in all departments is always useful.

Played six 50 Over Cup matches and was asked to open when his bother went down ill v Hampshire and made a polished 41 and thoroughly deserved a maiden 50. Only bowled 5 overs and possibly should have been asked to bowl more often. Has a bright future.

Andy Umeed

Decent enough season in the 50 over Cup, which seems to be his best format, but in the CC he was so inconsistent and when asked to open he failed miserably, twice getting out first ball. He has changed his technique to be more aggressive and just needs to be more consistent and not try to smash it from ball one. There is a slot available at the top of the order as Somerset do not have a settled opening pair.

Roelof Van der Merwe

Sadly, not the bowler he was – Leach took the one spinners slots when he got injured and arguably should have played in the finals but VDM was selected instead. Still as competitive as ever which is great to see and a firm favourite with the Somerset faithful.

Archie Vaughan

What an outstanding start to his professional career despite being run out without facing on his debut v Kent at Taunton. Played 7 matches, bowled 15 overs at 4.2/over and then in the final made 32* in a lost cause. Should have perhaps bowled a bit more especially in the middle overs where the batsmen are not on the charge.

Played four Championship matches and was instrumental in the two wins with the ball taking 11-140 v Surrey in 69 overs – 2.02/over and 15 wickets in all at 20.13. Batting wise, he did not disappoint either scoring 236 runs at a commendable 33.71 and became Somerset's 8th opening batsman of the season, scoring 30,16*,44,3,21,68 (a maiden First Class 50), 29 and 25, at a very respectable average of 33.71 all at the age of 18.

Of course there were comparisons to his father, of which he does show traits, certainly in the cover drive, but he is his own man and hopefully a long and prosperous career for Somerset ensues. Had already signed a 2 year contact which started 1st November 2024.

Overall Observations

2024 was clearly a very good season. At the beginning of September, Somerset were in with a chance of winning all 4 domestic titles having already won the 2nd XI t20 competition - in the final of the Metro Bank One Day Cup and t20 Blast and 2nd in the Holy Grail – the County Championship. But once again Somerset came away empty handed. A poor performance in the t20 final against Gloucestershire was disappointing to say the least, but Somerset were beaten by the better side on the day and much the same occurred in the Metro Bank 50 Over Cup final against Glamorgan at Trent Bridge.

In the Championship, Somerset were well placed in 2nd but needed someone to beat Surrey. That turned out to be Somerset and after thrashing Durham by 293 runs after round 11, Somerset were 24 points adrift. The incredible victory over Surrey cut the lead to just 8 points but a dreadful performance at Old Trafford to a team almost relegated, scuppered any hopes of the Holy Grail. The final match also produced yet another loss to Hampshire securing only 3 points, resigned Somerset to 3rd place and cost the Club roughly £100,000.

So, whilst a brilliant season and one that every other county except Surrey would be over the moon with, Somerset still fail to get over the line at the death. Why does this keep happening? That is not an easy question to answer and one not to be answered here, but management and players must seek to find the answers.

The Pitch

Taunton is renown as a batsman's paradise and so it remains for the most part. However, result pitches are what's needed – 5 out of 7 produced results in the Championship in 2024 which was a great improvement and if they take turn on day 3 and 4 even better. What is not needed is the flat pitches that produce bore draws such as the Nottinghamshire match.

The t20 pitches were as good as ever and were played on the hybrid surfaces as far as can be established and those in the 50 over competition produced good matches unlike some of the away matches...but that's another conversation.

It would also be very welcome for management to be a lot more open in its information given to members. Other county Head Coaches and DoC's are very much refreshingly open and it seems that Somerset deliver as little as possible smoke and dagger information.

2025

In the Championship, Somerset simply (it's not simple really!) have to **win more away matches and continue to win at home.**

So, the four point plan is also simple!

- 1) **Continue to produce a pitch that offers more assistance to both spinners and seamers.**
- 2) **Improve the opening partnerships.**
- 3) **Win more matches away from home.**
- 4) **Re-sign Matt Henry or an equally proven overseas bowler like the now retired Tim Southee.**

Duncan Sperring
14/12/2024

This review is only a personal view – there are many more topics for discussion but 44 pages are more than enough! I hope you have made it to the end.