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Holmbridge go top as wicketkeeper returns from awful injury

Hero Holmes in super comeback as leaders soar

Central

HOLMBRIDGE opened up a six-point gap at the top of Section A following their 10-wicket triumph over Crigglestone.

The joint leaders at start of play demolished their third-placed rivals as openers Richard Holmes and Ian Parr took the visitors to an easy win.

Holmes rattled up 78 and Parr 39 as the Holme Valley side knocked off the 121 they needed for victory in 35 overs.

Earlier, Crigglestone had struggled against David Clough, Richard Haigh and David Milner. Haigh finished as top bowler with four for 44 from 11.5 accurate overs, and with backing from Clough (3-27) and Milner (2-22), Crigglestone were dismissed for 120.

Holmes was behind the stumps for the first time following an horrific knee injury while playing football almost two years ago, and he grabbed three catches and two stumpings.

Holmbridge's chase for the title and promotion to the Premier Section was aided by Higham's defeat at Birchencliffe.

The Ainley Top club made 195 in their 45 overs with Blackwell (44), Robinson (76no), Harris (29) and Holroyd (32no) the main scorers. Higham were indebted to a fine 78 from James, but the rest of the side had no answer to the bowling of Bob Garside who took seven for 98 in 18 overs as they were dismissed for 163.

Colne Valley side Leymoor were unable to take advantage of Crigglestone's defeat, however, taking a point apiece from a rain-ruined game with Cawthorne.

Skelly (61), Hawley (58) and Holling (45) were the top-scorers in Cawthorne's 216-6 dec in 34.4 overs, and although Leymoor gave chase with Geoff Blackham hitting 85 and sharing in a 99-run partnership with Ian Kenworthy (24), they were unable to overtake their opponents and closed at 196-8 after 38 overs.

Almondbury Wesleyans made short work of beating bottom club YMCA at Rose Hill. The home side scored 175-9 in their 45 overs with Bluff (27), Tariq (38) and No10 Moorhouse top-scoring with 46.

YMCA were 96-7 at one stage but Moorhouse and Tariq put together a stand of 66 to rescue their side.

The home side must have thought they were in with a chance of victory as they had the Wesleyans at 23-3 but a fourth-wicket stand of 90 between John Cowan (85) and Jonathan Harding (46) rescued the visitors and they went on to victory.

Dewsbury Moorlands maintained third place in the Premier Section with a seven-run victory at Old Almondburians.

The visitors' chances of victory seemed slim after they were shot out for a miserly 83 with Ian Tunnacliffe (4-24), Martin Tunnacliffe (2-38) and Prescott (2-17) the main strikeforce.

Moorlands' Eddie Walker had other ideas, however, and his seven for 24 return shot Almondburians out for 76, with the last three wickets falling at that score.

Clayton West closed the gap on top club Hoylandswaine by a point by beating Lepton Highlanders with ease.

After declaring at 181-3 — with Stuart Rank (59), Andrew Canning (62 not out) and Kevin Rank (45) — they ran through the home side's batting line-up to shunt them back to the pavilion for a paltry 33. Ian Gibson took four for 13, Mark Butterfield four for 20 and Andrew Skelton two for nought.

Point is enough for Holmbridge

YE Section A title is clinched

A SEASON of hard work ended in reward for Holmbridge on Sunday as they claimed the point they needed to clinch the YE Central League Section A championship.

Already sure of promotion to the Premier section, Holmbridge entertained visitors Higham, who were themselves battling for the second promotion place.

Put in to bat, Holmbridge were determined from the off to finish their innings with wickets in hand and so it proved to be as the Higham attack could find no easy way through.

J Archer (3-32) proved to be the most successful against cautious Holmbridge batting as he managed to wrinkle out the first three men, all of them caught behind by P Bamforth.

A steady 21 from Ian Parr helped the Bridge to 47-3 at the half-way stage and knocks of 25 not out from Adrian Dickinson and 20 not out from Dave Milner were enough to see Holmbridge through to 97-4 at the close. Not great entertainment for the crowd, but enough to secure the point needed to put Holmbridge in the Premier Section next season.

Higham's reply got off to a shaky start, as the first three batsmen paid the price of playing some cavalier shots early in the innings.

Richie Howarth (3-35) claimed the wickets

in the first seven overs, including that of G Dickinson (four), who went to a stunning one-handed catch by Milner at point.

Caution then prevailed as Higham settled down to the task of reaching their modest target. A knock of 39 from S Fearnley and 28 not out by M Heaton saw the visitors home with 20 overs to spare.

Credit must be given to the two umpires for allowing the second innings to take place at all, as rain and bad light made playing conditions most unpleasant.

Higham went away with vital points to keep them in the hunt for promotion, but congratulations to Holmbridge on winning the championship, their second major trophy in as many years.

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