

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE AND DISTRICT LEAGUE 1929

TEAM	CAPTAIN	VICE CAPTAIN	PROFESSIONAL
BIGNALL END	J.H. MAYER		
BURSLEM	E. COOK	W. BRISCOE	C. J. TAYLOR
CREWE ALEXANDER			H. A. SEDGWICK
GREAT CHELL	F. VOORREY	A. W. IKIN	A. W. IKIN
KNYPPERSLEY			
LEEK	J. H. ELLERTON	A. RYDER	
LONGTON	C. EDWARDS	J. E. V. TONEY	
NANTWICH	E. H. STEVENTON	W. T. MAYBURY	H. E. BOURNE
NORTON	S. SMITH	D. WORTHINGTON	E. MAYER
PORTHILL PARK	J. S. HEATH		J. BOON
SILVERDALE	J. COCKS		J. C. COOPER
STONE	E. C. FERNIE		W. LEE

(12)

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CRICKET

North Staffordshire and District League

PROSPECTS OF THE CLUBS

A Promising Outlook

By "THE CRITIC"

With all its eccentricities, and contrasts, and freakish changes, it seems that, like history, even the incalculable English weather repeats itself. When I essayed the task, on the threshold of the cricket season a year ago, of reviewing the prospects of the clubs in the North Staffordshire and District League for the then ensuing tourney, the atmospheric conditions were about as uncricketlike as they could well be, with biting east winds that made one shiver at the very thought of flannels and fielding. The calendar indicates that the time has come once more to take a forward look at the prospects of another season immediately ahead, and the prevailing conditions are a repetition of those which made cricketers inclined to shy a year ago. At the time of writing a bitter east wind, with considerable power and the edge of a razor, which has called winter ulsters and woollen scarves into general service again for more than a week, persists with such venom that there still is little inclination to start practice until some weather more like April and less like January may find its way to these Islands. How often it seems to happen that footballers have to swelter in summer heat in March, and even February, and cricketers shiver in Arctic winds in May, and even June. However, if the repetition of last year's experience extends to the summer, cricketers will rejoice and be grateful, for the season was the best for a number of years in the all-important matter of weather. This year I have an idea that the weather may have a decisive influence in the destination of the League Championship. Why I think so will appear in the course of this survey of the prospects.

The constitution of the premier division shows one change, in that the L.M.S. Railway Club was outclassed last season, and returns to the lower section after one disastrous season in the First Division, the vacant place being taken by Stone, who at long last achieved their object, won promotion, and return to the top class after an absence of seven years. I have often expressed the view that such is the proper place for the Stone club. I think their presence will add to the interest of the competition, and shall be disappointed if they fail to offer a stout challenge to the best, and make a strong bid for the retention of their status.

It is gratifying to be able to form an opinion that, on the whole, there is an upward trend in the standard of play at present. An increasing number of clubs have recognised the benefit of professional assistance and coaching, and the more efficient coaching provided for young players, and the more practice young batsmen can get against good bowling, the more sure will that upward tendency be. Clubs who regard this as a luxury they cannot afford are, at least in my view, following a mistaken policy (possible exceptions must, of course, be conceded), for it has often been proved that an improved standard of play enhances public interest and attracts increasing support. I am far from suggesting to clubs of limited resources the policy of engaging expensive match-winning professionals, in the hope that they will pay for themselves by filling the coffers with gate-money. Barnes and Constantine are for the clubs who can count on their three-figure gates. But North Staffordshire League clubs are proving that "where there's a will there's a way" to obtain valuable professional services, and the outcome of their enterprise and wisdom is bound to be a better class of cricket and the bringing out and polishing of the budding talent of the district.

The Champions

Having won the championship by a point from Norton in 1927 (for the first time in their history), Nantwich went one better in 1928, and finished high and dry, seven points clear of their nearest rivals. This time the Cheshire men intend to equal the feat of Porthill and Bignall End by annexing the flag for the third consecutive year. That intention will take a deal of thwarting. Last season the Nantwich bowlers demonstrated their ability to get the opposition out cheaply even in a dry summer, and the same men may do so again, even though hard wickets prevail in 1929. But the famous trio, E. H.

Steventon, W. T. Maybury, and L. Haigh-ton, are certainly, more formidable when the surface "dries" a bit, and if the season happens to be one of more or less broken weather, I think they are good enough to put Nantwich in pride of place again, in spite of the undoubted strengthening of some other aspirants for honours. In a season of fast wickets one would be well, less confident. But Nantwich will have an excellent all-round side, though Frank Hough's brilliant wicket-keeping will, of course, be missed. The Cheshire County stumper went to India midway through last season, and it is gratifying to learn of his success, for he has already attained to the responsible and lucrative position of works manager of the State Railway of Hyderabad. Fortunately, Nantwich had an experienced wicket-keeper to take his place in Harold Smith, who filled the role prior to Hough joining the club in 1923, and who showed that he had lost none of his skill. It is worthy of remark that not a match was lost last season after he resumed the gloves.

The team will again be led by that most popular of skippers, E. H. Steventon, and the personnel will be very similar to that which constituted so well-balanced and dependable a side last year. The three regular bowlers can be supplemented by useful men in J. E. Smith and T. W. Steventon, and the attack will not often be collared. The fielding level is probably as good as that of any team in the League. Now look at the batting—F. W. Slight, J. B. Swindale, L. E. Norton, T. W. Steventon, E. H. Steventon, J. E. Smith, H. Smith, W. T. Maybury, A. Hinde, J. Beaman, Puzell, and the rest! And when you fill the 11th place with the newly-engaged player-coach, H. E. Bourne, of Knypersley, I am thinking that not the most enviable of tasks confronting the genial "Ted" will be that of the order of going in. I congratulate the club on the wisdom of this appointment. "Bottle" Bourne is still a batsman of class, as well as a stylist of real class, but he is also a player of great experience. Nantwich have some excellent material for him to work upon, and the side that displaces them from the head of the table in 1929 will deserve the honours.

Porthill's Jubilee Year

The strongest challenge appears likely to come from Porthill, and few would begrudge the Wolstanton club its success if it achieved a fitting celebration of its jubilee by placing another championship to its credit. Founded in 1879, Porthill Park, commonly spoken of as Porthill, was one of the original members of the League when it was formed 10 years later, and it has consistently played an honourable part in the tourney. In 1925 it won its first championship, and in 1926 it gained its eighth. It is safe to say the old club has never been in a position of greater strength than it is to-day. With a membership 150 strong, and a list of sub-scribers and vice-presidents of almost equal numbers, its financial resources are exceptional, and last year's income exceeded £450. The club owes a good deal to the untiring labours of an ideal hon-secrctary in Mr. J. Marsh, whose long service recently received appropriate recognition in the form of a presentation.

For several years Porthill have had the strongest batting side in the League, and last season their average score per wicket was as high as 22.87, which means an average total per completed innings of 228. These are remarkable figures in league cricket. Their wickets were worth on the average over five runs more than those of any other club in the league. On the other hand, only five clubs had a higher average per wicket scored against them. Therein lay their weakness. The bowling was not good, and with the unfortunate loss of J. J. Evenson, owing to accident, and the inconsistency of Durbar, would have been in a sad tangle had it not been for Arthur Bickerton, who revealed unexpected ability as a bowler at the time of need to take 39 wickets at a cost of under nine runs a piece. Obviously the great need was to strengthen the bowling, and a combination of per-secracity and good fortune seems to have achieved that end very effectually.

The engagement of Joseph Boon, the young Staffordshire fast bowler, appears to me to be the most important step the club has taken since it brought Barnes back to Staffordshire 25 years ago. Boon has great pace, has not lost speed and his maturity, and seems to have everything in his favour. I see no reason why he should not develop into a great bowler. Slow wickets will, of course, not suit him, but with a reasonably dry summer I am afraid there will be consternation amongst many of Porthill's opponents. At the same time Porthill has brought Porthill another notable addition to their bowling

resources, for W. Londale has transferred from Knypersley to Wolstanton Marsh. These two young products of the Knypersley club will make a vast difference to the all-round strength of Porthill. Londale is also useful with the bat, and Boon can hit sizes with a facility that will delight Wolstanton spectators. Another newcomer is W. Hine, one of Longton's young bowlers, and one with whom I have been favourably impressed. Barring accidents, Porthill should have an extremely formidable attack.

Then look at the batting. Such a galaxy of stars as A. A. Bickerton, N. W. White,

W. H. Fitchmont, J. S. Meath (again elected captain), K. Gleaves, H. C. Beeshaugh, H. P. Wood, G. A. P. Baggeley, is apparently to be reinforced by another class batsman in F. D. Read, who has come to the district from London, where he was a regular first-wicket man for Honor Oak, one of the strong London clubs. And there are numerous young players of promise to be called upon in case of need. If Porthill can command anything like their best side at the start-up and keep them together with reasonable regularity, the championship issue appears to lie between them and Nantwich, with all respect to some others who will be stronger than last year, notably Burslem. And the outcome may depend upon which set of bowlers is best suited by the weather conditions.

Enthusiasm at Burslem

If enthusiasm, confidence, and team-spirit count for anything, the Burslem club is in for a successful season. In Mr. J. D. Appleby, whose portrait is reproduced herewith, the club is fortunate in possessing an hon. secretary who brings ability and method to the discharge of his duties, who takes the large view and is out to provide the best possible cricket at Cobridge. Last year a combination of circumstances produced indifferent results. The frequent absence, through ill-health and injury, of the captain and vice-captain, the loss of a fine wicket-keeper by fatal accident, and an accident to P. Kirkham just when he was making good as a bowler, were some of them. The new campaign will be entered upon with high hopes and with good grounds for them. C. J. Taylor, who formerly bowled with success for Leek, has occasionally played for Staffordshire, and bowled remarkably well a couple of years ago, has been engaged as professional and coach. Taylor was formerly a successful fast bowler in first class cricket. Lately he has reduced his speed, but his accuracy of length and late swing made his medium-pace bowling very effective. He will materially strengthen the Burslem attack, and his experience should be of great value to the club's many young players.

Evans Cook is to captain the side again, with the popular footballer, W. Bri-ccc, re-elected vice-captain. Both are hoping to have a full season's cricket. The captain's services to the club have been recognised by electing him a life member, and a similar compliment has been paid to his brother Albert, one of North Staffordshire's finest all-round athletes. I am indebted to the popular Albert, who contemplated turning out again this season, and if that proves true supporters at Cobridge will fervently hope that he will be able to reproduce something of his old form. There have been no departures from Burslem since last season, but seven or eight players have transferred from other clubs. These include V. Rouse, of football fame, who captained the L.M.S. last year, A. Haslam, (from the same club), E. Payne (Norton), H. Saunders (Stilveedale), A. Edge (High Lane), and Redce-constable Singleton, who has been prominent in police matches. P. Kirkham is quite fit again, and besides the pair who have borne the brunt of the bowling for some years, E. Cook and Roy Hollowood, and the new professional, other bowlers who can be called upon include W. Fenton, C. Tunnicliffe, A. Cartledge, and E. A. Oliver. L. A. Crump, who made a promising debut for Staffordshire last season, the brothers Hollowood, A. Birch, W. Bailey, W. Britson, H. Cotton, and the brothers Cook should be good for lots of runs. Burslem are quite likely to regain a high position in the table this year. Considerable attention has been paid to the ground, and both mowed and practice wickets have been relaid.

Few Changes at Crow

The Alexandra had a successful season in 1928, secured six more League points than in 1927, and climbed from sixth place to equal second. The improvement must in a large measure be attributed to the engagement of Herbert Sedgwick, fast bowler for a number of years in the Staffordshire team and earlier with Yorkshire. Sedgwick had a good season and seems to lose little of his vim with passing years. He has been re-engaged, so that the Alexandra officials realise his value. There is not likely to be much change from last season in the constitution of the side, though there are a few promising players who may force their way into the first XI. As the summer progresses J. Jennings has taken up an appointment at Birmingham, and his services, which were distinctly useful, will be lost. And I am informed that E. Woodhall may not be available during the early part of the season. This is rather serious, for Woodhall is a bowler who can ill be spared. Two players, by name Mayer and Haslam, have transferred from neighbouring Nantwich, and another new-comer is W. H. Becker, late of Clitheroe Grammar School. One or two Juniors of promise are also being given a trial at the nets. With the bulk of last year's team ready to take the field again, a sound, workmanlike side should be turned out. A feeling of confidence prevails, and the opening of the season is impatiently awaited.

(To be Continued)

CRICKET

North Staffs. and District League

KEENNESS EVERYWHERE

Stone in the Upper Circle

By "THE CRITIC"

Continuing my survey of the prospects of the League clubs for the season, which opens to-day, commenced in last Saturday's "Advertiser." I must say I have been struck with the zest and keenness which my inquiries reveal in every League camp. Everywhere I have found eager anticipation and pleasure in the prospect of the re-entry of the noble summer game. Even where hopes of championship honours have little ground in which to take root, optimism prevails, and a perfectly delightful keenness. All cannot get to the top, but all will enter upon the new campaign with grim determination to play the game and do their best. That is the spirit which the League fosters, and in that spirit every member of every team can enjoy his game to the full, win or lose.



Chell's Advance

The club that made the most progress of any in the League last year was Great Chell. A clear gain of seven points as compared with the previous season lifted them from eighth into the fourth place, only one point behind Crewe and Leek, who were bracketed as runners-up. A young and enthusiastic side, prospects are very bright at Chell. In A. W. Ikin, one of Bignall End's stars in the all-conquering side of four years ago, and who has made good with the county since, the club has the services of a fine player and an experienced judge of the game. His influence on the young players is wholly good, and he is entitled to a large share of the credit for the highly-successful team-building which has been progressing at Chell during the last two years. That old stalwart, E. J. Barber, has relinquished the captaincy, as he is unlikely to be free for much cricket this season, and is succeeded by F. Vodrey, who will, I understand, like his predecessor, have the wise counsel of Ikin as vice-captain. With the exception of the late Captain, all last season's players are available, and there are strong hopes that the bowling will be more effective. This was the chief need of the side last year, when F. Vodrey and G. Fitchford were the regular pair, with useful assistance from U. Worthington, Ikin, and R. Machin. This quintet will be reinforced by the transfer of Gordon Skellern from Burslem High Lane, for whom he had the exceptional record in 1928 of 94 wickets at a cost of 9 runs each. It may prove that the bowling this time is well up to the average League standard, and if this is so the fancied ones must beware of Great Chell. For the young team are keen in the field, have a young and capable wicket-keeper in H. Chatterley, and batting strength above the average. The progress of four of the youngest members of the side will be watched with interest. These are W. Warburton (whom I should be inclined to bracket with A. Ward, of Silverdale, as the most promising "youngsters" in the League, within my own observation), Arthur and Roy Smith, and Stanley Crump, who, at the age of 17, played really well on several occasions in the first XI last season. In Horace Mollart of Sandyford, this band of young batsmen has another recruit of great possibilities. I saw him put up a prolonged and skilful defence to the Stone bowling last season. Here is more excellent material for Arthur Ikin. With the brothers Vodrey and others, and Ikin's prolific bat, there should be plenty of runs at Chell, and plenty of entertainment for their whole-hearted supporters. Whether the President (Dr. Barker) will be called upon to fulfil his undertaking to pay off the remaining debt on the ground if the team win the championship this year, is a contingency of which I have my doubts, but I expect them to maintain a high position, and if they should succeed in heading the table, well, there could be no more popular champions. I am informed considerable improvements have been carried out on the ground during the winter.

Boon Hill Affairs Booming

There is much activity, enthusiasm, and confidence at Boon Hill, the home of the Bignall End Club. Last year there was evidence that the old club was recovering from the slump which followed the breaking-up of the remarkable team which won the honours of the League in 1923-4-5. In 1927 the weakness of Madeley saved the club from relegation, but a year ago a spirited challenge for the leadership was maintained for two-thirds of the season. Then came a curious and largely unaccountable loss of form. But in spite of the disastrous wind-up—5 points out of a possible 18—the final reckoning showed a gain of 4 points on the previous season, and a lift of four places in the table. Prospects of further improvement seem fairly rosy. Too much depended on two bowlers last year, and though Douglas White and Fred Dale did really well, the lack of support was severely felt. If the former is again available, and I have heard nothing to the contrary, Bignall End will again have an excellent opening pair of bowlers. But what of support? Well, there should be more of it, since E. Talbot, of Burt Lane and Kidsgrove, comes with a reputation for being useful, and the return of Downing "twins" from Silverdale provides another bowler. Downing, whom I have seen bowl remarkably well. If only Dr. Albert Riley could make it convenient to take his place in the side with anything like regularity, Bignall End would have quite a formidable attack.

There is strength in the batting, with the Captain (J. H. Mayer), Leo McEllin, A. Booth (the brilliant young Lancashire), W. Beech, E. J. Dale, and S. Haslam, the last-named a young player of good style and promise, who should make good this time. I heard glowing accounts of K. Platt, who appeared in the last few matches of 1928 as a schoolboy. If he is available, big things will be expected of him, young as he is. I expect to see Bignall End represented by a useful, all-round side, though they may not be good enough to offer a serious challenge to the top-weights for championship honours. It is a reminder of the rapid passing of time to learn that J. H. Mayer, who has done so much for his club in several capacities, has recently completed 21 years' service as hon. secretary, an interesting anniversary which, I understand, is being marked by a suitable recognition of his invaluable work for the club.

Moorland Merit

Without professional aid, Leek pleasantly surprised me last year, for their bowling which did not look very convincing on paper, proved to be considerably more effective than that of any other club in the League, with the single exception of the Champions. This was due in large measure to the striking success in a dry season of a pair of slow-medium bowlers in H. Birch and E. L. Kidd, both of whom are now getting into the veteran stage, judging by length of service. To the skill of their joint attack, more than to any other factor, must be attributed the doubling of the number of Leek's victories, as compared with 1927, and the rise of the club from fifth place in the table to equal second, in spite of the fact that the batting was not very dependable, and only the remarkable form of the ever-green Arthur Ryder saved it from being weak. Much the same players will be available this year as last, and under the presidency of Col. A. F. Nicholson. In succession to his late father, Sir Arthur, another successful season is anticipated, with special attention to the many young and improving players in the membership list. J. R. Ellerton has resigned the secretaryship, but will again captain the side. This is his record for the club: hon. secretary 25 years, committee man 27 years, player 31 years. How long he has been captain I am not sure, but I think since the post-war resumption. A. Ryder is vice-captain, and Mr. W. Dale the new hon. secretary. Since the sensible reunion of the two clubs at Leek, the Moorland town has always put a good side in the field, and has figured prominently in the competition, the championship being won three times in the first four seasons after the war. They would probably be well advised to secure professional coaching for their young players, of whom several give more than ordinary promise. Although the regular pair of bowlers may not repeat quite the success of last year, there are four young men of ability to back them up, and it might be all to the good if they got more opportunity. These are J. Pointon, J. W. Ellerton, G. Sedgwick, and W. S. Hutchinson. The last-named I have not yet seen in action, but his debut in the latter part of last season was highly successful, and I heard excellent accounts of his off-break. The other three are sons of old and distinguished bowlers. They are fast-medium bowlers, Gordon Sedgwick left-arm, and the other two right. Ellerton and Sedgwick are still in their teens, and with adequate scope both might develop class. As both are useful with the bat, which also applies to Pointon, this trio consti-

tute a big asset. Other young players of promise include C. Humbleton, J. Williamson, F. Mason, A. Ball, and H. Goodwin. Last season Humbleton impressed me considerably as a batsman "in the raw," so to speak, and one who would amply repay good coaching.

Norton Nursery

The Norton club have a long and interesting career to look back upon. They were the first champions of the League in 1890, and took the honour again exactly 20 years later, and they have got so near us to be runners-up five times between 1911 and 1927. Last year they headed the table for some time in the early part of the season, but then struck a terrible patch, mainly owing to batting failures, and in consequence finished with five points fewer than in 1927, and in the sixth place instead of second. Norton is a traditional cricket nursery, and other clubs, perhaps mainly Burslem, have often benefited by the migration of useful players who learnt their cricket at Norton. But the source of supply has never dried up, and the club has always had a sufficiency of young home-made talent to keep the flag flying. E. Mayer, the former Madeley captain, has been re-engaged as professional, and there will be little alteration in personnel from last season. The team may, however, be definitely stronger, owing to the natural development of several young players of promise. Captain and vice-captain are S. Smith and D. Worthington respectively, and they will have all last year's players to back them up, except E. Payne, who has transferred to Burslem. Mayer and A. G. Evans were one of the most successful bowling pairs in the League last year, and left little for the other bowlers to do, but H. Higgins bowled well on occasion, and another young bowler tried late in the season, who took wickets with facility, was Alfred Reynolds. Strong hopes are entertained that he will confirm the excellent impression he created, and other young players who may make good this season include A. G. Bishop, S. Dunswood, A. Wright, A. Baker, and W. Hurst. R. Taiton, I. Waterfall, and P. J. Massey are amongst the established members of the side, which should be good enough to avoid a repetition of last year's batting collapse, and earn a position worthy of Norton traditions. It is significant that the second eleven last year carried off clear championship of their section with a clear lead of five points of their nearest rivals.

Another Old Cricket School

Silverdale's cricket history goes back into the dim and distant past, to a time when, I believe, the old Trentham club were about the only local rivals of the colliery village. But 32 years have passed since the old club was last hailed League champion. During that long period Silverdale's team has never got as high as the second place, except in 1923, when they were defeated by Bignall End in a play-off for the championship. Generally relying upon native product, the club has turned out many good cricketers, and no doubt will continue to do so. But last year the bowling fell below the League standard, and yielded more runs per wicket to their opponents than any other team in the section, save only the unfortunate L.M.S. side. The need of finding young bowlers of ability is pressing. Ben Griffiths bore the brunt last season, and his chief assistants, J. Whalen, E. Groomer, and E. White were only partially successful. It appears as though the same men will have very largely to carry the club through again, and unless fresh talent can be discovered, I am afraid Silverdale will not find it easy to get their opponents out. There is not much wrong with the batting, with J. C. Cooper (re-engaged as professional and coach to the club of his native village), J. Ankers, C. T. Rushton, A. Ward, and J. Whalen to lead the way. The brothers Downing have returned to Bignall End, but a couple of promising recruits have come from Madeley in A. Bech and J. Sculth. There are not many better wicket-keepers in the league than George Green, and Silverdale's fielding is always an object lesson in keenness, so that bowling is the only phase that gives rise to any anxiety. J. Cocks will, of course, skipper the side again, and Mr. J. E. Rishon continues his valuable services as hon. secretary. Mr. Rushton, whose portrait is reproduced herewith, commenced his playing career with Silverdale in 1886, and he has just entered on his 24th year of secretaryship. He has represented the club on the League Committee for many years, and is one of the four gentlemen who have been honoured by that body by election to life membership. His son, Charlie, has been one of the league's best left-handed batsmen for quite a long time, and I only wish he could have spared the time for county cricket, in which he has appeared on very rare occasions.

Longton's Transition Period

The prospects of Longton are somewhat enigmatic. One of the club's popular players, A. Hodson, has undertaken the secretarial duties in succession to Mr. J. Harlow, and Major John Kent, treasurer of the county club, succeeds Mr. G. Barr in the presidency. There is also a change in the captaincy, G. Edwards taking over from A. Kent, with J. E. V. Toney as vice-captain. Enthusiasm prevails, but it is recognised that the club is passing through a transition period, when a certain amount of team-building from the younger players will have to be done. Too much has depended on a few of the older players in the last few years, and they cannot be expected to maintain the standard indefinitely. There has been little change bowling of anything like first division class to support H. Brassington and A. Smith, and the batting has depended too much on the first three or four men. One of the mainstays of last season, A. L. Day, has departed, and there is real need of developing talent of the league standard in both departments. The side to open the season will probably be selected from A. Smith, H. Brassington, A. Kent, A. C. Hawkins, A. E. Bennett, E. Burton, A. Meigh, C. Steele, J. Preece, K. Mackee, A. Hodson, and F. Audley, with the captain and vice-captain.

Knypersley's Losses

The Knypersley club has encountered enough rough weather to damp the ardour of most. But I find officials and players alike buoyant and hopeful. Optimism is in the air, in spite of the fact that the closing of the local works has hit the club hard financially, and driven some of its best players away. However, there is a strong band of young players, and, I am assured, plenty of budding talent. What is chiefly needed is more adequate public support, and it is up to all who are interested in the welfare of the club to do their best to secure this in increasing degree. Last season the team put up some excellent performances, but had also serious lapses, and finished in the eleventh place, with only the L.M.S. below them. An improvement will be necessary, but such will not be easy in view of the loss of four such players as H. E. Bourne, T. Bibby, W. Whitehead, and W. Lonsdale. Bibby and Whitehead, two specially promising young players, have left the district. This exodus will leave gaps it will be difficult to fill, and I am afraid the batting can hardly be equal to last year. There is also need of a good bowler of pace to operate with Mosedale, a large-hearted, unflinching bowler, who needs little change at his end. He has two useful assistants in W. A. Goodwin and W. Boon, elder brother of the Porthill professional, and H. The also met with some success last year, but more bowling will be needed now that Lonsdale has departed. A. Cooper, E. Tunstall, and W. Boon, of last year's side, and J. E. Gibson, who returns from Chell, should make runs, together with the captain, and the following are amongst those mentioned as young players of promise:—J. Redson, A. Millward, J. Heath, H. Green, P. Green (who has been appointed hon. secretary, vice H. E. Bourne), G. Lowe (a smart young wicket-keeper), J. Mothershaw, G. Gibson, H. Awtly, F. Finney, and J. Colclough. Whilst wishing "Ted" Mosedale and his merry men a good season, I'm afraid they will have a struggling time.

First Division Cricket at Stone

The return of Stone to the First Division has created enthusiasm amongst players, officials, and supporters, and I have no hesitation in saying that the team ought to be good enough to take a good position in the league table. In understand there is likely to be very little change in personnel, except that those two classy old players, E. J. Johnson and B. Meakin, are expected to render more assistance. The former, who is such a benefactor to the club, asserts that his cricket is finished, but it is hoped that he will play in a fair proportion of matches, and if he does I think he will show that he can still get good batsmen out. Bernard Meakin, the old county captain, will be of great service if he plays with sufficient regularity to keep in practice. On 1st Division wickets a batsman of his class would be a real asset, and I think his presence in the team would make the batting above average strength.

For information concerning the club's professional, W. Lee, of Old Hill, readers are referred to a sketch of his career which appeared in this journal, with a portrait, some weeks ago. He is an all-round player who will add much strength to the team. Last season his bowling record at Old Hill was almost equal to that of Aaron Lockett, the respective figures being 55 wickets, average 12.9, and 59 wickets, average 12.7. He also averaged 34 with the bat.

E. C. Fernie will captain the side again, and though the removal of S. C. Charlwood from the district is a loss, Lee, P. F. Stubbs, P. Ravenscroft, F. Middleton, A. M. C. Smith, and G. W. Hammeley will furnish batting stability and scoring power, with such assistance as B. Meakin can give, and the addition of J. A. L. Wenger after the "Varsity" term. The

bowlers, R. C. Worrington, the captain, H. H. Wood, and J. Cooper, are mostly all-rounders, so there should be little "tail" to the batting, and I believe the fielding is of good quality, with two excellent wicket-keepers in Middleton and Stubbs. It seems to me that only keenness and loyalty on the part of the players is needed to ensure a successful season.

Summing Up

As I indicated in the first instalment of this survey last week, my estimate of the relative strength of the tennis places Nantwich and Porthill as most likely to fight out a close contest for the championship, with the weather conditions exercising an important influence on the result. On the whole a jubilee success for Porthill would be no surprise to me. Perhaps the greatest challenge to this pair may come from Burslem, though Great Chell, Leek, and Crewe may have something to say. At the other end Knypersley will find it hard to avoid the wooden spoon, with Longton and Silverdale as somewhat near neighbours. These are just speculations, and may, of course, be quite falsified. But speculating in "futures" is always a fascinating pastime. Anyway, there is no longer the same fatality attaching to the bottom place, for the League Committee have amended the rules to do away with compulsory relegation. The last club in Section "A" will have to apply for re-election, and the ballot vote of the representatives of the clubs forming that section will decide whether they shall change places with the champions of Section "B" or not. This is a reversion to the constitution of years ago, and in effect it may convert Section "A" into a sort of close corporation, beyond the reach of any aspiring clubs outside its charmed circle, unless in very exceptional circumstances. No doubt there are strong arguments in favour of this alteration, and one assumes that the committee very carefully weighed the fairly obvious objections.

STAFFS. COUNTY CRICKET

Interesting Season in Prospect

By "THE CRITIC"

On Wednesday next, the 29th inst., the Staffordshire County Club enters upon the new season's programme, and the opening match, against Lancashire II., at Old Trafford, will put the team to a sharp test, for the Lancashire nursery can generally furnish forth a side of considerable all-round strength. It certainly ought to do so, for the county champions spare no pains to discover youthful talent and provide the best environment and tuition for the development of such talent when it is found. The 2nd XI. is composed of young players who, in the opinion of the best judges in the Palatinate, possess the necessary class to recruit the 1st team as occasion requires. And they are usually amongst Staffordshire's stoutest opponents. When last Staffordshire played at Old Trafford, four years ago, they were beaten by seven wickets in a curious match. The wicket looked good for bags of runs when Staffordshire won the toss, but it "kicked" so badly that the batsmen were always in difficulties, and the side was dismissed for 113. After rolling the wicket played perfectly for the rest of the match, and about 750 runs were scored for the loss of a further 23 wickets. The match was lost before lunch on the first day, and the batting could hardly be blamed, seeing that the ball was frequently rearing shoulder-high. It was a phenomenon I have never been able to understand, though it was said that the usual ten minutes rolling prior to the start was overlooked. Personally, I had not noticed whether that was so or not, but it was passing strange that a fast wicket should prove fiery in the extreme for the first innings, and thereafter, with no change in the weather, play like a batsman's paradise.

So Staffordshire have a little score to rub off when they appear at the Lancashire headquarters again next week, and I hope they will be at full strength and will make a bold bid for revenge. The following is the list of fixtures for the season:—

May 29 and 30, Lancashire II., Old Trafford.

June 5 and 6, Lincolnshire, Frodingham.

June 24 and 25, Lincolnshire, Wolverhampton.

July 8 and 9, Cheshire, Porthill.

July 17 and 18, Cheshire, Boughton Hall, Chester.

July 24 and 25, Notts II., Trent Bridge.

August 5 and 6, Buckinghamshire, Porthill.

August 7 and 8, Lancashire II., Stoke.

August 12 and 13, Notts II., Stoke.

August 26 and 27, Buckinghamshire, High Wycombe.

June 12, 13, and 14, Minor Counties XI. v. South Africans, Stoke.

Buckinghamshire take the place of Leicester II., as compared with the last few years, and the change enhances the attractiveness of the programme, for Bucks are one of the strongest of the Southern Counties taking part in the competition, and have a reputation for an entertaining style of cricket, besides which their team includes several interesting personalities, one or two of whom will almost certainly be seen at Stoke representing the Minor Counties against the South Africans. This three days' match also holds out the promise of a treat for lovers of the game in Staffordshire. The tourists are, of course, a first-class side, who will oppose England in a series of tests, and the pick of the Minor Counties will be a team well worthy of their steel. The visit of the West Indies players last year was a memorable occasion, and only fine weather is needed to make that of the present tourists at least equally successful.

Last year Staffordshire's percentage of points in the Minor Counties competition fell from 90 in 1927 to 66.66, and their position in the table from first to fifth. This was due, not to defeats, but to the loss of 10 points in five unfinished matches which were won on the first innings, a penalty which cannot be defended as equitable. The season was characterized by a certain amount of team building, owing to the loss of several players who in 1927 were amongst the most regular, and the efforts of the committee to unearth young players of ability met with an encouraging measure of success. J. S. Heath took up the captaincy in succession to J. B. Russell, and G. A. Fitton, W. H. Ellerker, E. P. Cross and Boon became fairly regular members of the team. The first-named stiffened the batting materially, Ellerker proved a useful all-rounder, Cross "filled the bill" satisfactorily as wicket-keeper, and Boon gave every promise of rapidly developing into just the fast bowler the county was in need of. To find an admirable captain in the time of need, a wicket-keeper of class who can also get runs, a young fast bowler of promise, and two such useful young players as Fitton and Ellerker to fill the vacancies caused by the loss of J. B.

Russell, H. Goodwin, E. J. Gothard, and Platt was a remarkable testimony to the county's resources. But that was not all, for several other young players were given a trial who showed form suggestive of class. L. H. Crump opened the innings three times, and his batting was sound and straight, with a particularly good defence. He now has the advantage of C. J. Taylor's coaching at Burslem, which may be just what was needed to bring him on into a county player of much value. In bowling Douglas White, of Bignall End, made a sensational debut at Trent Bridge, and though he could not, of course, maintain such a standard, he bowled well enough to suggest that he may be useful to the county in the future. Thus the efforts of the committee to find young available players of the right type were by no means unsuccessful, and the outlook for the future is, therefore, brighter than it has been for some years.

There should be little difficulty, I opine, in placing a strong side in the field this year, and one capable of making another effective bid for championship honours. The captain may be expected to enjoy a more successful time with the bat than last year, when he was dead out of luck. He has already jumped into his best form, for he played a fine innings of 94 at Stone on Saturday. H. W. Homer is also getting runs in his accustomed style for Old Hill, and A. Lockett and Sydney Barnes have been batting well in the Central Lancashire League. These men, with Fitton and A. W. Ikin, provide the nucleus of a useful batting side, and one greatly hopes Arthur Bickerton will be able, as last season, to play in more matches than had been his wont for some years previously. Crump, Cross, Sedgwick, and Boon would complete an impressive team. Beyond these eleven players there are C. Howl, L. McEllin, Ellerker, and White to be considered, and amongst others one would like to see in the side as opportunity occurs are E. Perry (Westbromwich), P. O. Yates (Old Hill), W. Lee (the Stone professional), R. S. A. Hardy (Stafford), and T. Mayer (the Norton professional and former Madeley captain). Then there is F. D. Perks (Westbromwich), with considerable county experience, and C. G. Varcoe, who might well have yet another opportunity of breaking the uncanny spell of non-success which has clung to him in county cricket, for he is a capable batsman and enjoys a considerable reputation in the Manchester district. If he once broke the spell of ill-fortune and got properly going he might be a prolific run-getter in county cricket. Mayer is doing well with the bat and ball in league cricket, and Lee and Perry are, like Ellerker, all-rounders of ability. The Smethwick man's bowling was extremely useful on occasion last season, but Lee is more reliable

with the bat, and Perry's batting has impressed me very favourably. A player whose name has been mentioned to me is M. Sutherby, of Market Drayton, but I have never had the pleasure of seeing him. His late father was, of course, a distinguished Varsity Blue and county player. He generally opens the innings for Market Drayton. Whether he has a Staffordshire qualification I don't know, but I imagine he would in any case be entitled to play under the nearest county rule. And what of J. W. Johnson, the Oakmoor batsman? He fell out of the team two years ago owing to loss of form, which was solely due to indifferent health, but last year he was quite himself again, and played as well in club cricket as he has ever played. Indeed, his scoring was almost phenomenal, and I believe he averaged well over 100 for Oakmoor. At his best there is no more brilliant bat in Staffordshire, and if, as I understand, he has fully recovered his health, it is difficult to see how he can be left out of the team. J. J. Ankers, of Silverdale, is another of the regular players of a few years ago who, taking up the game again last season after a year's absence from it, is playing so well that he would probably get a lot of runs for the county. There are plenty of young cricketers in the leagues at both ends of the county who may develop into county players, and the committee might pursue their policy of testing junior talent by trying one or two more this season, but the names I have mentioned appear to furnish sufficient material to ensure a team well up to, if not surpassing, the average post-war standard. One hopes that mid-week cup-ties will not, by clashing with county fixtures, rob Staffordshire of Barnes's services as many times as was the case last year, and I would like to wish the brilliant veteran another successful season in his native county, remembering that a successful season for him (meaning the maintenance of something like his standard up to the present) would be a phenomenal season for anyone else.

It is definitely stated that the experimental alterations of rule, which are being tested this season in first class county matches, will not be applied to the Minor Counties Competition matches. As regards the larger wicket I have no hesitation in saying a good thing, too. But I should rather have liked to see the alteration in the l.b.w. law tried, for I think that will quite probably become part of the laws of the game.

CRICKET

North Staffs. and District League

WHITSUN FESTIVAL OF CRICKET

By "THE CRITIC"

The Whitsuntide holiday is an annual festival of cricket in the N.S. and District League, a full programme of matches being played on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. This miniature tourney commenced in delightful conditions on Saturday, and all the six matches were played to a finish. In every case except one previous form was verified, and the matches ended as most followers, free from bias, would have predicted. The one surprise was a desperately narrow victory by Longton at Burslem. The Longton players will be getting inured to excitement of thrilling finishes, for probably no team ever started a season with four such nerve-wracking endings as they have experienced in unbroken succession. I mentioned the circumstances of three of these last week, but with another to add I must recall them. I saw their first match, when with five minutes' left Crewe had two wickets standing, but Longton won with three minutes to spare; then they lost at Leek by four runs; then in another desperate finish were two runs behind Knyperstey's total, with two wickets in hand when time expired. In their fourth match at Burslem on Saturday, they scored 78, got five Burslem wickets down for nine, saw Roy Hollowood hit 53 in an heroic effort for his side, and yet snatched a victory by two runs, amidst palpitating excitement. C. Steele was Longton's top scorer with 22. I formed a high opinion of this young batsman two or three seasons ago. Is he going to vindicate my judgment at last? I have waited expecting the fulfilment of the promise I thought I saw, but he has not encouraged one's hope much in the meantime. Taylor had four wickets for 22, Burslem's collapse was sensational, Alf. Smith working great havoc. With the position apparently hopeless, Roy Hollowood took his courage in both hands, and as he hit the bowling all over the field, the Burslem spectators were worked up to great enthusiasm. But when only two runs were wanted to equal Longton's score, and the last man had joined him, he fell. He considerably mated Smith's analysis, but Longton's old war horse came out with seven wickets for 45.

Leek are also partial to exciting finishes, for, after declaring at 163 for six against Bignall End, they had only five minutes to spare when the last Bignall End wicket fell for 73. Leek were indebted to two prolific partnerships for their good score, and J. Pointon (62 not out) was concerned in both. With A. Ryder (37), he redeemed a bad start with a fine stand for the 3rd wicket, and had another productive partnership with E. Hutchinson (45) for the 4th. Bignall End failed, as stated, by five minutes, to save a point.

The champions garnered two useful points at Great Chell, where they met with defeat last year. Bourne (23) and W. T. Maybury (21), gave Nantwich a good, though slow start, but they had rather a struggling time in reaching 127. Ikin securing five wickets for 32. But the runs were sufficient, for Chell were disposed of for 89 (F. Vodrey 27), Maybury having half the wickets for 29.

The Silverdale batting cracked against two of the younger school of Norton bowlers, A. Reynolds and H. Higgins, and they were comfortably defeated by the leaders. Norton were given a grand send-off by W. Hurst (61), and I. Waterfall (40), who put up 87 for the first wicket, but thereafter J. Whalen (four for 39), and Ben Griffiths (six for 27), bowled with great effect, and no-one else reached double figures. The total of 128, like Nantwich's 127, was good enough, the strong Silverdale side being dismissed for 77. Higgins had the fine figures of six for 18, and Reynolds four for 28.

Porthill won at Stone, but the home side again put up a creditable show. Thanks mainly to a great innings of 94 by J. S. Heath, who received excellent support from Ken Gleaves (53), Porthill were able to declare at 133 for eight, to which Stone replied gamely with 145, of which Lee scored 36, and F. Ravenscroft 33.

Knyperstey were overcome on their own ground by the Alexandra, of Crewe, who dismissed the home side for 89, and won by five wickets. A. Cooper got 47 of the Knyperstey runs, but was let off twice in the slips off Sedgwick before he had scored, so that but for these favours, the home team would have made a sorry show. Sedgwick had five wickets for 38, and should have had much better figures. F. Walker got a painstaking 39 for Crewe.

Bank Holiday Games

Whit-Monday's matches were played in perfect weather, and produced much interesting cricket. Norton dropped their first point, and Stone secured theirs and were rather unfortunate not to obtain two at Longton. The home side in this match, for the fifth time in succession, had an exciting finish, as in a fight against time they succeeded in avoiding defeat with their last two batsmen at the wicket. Stone's batting was good, and their total of 173 included 50 by Lee and 41 by the wicket-keeper, Middleton. Harold Brassington had the exceptional bowling figures in such a total of 5 for 25. Mainly owing to Smith, whose 40 was a great innings for his side, Longton, as stated, just saved the game, scoring 123 for 9 wickets.

At Norton, W. Vodrey was again in form, and his 49 was top score in the visitors' total of 171 for 9, at which the closure was applied. But the leaders' opening pair, W. Hurst (59) and I. Waterfall (48), as on Saturday, put up a splendid opening partnership for Norton, and on this occasion were not separated, the score reaching 110 for no wickets.

Porthill, Nantwich, and Leek all won their matches again, though the champions had little time to spare at Bignall End. They ran up 183, though such a total did not seem likely at one point. W. T. Maybury (31) and E. H. Steventon (30) again batted well, and A. McTurk came in late to hit 43 in quick time and swell the total to formidable proportions. Douglas White bowled very well, and had 6 wickets for 43. The home batting was below par until Fred Dale went in to make a bold bid for a draw, and scored a praiseworthy 45. However, Bignall End were all out ten minutes before "time" for 110.

At Porthill Boon (4 for 17) and H. Gleaves (4 for 15) made a mess of Silverdale, who were bundled out for 52, in reply to which the home side hit up 174 for 6 wickets (G. A. F. Barguley 42, W. H. Fitchford 36). At Leek, V. Astbury returned to the first XI, to play a capital innings of 55, and Gordon Sedgwick batted stylishly for 36. Leek declared at 148 for 6. Knyperstey made a weak response, and were dismissed for 56. Harold Birch taking 6 wickets for 29 and Sedgwick following up his good batting by accounting for 4 wickets for 10.

Burslem drew their match at Crewe, taking 23 hours to score 150. R. Hollowood was again to the fore with 40. Crewe could not get the runs, but they played out time, scoring 98 for 8 wickets.

I was sorry to hear at Stone, on Tuesday, of an unfortunate breakdown by Bernard Meakin whilst batting against Porthill on Saturday. He strained a leg ligament in running between wickets, and had to be assisted off the field. Besides depriving Stone for some time of the services of a brilliant bat, the mishap had an important influence on the result of the match, for the old Staffordshire captain had carefully played himself in and was just beginning to look really dangerous when his innings thus came to an untimely end. This circumstance makes Stone's strong reply to Porthill's big score all the more creditable.

Stone's First Victory

Stone gained their first win of the season by outplaying Crewe at Stone, on Tuesday. That they were the better side was beyond question. Although losing their first four matches, the team has been playing such attractive cricket that it was no surprise to see quite a nice gathering of spectators, who had the three-fold advantage of beautiful surroundings, brilliant sunshine, and an entertaining game. Stone took first innings on a capital wicket, which was easy paced though not unresponsive to spin. Against Sedgwick and E. Woodhall, a useful start was made by E. C. Fernie and F. Ravenscroft. The professional bowled with vim, and some-

times made the ball swing away abruptly, and Woodhall, as usual, swung away a little, but he was often just short enough to enable the Stone Captain to display his strong off-side play to great advantage. His square and late cutting quickly yielded a quartet of pretty boundary strokes, and he also played Sedgwick well, but his partner was just beginning to take his share in the run-getting when he failed to turn a fast one to leg, and was lbw at 28. With Lee as his partner, Fernie continued to score freely on the off-side, and a further 48 were added before Sedgwick, who had changed ends after a rest, penetrated the weak point in his defence, and bowled his leg stump. If he were equally strong on the on-side, there would be few better bats in the League than the Stone Captain, but he exposed his vulnerable spot by his tendency to step back and cut balls that could more safely have been played on the other side of the wicket. His cutting was most delectable, and he served his side well by scoring 41 of the first 76. That classy batsman, P. F. Stubbs, seems to be rather under a cloud at the moment, and he fell to the second ball he received, beautifully caught with the left hand at backward point off Woodhall. It was the only wicket this young bowler got, but he bowled better stuff than some of that which got wickets. Stubbs tried to drive a swinging half-volley without getting over it properly, and the half-hit was snapped up.

Then came two useful partnerships between Lee and A. M. C. Smith (20), and Lee and F. Middleton (30), so that when Lee gave a high catch in the slips off C. Coffin, the total had been advanced to 156 for six. He had scored 43 out of 128 by rather sedate cricket, and was not quite at his best, though he was rarely in much difficulty, and so far as I noticed, gave only one sharp chance in the slips off Sedgwick. This was his third good innings in four days, and I was told by those who know what batting is that both on Saturday and Monday he played better cricket. The Old Mill player is certainly doing well in his new environment, and has quickly established himself as a popular favourite at Stone. Both Smith and Middleton made some good hits, but enjoyed a little luck. Stone eventually made a sporting declaration at 174 for eight, leaving the visitors time to get the runs if they could master the Stone bowling. I commend the home captain for his policy, as against the "safety first" idea, which would probably have produced a draw.

Alexandra's work in the field was quite unworthy of the traditions of the club. I hark back to the days of Osborne, Price, Fenn, and Payne, and compare the brilliant fielding of that team of 30 years ago, with the decidedly sloppy performance of Tuesday, and sigh for the glory that has departed. If Sedgwick had been supported as a keen and alert fielding side ought to have supported him, Stone would have had a hard struggle for runs. But it was largely a case of good bowling wasted. The wicket offered no assistance to a fast bowler, and it was all important that possibilities should be snapped up in the field, and especially in the slips, but at least two sharp chances were missed quite early, whilst later most of the bowlers suffered from palpable mistakes in the field. Sedgwick's three wickets cost 41, and C. Coffin had three for 35.

Crewe made a deplorable start against the bowling of E. J. Johnson and Lee. It was delightful to find the former as keen as ever, bowling with a lot of his old skill, and obviously enjoying his cricket thoroughly, and it is fairly safe to say that his retirement from the game is not yet. These were the totals at which the first six Alexandra wickets went down—2-5-19-23-34-43. Johnson's off-spinner had all the batsmen bottled up, and Lee was no less troublesome with his swingers. It was a surprise to me, however, to see them "going" with his arm, instead of in-swinging, which I have always previously regarded as his speciality. I think all his wickets were obtained with balls that turned from leg, except the first, which swung in just enough to make a catch behind the wicket off the inner side of the bat. For a long time H. Hope was the only batsman to play the bowling at all, and he had some very narrow escapes. One lovely break-back from Johnson completely beat him, and grazed the balls, and another missed the leg-stump by very little. Lee also got desperately near his off-stump with an

away-swing. Hope, however, saw five colleagues depart, and the original bowlers rested, before he cut a long-hop into the hands of point, having made a patient 21 out of 43. J. Dickenson, after being twice almost bowled in trying to play Lee, went in for hitting, and credited himself with 30 before succumbing rather tamely to a leg-break from the Stone Captain, who had taken up the bowling with R. Wormington. Brownridge and Prince gave a little trouble, but the original bowlers resumed to finish off the innings for 112, giving Stone a handsome win with pretty well of time to spare. Johnson did not quite maintain the quality of his first few overs, but his record of three for 40 might have been much better without flattery. Lee secured four for 34, and had a good day. The faith which I have repeatedly expressed in the ability of Stone to hold their own in the upper circle has already been amply vindicated.

Other Results

Nantwich at home rounded off a splendidly successful week-end by defeating the leaders, Norton, by three wickets, after dismissing their visitors for 127, but Leek and Porthill both failed to complete the trio of victories, though the latter got a point at Chell, where their batting strength stood them in good stead. Chell put up a good performance in scoring 206 for nine wickets, but they dare take no risks with Porthill's galaxy of forcing batsmen, and in making themselves safe, did all they could, perhaps, expect to do in sharing the points, for Porthill put together 141 for six, with Ken. Gleaves 54 not out, and were, of course, by no means a beaten side.

Leek suffered an extraordinary collapse at Burslem, for Roy Hollowood had the batsmen at his mercy, and took seven wickets for 14. The Leek total of 32 was much the lowest of the season thus far. Burslem compiled 145, and so continued their erratic, up-and-down course.

Luckless Knypersley were the only team who failed to garner a single point from the holiday matches, and three defeats leave them at the foot of the table. Bignall End were able to declare at Knypersley with 172 for seven, and the home team could only compile 93 in response. Longton were at Silverdale, and making a draw with the home men, joined Nantwich and Porthill as the only teams to escape defeat during Whitsuntide.

The leaders lost three points, as compared with the champions, and two points on Porthill, with the result that this trio are now bracketed equal at the head of the table, a point in front of Leek. Every club has now met with defeat, and Silverdale and Knypersley are alone strangers to victory. The most noteworthy feature of the holiday results is the jump of Nantwich from the eighth place to equal first. Silverdale managed only one point from the three matches, and Chell and Bignall End two each. Porthill only dropped one of the six points at stake, and Leek and Longton two each.

The table of results now stands as under:—

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Nantwich	6	4	1	1	9
Norton	6	4	1	1	9
Porthill	6	4	1	1	9
Leek	6	4	2	0	8
Burslem	6	3	2	1	7
Longton	6	2	1	3	7
Great Chell	6	1	1	4	6
Bignall End	6	2	3	1	5
Crewe Alex.	6	2	3	1	5
Silverdale	6	0	3	3	3
Stone	6	1	4	1	3
Knypersley	6	0	5	1	1

Walsall v. Old Hill

On Saturday, Walsall's first team were at home to Old Hill, but the batsmen could not get going, although it was a fast wicket, and were all out for 77, Lindop with 19 being the top scorer. Old Hill passed the home team's total with the loss of only four wickets, and hit up 129, Homer making 40 of the total. For Walsall, Wilkinson had four wickets for 23 runs, and for the visitors Woodhouse had four wickets for 20.

Walsall went to Kidderminster on Monday, and lost by 194 runs to 129. For the home team, Tomkinson made 68 and Brook 46, and Owen was top scorer for Walsall with 28 not out. Whitehouse had four wickets for 44, and Wilkinson three for 43.

STAFFORDSHIRE DISMISSED FOR 148.

Lockett's Batting One Bright Feature at Old Trafford.

LANCASHIRE'S POOR START.

In their opening Minor Counties fixture at Old Trafford to-day, Staffordshire gave a disappointing batting display against Lancashire II.

Five wickets went down for 55 runs and at lunch seven men were out for 94.

This afternoon Lockett hit out with delightful freedom and passed the half-century before he was dismissed for 55, including eight boundaries. The ninth wicket put on 40 runs.

The innings closed for 148—a disappointing total, though better than at one time appeared likely.

Lancashire made a poor start, losing three wickets for 37 runs.

(By OUTFIELD.)

OLD TRAFFORD, Wednesday.

There was a strong breeze blowing straight down the pitch at Old Trafford this morning, when Staffordshire opened their Minor Counties season against Lancashire II.

The visiting county, unfortunately, were minus one of their bowling mainstays in Sidney Barnes, who is assisting Wales in their match with Sussex at Brighton, and A. A. Bickerton, the Porthill player, filled the vacant place.

The home side were without Booth, who has torn a muscle, but were fairly strongly represented. Apart from the wind the conditions were ideal and the pitch quite firm. Stanley Heath had, therefore, no option, on beating young Peter Higson in the toss, but to take first innings.

A Wicket First Ball.

The Staffordshire innings had a sensational opening, for Bickerton, who was accompanied to the wicket by G. A. Fitton, was bowled by Rhodes, the tall Levenshulme amateur—who shared the attack with Preston—with the first ball of the match.

The Porthill man was far too late in attempting to deal with a delivery that came straight through and kept low.

H. W. Homer joined Fitton and turned the last ball of Rhodes' initial over to the leg boundary.

Preston found difficulty in finding a length at the opposite end, and he dragged his foot over the mark twice, Homer taking the maximum advantage of the no-ball with a well-timed drive to the off boundary.

Fitton was a steady partner, and began with three singles, while the Lancashire fielding was keen.

Bowling Changes.

The first bowling change came with the score at 17, Rushton taking over from Preston, who later relieved Rhodes, the amateur having kept an excellent length for half a dozen overs.

Fitton continued to bat with extreme caution, but Homer lost no opportunity of scoring and was twice severe on Preston, whose length was variable. With 30 registered in just over half an hour, the left-hander was well beaten by Rushton, who had come on at the Press box end. Lee, the Stone professional, filled the vacancy and was almost bowled by the first delivery he received, the ball beating the bat and only just clearing the balls. With only eight runs added, Lee, who had notched five of them, "nibbled" at Rushton's going-away ball, and the chance was snapped up by Rhodes at first slip, the amateur making the catch at the second attempt.

Homer's score was now 20 but he had had very little of the bowling. Certainly, he was the only visiting batsman to appear aggressive against bowling which was, for the most part, accurate, but nothing more.

More Disasters.

A. W. Ikin now partnered Homer and kept his end going by means of skilful—If cramped—back play, though he made one determined effort to pull Holroyd, the Lancashire left hander, to the square leg boundary. The Great Chell batsman had only collected two, however, when Holroyd caught him in two minds and he was bowled, the total standing at 41.

Holroyd and Rushton were bowling well at this time, and the first scoring stroke of note for fully a quarter of an hour was a snick past the wicket-keeper by Homer, for four.

Heath, who had joined Homer, began confidently, but the ball required careful watching; The half-century was hoisted after 70 minutes' batting.

There was a double change of bowling at this stage, Horridge and Latchford coming on for Holroyd and Rushton. Heath got Latchford smartly to leg for three, but heavy misfortune befel the visiting county in the next over, when Homer was run out.

It was one of those very unhappy type of run-outs when the batsman makes up his mind, changes it again, and leaves his partner guessing. The sequel was that the ball was returned from somewhere in the vicinity of cover, both batsmen were at the same end, Homer was run out, and what promised to develop into a profitable innings was cut short. The outgoing batsman's 31 included three 4's.

Lockett's Enterprise.

Lockett joined Heath, who had just reached double figures, and the pair settled down to some of the brightest cricket of the innings. There was no suggestion of a big stand, however, and with the total at 76 Heath was cleverly caught by Rushton at mid-off, when attempting a big drive off Holroyd, who was fighting the ball cleverly.

Lockett attacked the bowling with spirit, but when 12 had been added Ellerker was caught by Webster at backward point—again off Holroyd—before he had opened his account. The total was 88, and Lockett's score stood at 21, when R. S. Hardy joined him.

With only a couple of runs added after lunch, Hardy was l.b.w. to Rushton, who had resumed bowling with Holroyd.

Century Hoisted.

E. P. Cross joined Lockett and the Oldham professional had the satisfaction of sending up three figures when he drove the left-hander to the sight screen—a full-blooded stroke to which Holroyd jumped up in vain. Again Lockett helped the score along by lifting a well-pitched delivery from Rushton to the on-boundary. Lockett was frequently tempted by Holroyd and in the next over repeated his previous stroke—a lofty drive, which just dropped short of the rails and sped to the boundary.

Having passed Homer's score Lockett hit merrily, but always judiciously, picking out the right one, and with Cross defending steadily

there appeared to be every chance of his achieving a meritorious half-century.

A hard drive through the covers off Preston brought him within one of that figure, and in the same bowler's next over Lockett obtained the single he needed.

A Fighting Innings.

Cross had a "life" off Holroyd, but Lockett continued resolute. He was certainly doing much to improve the "shining hour" for Staffordshire and he swept Preston to the square leg boundary with his next scoring shot.

It was an admirable ninth wicket stand which had taken the total from 98 to 138. One run later, however, Lockett was easily taken at cover by Horridge off Preston.

The Oldham professional had given an admirable display with never an inclination to flatter the bowling—the right type of game when things are going badly. He hit eight 4's.

Joined by Boon for the last wicket, Cross pulled Preston to the leg boundary, but the innings ended at 148, when the Porthill professional was bowled in hitting out at Latchford.

The Staffordshire innings had lasted two hours and 35 minutes.

Lancashire began their innings at 3 o'clock with E. Webster and Paynter facing the attack of Ellerker and Boon. With only eight scored the amateur was well beaten by the Porthill man, who was bowling against the wind.

Horridge came in and began well by turning the fast bowler to the rails on the leg side. With the total at 22, however, the newcomer mistimed one of Boon's swingers and was easily taken by Ellerker at second slip. The home county made a bad start, and with the total unchanged, Paynter was cleverly run out.

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

A A Bickerton b Rhodes	0
G A Fitton b Rushton	6
H W Homer run out	31
W Lee c Rhodes b Rushton	5
A W Ikin b Holroyd	2
J S Heath c Rushton b Holroyd	19
Ellerker c Webster b Holroyd	0
A Lockett c Horridge b Preston	57
R S Hardy l.b.w b Rushton	4
E P Cross not out	12
Boon b Latchford	6
Extras	6
Total	148

LANCASHIRE II.—First Innings.

E Webster b Boon	6
Paynter run out	5
Horridge c Ellerker b Boon	11
F Beattie c Cross b Lockett	12
Latchford b Lee	38
P Higson not out	9
Farrimond not out	7
Extras	7
Total (for 5 wks)	96

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Staffordshire—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Rhodes	8	2	26	1
Preston	11	0	38	1
Rushton	16	4	36	3
Holroyd	13	6	19	3
Latchford	8.4	3	18	1
Horridge	4	1	5	0

Preston bowled one no-ball.

FALL OF WICKETS.

Staffordshire—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	30	38	41	55	76	88	96	137	148

STAFFORDSHIRE DEFEATED IN FIRST MATCH.

Lancashire II. Win by Eight Wickets.

FINE BOWLING BY HOLROYD.

Staffordshire lost their first Minor Counties match at Old Trafford this afternoon, Lancashire II. beating them by eight wickets.

Forty-one runs behind on first innings, the visiting county gave a feeble display in their second venture, being all out for 117, leaving Lancashire to get 77 to win.

These were obtained for the loss of two wickets, Paynter batting in fine style and just reaching his fifty.

The feature of the day's play was the excellent bowling of Holroyd, who took five wickets for 17 runs, bringing his total for the match to eight for 36.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

OLD TRAFFORD, Thursday.

The eighth wicket stand by Farrimond, the wicket-keeper, and Preston was the factor which helped Lancashire II. to top Staffordshire's first innings total yesterday, and so enter on the final stage of the match this morning with what appeared to be a very useful advantage.

When the seventh Lancashire wicket fell at 113 late yesterday afternoon, the visiting county had a great chance, but their bowlers, feeling the absence of Barnes, were unable to counteract the rugged determination of Farrimond and Preston, the total being carried to 168 before another success came Staffordshire's way.

Boon, who had four for 61, had bowled really well at times, but Lee brought the Red Rose venture to an end at 189, for a margin of 41 runs to the good.

Staffordshire had only barely time to start their second innings, and again it was a doleful beginning, Lee, who superseded Bickerton as partner to Fitton, falling a victim to the Rhodes-Farrimond combination, with only a single scored.

Play Resumed.

Fitton was accompanied to the wickets by Bickerton on the resumption this morning, Rhodes and Rushton bowling. Both batsmen began sedately, the first quarter of an hour bringing half a dozen runs—all singles.

At length, however, Fitton managed to edge a fast one from Rhodes down the gully to the boundary, but the young Lancastrian had not long to wait for a success, Bickerton being caught at third slip by Paynter, off Rushton with the total at 14.

A square cut which rattled past point gave Homer, who had joined Fitton, the credit of making the first scoring shot of any distinction to-day. The cricket, however, was, for the most part, very dull, and the bleak conditions did not help matters.

With 26 on the board Holroyd took over from Rushton, and a full toss on the leg side from the left-hander gave Fitton the opportunity of registering his first boundary. In Rhodes' next over, however, Fitton was particularly fortunate to nick the ball inches wide of his off stump, and, as it happened, to the sight screen.

Holroyd was ineffective this morning, and when Latchford relieved him Homer opened his shoulders to the new bowler's first delivery—a short one wide of the off stump.

The arrears were wiped off, with Fitton and Homer still together. The left-hander was now showing more freedom and sent up the half-century—the product of 55 minutes' batting—with a glorious drive through the covers off Latchford.

With the total at 59 Homer was l.b.w. to Horridge. The partnership had produced 45 and had considerably improved Staffordshire's position.

Lockett joined Fitton, whose score stood at 24.

"Having a Go."

With the arrival of Lockett runs came a little quicker, but that was due to the new-comer's penchant for "having a go." Fitton continued to bat with extreme caution, and paid the maximum respect to all the bowlers. When he did eventually depart from the funeral pace it was a loose delivery from Rhodes that provided the medium for an all-run 4—the outcome of a slashing drive between mid-off and cover.

When Holroyd resumed bowling there was another very dull spell. Lockett found the opportunity however, to pass his partner's score, but with 98 on the board the Oldham professional was easily caught at first slip off Holroyd.

Fitton had batted five minutes short of two hours for 29 at this stage, but Holroyd ended his prolonged display of ineptitude at 97 by clean bowling him.

With Ikin in, Heath sent up the century—the outcome of two hours and ten minutes' batting, but the visiting captain was beaten in Holroyd's next over, playing forward and completely misjudging the flight of the ball.

Hardy was well beaten by Horridge's pace up the pitch before he had scored, and, with a lead of 60 runs, the visiting county had only three wickets standing.

Apart from the contributions of Lockett and Fitton, the Staffordshire batting was singularly spineless.

Ellerker made one or two crisp drives, but provided Horridge with another victim at 117, and Ikin was caught in attempting a big drive, with the total unchanged.

Boon failed, and the Staffordshire innings closed at 117, the home county being left with 77 to get to win.

The last six wickets fell for a mere 21 runs, Holroyd and Horridge being the destructive factors. Both bowled with good judgment, and the left-hander came out with the splendid figures of five for 17, Horridge's three wickets costing seven apiece.

An Early Success.

Lancashire began what appeared to be an easy task of obtaining the 77 runs required for victory with F. D. Beattie and Paynter, who faced the bowling of Boon and Lockett, but with only four on the board, the amateur gave an easy catch at slip, to provide Lockett with an early wicket.

Reverting to the Staffordshire innings, it says much for Holroyd's skill that he came out with the excellent figures of 8 for 36 in the match, though limp batsmanship contributed materially to that achievement.

A second success came the way of the visiting bowlers with the total advanced to 20, Horridge reaching out to Lockett, and being stumped.

Paynter and Webster took the score along slowly but surely, the half-century being hoisted after an hour's batting.

Defeat!

Ellerker had relieved Lockett in the attack, enabling the Oldham professional to supersede Boon at the Town end. The Porthill man had bowled at a useful pace, but his length and direction were variable.

Lee came on for Ellerker at 54, but Lockett continued to present most difficulties to the home pair.

When Boon was called back vice Lockett, the home side were within 14 of victory.

Paynter batted well and made the winning hit—a 4 off Lee—at 3.30, reaching his half-century at the same time.

Staffordshire were thus beaten by eight wickets.

STAFFORDSHIRE—First Innings.

A A Bickerton b Rhodes	0
G A Fitton b Rushton	6
H W Homer run out	31
W Lee c Rhodes b Rushton	5
A W Ikin b Holroyd	2
J S Heath c Rushton b Holroyd	19
Ellerker c Webster b Holroyd	0
A Lockett c Horridge b Preston	57
R S Hardy lbw b Rushton	4
E P Cross not out	12
Boon b Latchford	6
Extras	8

Total 148

STAFFORDSHIRE—Second Innings.

G A Fitton b Holroyd	29
W Lee c Farrimond b Rhodes	0
A Bickerton c Paynter b Rushton	5
H W Homer lbw b Horridge	24
A Lockett c Preston b Holroyd	30
J S Heath b Holroyd	4
A W Ikin c Rushton b Holroyd	6
R S A Hardy b Horridge	0
W H Ellerker lbw b Horridge	11
E P Cross not out	0
Boon c Paynter b Holroyd	0
Extras	8

Total 117

LANCASHIRE II.—First Innings.

E Webster b Boon	6
Paynter run out	5
Horridge c Ellerker b Boon	11
F Beattie c Cross b Lockett	12
Latchford b Lee	39
P Higson b Lockett	12
Farrimond c Boon b Lee	37
Preston c Cross b Boon	43
Rushton b Boon	2
Rhodes b Lockett	1
Holroyd not out	8
Extras	13

Total 189

LANCS. II.—Second Innings.

F D Beattie c Boon b Lockett	2
Paynter not out	50
Horridge c Cross b Lockett	8
E Webster not out	13
Extras	6

Total (for two wkts.) .. 79

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Staffordshire—First Innings.		O.	M.	R.	W.
Rhodes	8	2	26	1	
Preston	11	0	38	1	
Rushton	15	4	36	3	
Holroyd	13	6	19	3	
Latchford	8.4	3	18	1	
Horridge	4	1	5	0	

Staffordshire—Second Innings.		O.	M.	R.	W.
Rhodes	6	2	9	1	
Rushton	14	2	34	1	
Preston	12	5	13	0	
Holroyd	9	3	17	5	
Latchford	5	0	15	0	
Horridge	11	3	21	3	

Lancs. II.—First Innings.		O.	M.	R.	W.
Ellerker	12	4	26	0	
Boon	17	1	61	4	
Lockett	23	8	46	3	
Lee	11	1	43	2	

Lancs. II.—Second Innings.		O.	M.	R.	W.
Boon	11	3	27	0	
Lockett	12	4	18	2	
Ellerker	4	0	16	0	
Lee	4.2	0	12	0	

FALL OF WICKETS.

Staffordshire—First Innings.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	30	38	41	55	76	88	96	137	148		

Staffordshire—Second Innings.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	14	59	96	97	100	101	117	117	117		

Lancs. II.—First Innings.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	22	22	54	87	108	113	169	173	189		

Lancs II.—Second Innings.		1	2
14	20		

COUNTY CRICKET

Staffordshire v. Lancashire II.

INTERESTING PLAY AT OLD TRAFFORD

By "THE CRITIC"

The Staffordshire team began the season's programme of matches in the Minor Counties' Competition on Wednesday, when they opposed Lancashire II. at Old Trafford. The Lancashire County Club appear to have abandoned the use of the liquid manure dope for the preparation of wickets at their headquarters, and the result is that a good natural wicket gives the bowler a chance as well as the batsman. At all events we saw an interesting and even struggle between bat and ball on Wednesday, and though Staffordshire had rather the worse of the day's play, I think that was due partly to the greater variety of the home county's bowling, which was on the whole more accurate than that of Staffordshire. The ground fielding of the Lancastrians was, taken all round, also superior to that of the visitors, who gave a few runs away. Further, most of the luck that was going favoured the home men, for those who were mainly responsible for heading the Staffordshire score had quite a number of narrow escapes from balls that beat the batsmen, and just missed the wicket. Then it was a sad blow to the visiting county, when H. W. Homer's wicket was thrown away by an unfortunate bungle in running at a time when he was well set. True, this mishap was, to some extent, counteracted by the fact that Paynter, a left-hander whose wicket is not easy to get, ran himself out, or was run out by means of a clever pick-up at mid-off by the Staffordshire Captain. Up to a point late in the afternoon there was a dour contest for the first innings lead, and only a productive stand for Lancashire's eighth wicket settled that issue in their favour. As a result of this partnership, the home county took a lead of 41.

The weather was bright, but a cool and rather strong wind was blowing almost straight down the pitch. J. S. Heath won the toss, and took first innings, but the start was a bad one, for Arthur Bickerton, who was fortunately able to take the place of G. H. Thomeycroft (the Wolverhampton amateur was unable to accept the invitation to play), had his leg stump knocked back by the first ball of the match. The bowler, N. Rhodes, a Levenshulme player, is fairly fast, and his first ball must have been an exceptional one, for it apparently came back very quickly from the off just enough to beat the Porthill man's stroke. He is not an easy man to beat, and it was rather remarkable that Rhodes, having pulled out such a beauty for his first ball, could not secure another wicket. Homer was quickly off the mark, and helped himself to a four and a two off no-balls in one over from Preston, another bowler with some pace. Fitton carefully played himself in, but had only made six out of 30 in 40 minutes, when he was clean bowled by Rushton, the hero of Staffordshire's dismissal for 25 at Stoke last August. Rushton is a useful medium-pace bowler, and makes the ball turn a bit both ways, cloaking the spin very well. He could not get a lot of "work" on on this wicket, but he made a good length ball turn in to the left-hander sufficiently to surprise him and beat his back stroke. Neither Lee nor Ikin stayed long, for Lee went feeling for an off ball from Rushton, and edged it up in the slips, and the diminutive Holroyd had Ikin beaten by a clever leg break, a break-back for the little left-hander. Stanley Heath played very confidently and well from the first, and with Homer making the bowling look harmless, and progressing steadily, without taking liberties, the pair looked like materially improving the outlook. But, alas, Homer was run out at 55 after batting an hour and 20 minutes. It was one of those unfortunate happenings for which it is difficult to apportion blame. The Captain hit an off ball hard with the obvious intention of scoring, and called his partner almost as he made the stroke. But the ball was not quite wide enough to clear cover point, and seeing it stopped by the fielder, he changed his mind and turned back. But Homer had answered the call promptly, and dashing down the pitch could not check himself. The Captain would, no doubt, have crossed and saved Homer's wicket at the expense of his own if he had realised the posi-

tion, but turning his back on his partner to regain his own crease, he was obviously unaware until it was too late that Homer had been unable to go back. Having called, it would probably have been better to go on, but in that case there would have been danger at both ends. It was a case of sheer bad luck for Staffordshire.

Half the side out for 55 was a disastrous beginning, and there was little improvement for some time. Heath and Lockett added 21, but the Captain was then out to a very smart catch at mid-off in trying to drive Holroyd. Though he hit it hard, he failed to keep the spinning ball on the ground, and a stroke that would often produce four runs brought about his dismissal instead. Ellerker was too eager, and failed to get hold of one of Holroyd's leg-breaks, being caught at cover, and Hardy was deceived by an in-swinging, so that eight wickets were down for 96. Lockett was, however, getting the measure of the bowling, and with Cross as a partner, he hit out in characteristic fashion. His drives were clean and powerful, and he brought off one or two glorious cuts, reaching his 50 in an hour. Cross kept him company, and middled the ball well without attempting to force the pace. But at 137 Lockett skied the ball on the off, having played an exhilarating innings of 70 minutes' duration, and credited himself with eight boundary strokes. Eleven more were added, and then Boon swiped all across a half-volley. The total was better than had seemed likely, but not good enough.

Lancashire also made a sorry start. Ellerker and Boon shared the bowling, the professional bowling down the wind. With only eight scored, he got a very fast one past Webster, and at 22 a bumping ball was cocked up in the slips by Horridge. As Paynter was run out at the same total, matters looked promising for Staffordshire but Latchford and F. D. Beattie added 32, the former batting remarkably well. Then Lockett came on to get the amateur very neatly taken at the wicket. With P. Higson in Lee bowled against the wind, and Lockett went to the other end to relieve Boon, but another 33 were added before Latchford "loosed off" at a swinger from Lee and was bowled. Lockett came back to his original end, and bowled the Lancashire Captain with a beautiful break-back, which he attempted to keep out with his pads, and Boon having resumed, sent Rushton's balls flying. At this point seven wickets were down for 113, and the first innings lead was anybody's. But Farrimond, who has often done well against Staffordshire, found a useful partner in Preston, who played really good cricket, and the visitors' score was passed without further loss. The eighth wicket added 55 before Lee got the Lancashire stumper easily caught in the gully. Lockett made the ball turn a little from leg to bowl Rhodes, and finally Boon had an over against the wind to get Preston caught by the wicket-keeper, the Lancashire lead amounting to 41. All the bowlers sent up loose ones occasionally, but Lockett generally kept a steady length, and his off-break required very careful playing. He seemed to have a couple of chances missed at the wicket, one a catch, and one of stumping, but Cross kept the wicket well, took two catches, and except for one four which he had no chance to stop, conceded only three byes. Both Lee and Boon several times got very near the stumps without hitting them. The fast bowler lacked a little in steadiness, and Lee was short at times, inviting the productive hook, but when his length was right, he often beat the bat by turning the ball nicely from leg. He also had the worst of luck when Staffordshire opened their second innings with five minutes only to bat, for he glanced a fast leg ball skilfully, but not quite wide enough to avoid the active Farrimond, standing well back. The wicket keeper jumped across to make a catch that was probably a big surprise to the batsman. So Staffordshire ended the day 40 runs in arrears, with one second innings wicket down.

THURSDAY'S BATTING COLLAPSE

It is only possible, reviewing the match after the victory of Lancashire on Thursday afternoon, to sum it up by saying that Staffordshire were outplayed. The play of the team was disappointing, and that applies more especially to the batting. But the fielding was not clean, with one or two outstanding exceptions, of whom Ellerker and Fitton deserve special mention, and the bowling, after Boon and Lockett, was hardly up to county standard.

When Staffordshire resumed their second innings, in which Lee's wicket had been lost for one run, Bickerton partnered Fitton, and commenced with a confidence

that suggested he meant making amends for his failure in the first innings. But he had only scored 5 when he was out to one of the very best strokes of the day, which thoroughly deserved 4 runs instead of costing him his wicket. It was rather a short ball, and the Porthill man cut it beautifully. Off the middle of the blade it went like a flash, and would have reached the ground not more than twelve yards from the bat, but Paynter happened to be fielding unusually close in at point, and he made a remarkable catch close to the ground. However, matters improved after this. Fitton was immovable, and Homer played well until Horridge deceived him with a rather quicker ball that came back slightly and trapped him leg-before. The third wicket had added 45, and with Lockett and Fitton together the score was advanced to 90, at which point Staffordshire were 55 runs on with only 3 wickets down. The game appeared to have been successfully pulled round then, and the position looked an even one. But the two slow bowlers, Holroyd and Horridge, came on to effect a rapid transformation. Lockett edged one up in the slips, and Fitton was at last bowled, after a stolid display of two hours' duration. Thereafter no one could check the bowlers, and a weak exhibition of batting ended with Staffordshire setting their opponents a mere 77 to get for victory. These were got without difficulty, owing to an excellent innings by the left-hander, Paynter, who reached his 50 with the same stroke by which he scored the winning runs. Lockett bowled well, and so did Boon, though he got no wickets, and Cross kept an excellent wicket.

Scores:—

Staffs.—1st Inns.

A. A. Bickerton b Rhodes	0
G. A. Fitton b Rushton	6
H. W. Homer run out	31
W. Lee c Rhodes b Rushton	5
A. W. Ikin b Holroyd	2
J. S. Heath c Rushton b Holroyd	19
A. Lockett c Horridge b Preston	57
W. H. Ellerker c Webster b Holroyd	0
R. S. A. Hardy lbw b Rushton	4
E. P. Cross not out	12
Boon b Latchford	6
Extras	6
Total	148

Staffs.—2nd Inns.

A. A. Bickerton c Paynter b Rushton	5
G. A. Fitton b Holroyd	29
H. W. Homer lbw b Horridge	24
W. Lee c Farrimond b Rhodes	0
A. W. Ikin c Rushton b Holroyd	6
J. S. Heath b Holroyd	4
A. Lockett c Preston b Holroyd	30
W. H. Ellerker lbw b Horridge	11
R. S. Hardy b Horridge	0
E. P. Cross not out	0
Boon c Paynter b Holroyd	0
Extras	8
Total	117

Lancashire II.—1st Inns.

E. Webster b Boon	6
Paynter run out	5
Horridge c Ellerker b Boon	11
F. D. Beattie c Cross b Lockett	12
Latchford b Lee	39
P. Higson b Lockett	12
Farrimond c Boon b Lee	37
Rushton b Boon	2
Preston c Cross b Boon	43
N. Rhodes b Lockett	1
Holroyd not out	8
Extras	13
Total	189

LANCASHIRE II.—2ND INNS.

Beattie c Boon b Lockett	2
Paynter not out	50
Horridge st Cross b Lockett	8
Webster, not out	13
Extras	6
Total (for 2 wickets)	79

BOWLING ANALYSIS

Staffordshire	1st Inns.		2nd Inns.	
	OM	RW	OM	RW
Rhodes	8	2 26 1	0	2 0 1
Preston	11	0 38 1	12	5 13 0
Rushton	15	4 36 3	14	2 34 1
Holroyd	13	6 19 3	94	3 17 5
Latchford	84	3 18 1	5	0 15 0
Horridge	4	1 5 0	11	3 21 3
Lancashire	1st Inns.		2nd Inn	
	OM	RW	OM	RW
Ellerker	12	4 26 0	4	0 16 0
Boon	17	1 61 4	11	3 27 0
Lockett	23	8 46 3	12	4 48 2
Lee	11	1 43 2	42	0 12 0

BOON BOWLS SPLENDIDLY AT FRODINGHAM.

Porthill Man's Seven Wickets For 31 Runs.

LINCOLNSHIRE BATSMEN TROUBLED.

Lincolnshire were frequently in difficulties against the Staffordshire bowling at Frodingham to-day and scoring at times was painfully slow.

Only 24 runs were scored in the first three-quarters of an hour, and half the side were out for 71, after 46 had been added for the fifth wicket, the best stand of the innings.

For this state of affairs, Boon, the Porthill Park fast bowler, was largely responsible.

He came out with the splendid analysis of seven for 31, having taken five for six at one period.

Faced with a total of 108, Staffordshire made a bad start, losing Fitton and Bourne cheaply.

(By "OUTFIELD")

FRODINGHAM, Wednesday.

Staffordshire visited Lincolnshire to fulfil their second Minor Counties fixture to-day. The Staffordshire team took the field without Lockett and Barnes, both of whom were prevented from appearing through the calls of evening league matches. Lockett had hoped to get along this morning, but the state of the match between Oldham and Milnrow last night precluded that possibility.

There were no fewer than six changes in Staffordshire's side. H. E. Bourne, the Nantwich batsman, H. Sedgwick, R. Hollowood, L. Crump, L. McEllin and E. Mayer (Norton), coming in vice H. W. Homer, W. H. Ellerker, R. S. Hardy, Lockett, A. A. Buckerton and W. Lee.

It is two seasons since Staffordshire visited the Brumby Hall ground, in a match which finished a fair crop of sensations.

The wicket for to-day's match appeared bone hard, despite this week's rain, and it was natural to expect the side taking first knock to derive some advantage.

Two Early Wickets.

The privilege fell to Lincolnshire, and B. A. Bashforth and T. D. Ross opened to the bowling of Sedgwick and Boon. The Crewe professional, after topping the stumps with his initial delivery, began with a maiden over. Bashforth was struck on the body in Boon's first over, and there was a brief stoppage.

The first scoring shot of note was a straight drive to the boundary by Bashforth off Sedgwick, and the Frodingham man turned the next delivery very neatly for a single. Boon was making the ball "fly" from the pitch at varied angles, and both batsmen treated him with extreme caution.

The visiting county had not long to wait for their first wicket, for, in Sedgwick's third over, and with double figures just reached, Bashforth opened his shoulders and was beautifully taken by Bourne at square leg.

Campbell, who acts as professional to the Frodingham Steele Works Club and County, followed in. Ross got Boon past point for four, but, with the total only advanced to 15, and his own share a single, Campbell was well beaten and bowled in playing back to the Porthill man.

A Bad Start.

The home county had made an unhappy beginning, but worse was to follow, for P. E. Loeffler, the Lincoln amateur, who had batted well against Leicestershire II, at Grimsby, was hopelessly beaten by the last delivery of Sedgwick's fifth over. The Crewe professional's

brace of wickets had cost four runs apiece up to this stage.

Ross continued watchful when joined by Platters, and the product of three-quarters of an hour's batting was a mere 24.

The fourth Lincolnshire wicket fell one run later. Flatters nibbling at Boon's going-away ball and being magnificently caught at the wicket. Crump taking the chance low down in a diving attitude.

With the Rev. H. Mack joining Ross, the handful of spectators saw a couple of left-hand batsmen at the crease together.

Runs came very slowly indeed, and when the innings was an hour old the score board showed a total of 37 only. The light, however, was poor, and there appeared to be rain hanging around.

Sedgwick made a confident appeal against Ross for obstruction, with the total at 41, but the verdict was against him.

The first bowling change was Mayer, for Sedgwick, at 42.

Fifth Wicket Stand.

Ross and his clergyman partner were now beginning to see the ball better, and combined to offer a very useful resistance for the fifth wicket. Certainly, the best scoring shot of the innings, so far, was provided by the cleric when he drove Boon delightfully through the covers for four.

The half-century was hoisted after 75 minutes' batting, and there was a further bowling change at 69, Hollowood relieving Boon, who had bowled steadily for 13 overs.

The scoring was improved, principally through the medium of singles, but neither of the new bowlers presented great difficulty.

Mack off-drove Mayer to the boundary after a long spell of dreariness, but Ross was statuesque until, with the total at 71, Hollowood disturbed his stumps with a very good length delivery.

The Stamford left-hander had been at the crease 100 minutes for his 23, Mack's score standing at 30 when the partnership, which had produced 46 runs, was brought to a close.

Four runs later, Boon, who had reliever Mayer, completely beat the clergyman, whose off stump was broken in two, and the Porthill pro. caused Seaby to play on, with the total advanced by one.

Seven wickets were thus down for 76, and the prospect of the home county reaching three figures was not bright.

Sutton, the newcomer, had the top of his stumps hit by a full toss from Boon, but the umpire had signalled a "no-ball."

Lunch was taken with the total 82 for seven wickets.

Boon Bowling Well.

After lunch Boon and Hollowood bowled on the resumption. Wright received a blow in the

region of the heart from a rising ball from the fast bowler, and took revenge in the next over at the expense of Hollowood, driving an over-pitched delivery from the Burslem man to the long on boundary.

Wright was repeatedly troubled by Boon, and was eventually given out caught at the wicket, after surviving two appeals for lbw.

Major Wilson, Lincolnshire's skipper, joined Sutton, and by cleverly turning Hollowood to the fine leg boundary, sent up the century, the product of two hours and 25 minutes' batting.

Two runs later, however, Sutton provided Boon with his sixth victim of the innings.

A Splendid Analysis.

The Lincolnshire innings came to an end when Boon clean bowled Major Wilson at 108. The Porthill pro. came out with the splendid figures of seven for 31, his analysis reading:— 21.2 overs, seven maidens, 31 runs, seven wickets.

In his second spell he captured five wickets for six runs in 8.2 overs, bowling at a rare pace, and causing his deliveries to "fly" on the pitch.

The visiting county began badly, for, with only four registered, Bourne was splendidly caught at slip off the Lincolnshire captain.

The young Burslem centurion, Crump, joined Fitton, who had opened with a clever four to the fine leg boundary off Wright, who shared the bowling with his captain. Fitton was lbw to Wilson at 18.

Crump and McEllin batted resourcefully for a time, but runs came slowly, the first 30 occupying three-quarters of an hour. A pretty shot past point by Crump was the only aggressive stroke since Fitton's departure.

LINCOLNSHIRE.—First Innings.

B A Bashforth	c Bourne	b	5
Sedgwick			23
T D Ross	b Hollowood		1
Campbell	b Boon		0
P E Loeffler	b Sedgwick		2
R Flatters	c Cross	b Boon	31
Rev H Mack	b Boon		3
H R Seaby	b Boon		9
W A Sutton	b Boon		11
G Wright	c Cross	b Boon	6
Major C Wilson	b Boon		3
E Munnings			14
Extras			108

Total 108

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

G A Fitton	lbw	b Wilson	8
H E Bourne	c Bashforth	b Wilson	18
L H Crump	not out		0
L McEllin	lbw	b Sutton	13
J S Heath	not out		0
Extras			4

Total (for 3 wks) 43

FALL OF WICKETS.

Lincolnshire.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	15	16	25	71	75	76	97	102	108

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Lincolnshire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Boon	21.2	7	31	7
Sedgwick	11	4	18	2
Hollowood	13	4	30	1
Mayer	7	1	15	0

STAFFORDSHIRE WIN BY AN INNINGS AND 24 RUNS.

Lincolnshire Dismissed for 158.

SEDGWICK'S GOOD ALL-ROUND PLAY.

Staffordshire established a useful first innings lead of 182 against Lincolnshire at Frodingham to-day.

For this they were largely indebted to vigorous hitting by A. W. Ikin, Sedgwick, and E. P. Cross, who each contributed useful scores.

Eighty-three runs were put on for the ninth wicket as a result of a bright partnership between Sedgwick and Cross.

Faced with the possibility of an innings defeat Lincolnshire lost three wickets cheaply, and half the side were out for 95.

A stand by the Rev. H. Mack and H. R. Searby for the sixth wicket improved matters somewhat for the home county.

Staffordshire won by an innings and 24 runs.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

FRODINGHAM, Thursday.

With a lead of 66 runs, and three wickets still to fall, the Staffordshire team appeared to be in a distinctly good position when the second day's play in the Minor Counties fixture with Lincolnshire began to-day.

At one time yesterday afternoon, such a useful lead seemed highly improbable, but the resource of Crump, the young Burslem batsman, and an admirable forcing display by Ikin, followed by "fireworks" from Sedgwick and the capital Norton all-rounder, Mayer, were factors that placed the home county in the position of having to fight with their backs to the wall.

Still, Lincolnshire were not wholly blameless for Sedgwick was missed twice—both sitters—and Crump gave an easy chance at square leg when his contribution was 30.

The Rev. H. Mack was the most successful home bowler, and he dislodged Mayer's stump with a ball which swung across at the last moment, and which the batsmen made no attempt to play.

Sedgwick (19) and Hollowood (15) were the two "not outs" who resumed the Staffordshire venture this morning in bright sunshine. There had been some overnight rain, but not enough to effect the pitch seriously.

Wright and Sutton opened the bowling, and the former's first over yielded nine runs, five to Hollowood, and the remainder to Sedgwick.

Hollowood's Admirable Innings.

The visiting county's total advanced to 191 before Hollowood left, well caught at short slip off Wright, whose deliveries had more nip from the pitch than any of the other bowlers Lincolnshire had tried. The outgoing batsman's 25 was in every way an admirable contribution.

Two hundred went up after the visiting county had been at the crease three and a half hours, the later batsmen having accelerated the pace to some purpose.

Sedgwick opened brightly again this morning, and the wicket-keeper, Cross, faced the bowling with plenty of resolution. The outcome was that Staffordshire were soon 100 ahead of the home county's total.

Major Wilson relieved Sutton, but Sedgwick continued to hit well all round the wicket, and reached his 50 in as many minutes with a beautiful straight drive off the Lincolnshire captain.

Bright batting was the order this morning, a welcome change from yesterday, and 250 was signalled after the innings had lasted just over four hours. At this stage, 60 runs had been added for the ninth wicket.

Mack was brought on, vice Wright, but both batsmen treated the clergyman bowler in cavalier fashion, and Munnings, the Grimsby Town footballer, was given a further chance.

100 Runs in 65 Minutes.

Cross, who made many good strokes, was missed at the wicket off the new bowler, and

the Lincolnshire fielding as a whole fell short of the best standard. So freely did the Staffordshire batsmen go for the bowling to-day that 100 runs had been added to the overnight score in 65 minutes.

With the total at 274, Sedgwick was easily caught at mid-on when attempting to hit Munnings for six. The Crewe professional's innings of 72 was a capital contribution in the cause of brighter cricket. He found the boundary nine times, and was always attacking the bowling.

Eighty-three runs were put on for the ninth wicket and Cross was approaching his half-century when Sedgwick departed. He did not reach it, however, for in attempting to steal a single from a push stroke towards cover, the Staffordshire wicket-keeper saw his partner fail to respond and Boon was easily run out.

The visiting county's total stopped short therefore at 290, or 182 runs on.

Cross's admirable knock included seven 4's. The Staffordshire innings had occupied their hours 20 minutes, and Lincolnshire began their uphill task at 12.30 with T. D. Ross and P. E. Loeffler facing the bowling of Boon and Mayer.

Loeffler cut the first delivery of the innings, a rising ball from Boon, very neatly to the boundary.

Boon Erratic.

Lincolnshire's opening batsmen were in rather more confident mood to-day, and both Ross and Loeffler made excellent strokes, being rather severe on Boon, who was unable to hit a length.

In less than half an hour they took the score to 33 when Loeffler was caught by Fitton off Mayer. The Frodingham man, Bashforth, filled the vacancy, but his stay was short.

Mayer, who bowled a particularly good length, broke through his defence and two good Lincolnshire wickets had gone with the home county still 140 runs behind.

Hollowood had relieved Boon just prior to Bashforth's dismissal, and the Burslem man beat Ross as he had done in the first innings with a fine delivery which came quickly off the pitch. Three wickets were down for 45.

First 6 of the Match.

Boon came on again for Mayer just before lunch, and at the end which provided five of his wickets yesterday.

Flatters, who was associated with the Rev. H. Mack, registered the first 6 of the match, a beautiful straight drive off Hollowood, and no further success came the way of the Staffordshire attack prior to the adjournment, which was taken with the total at 62 for three.

Hollowood and Boon bowled on the resumption and 70 was signalled without further loss.

The wicket, still fast, retained its sporting character, and Boon gave Flatters cause to flinch once with a ball that whizzed past his shoulder.

Still runs came fairly freely until, with the total 86, Boon bowled Flatters, who had given a bright exhibition and included a series of full-blooded strokes in his knock of 39.

Half Lincoln Out for 95.

Campbell obtained a 4 to leg off Hollowood but shortly afterwards provided the Burslem man with his second victim of the innings, Ikin accepting an easy chance at square leg.

Half the Lincolnshire side had been disposed of for 95, and 8, were still required to avert an innings defeat when Searby joined Mack.

Sedgwick relieved Hollowood at 38, this being the Crewe man's first turn with the ball during the innings, and Boon was rested, after a long spell, in favour of Mayer.

There was a useful stand for the sixth wicket, as both Mack and Searby made good strokes, the clergyman in particular batting well.

When the partnership had realised 58 and the total had been carried to 153, Mack was bowled by Mayer, and the end was not long delayed. Staffordshire winning by an innings margin.

Sedgwick took 3 wickets for 24 runs, and Mayer 3 for 28.

LINCOLNSHIRE.—First Innings.

B A Bashforth c Bourne b Sedgwick	5
T D Ross b Hollowood	23
Campbell b Boon	1
P E Loeffler b Sedgwick	0
R Flatters c Cross b Boon	2
Rev H Mack b Boon	31
H R Searby b Boon	3
W A Sutton b Boon	9
G Wright c Cross b Boon	11
Major C Wilson b Boon	6
E Munnings not out	3
Extras	14
Total	108

LINCOLNSHIRE.—Second Innings.

T D Ross b Hollowood	20
P E Loeffler c Fitton b Mayer	16
Campbell c Ikin b Hollowood	4
B A Bashforth b Mayer	4
R Flatters b Boon	29
Rev H Mack b Mayer	48
H R Searby c Hollowood b Sedgwick	20
W A Sutton c Ikin b Sedgwick	2
G Wright run out	0
Major C Wilson c Mayer b Sedgwick	1
E Munnings not out	2
Extras	12
Total	158

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

G A Fitton lbw b Wilson	6
H E Bourne c Bashforth b Wilson	1
L H Crump c Ross b Mack	44
L McEllin lbw b Sutton	13
J S Heath b Wright	5
A W Ikin c Flatters b Mack	38
E Mayers b Mack	21
H Sedgwick c Ross b Munnings	72
R Hollowood c Loeffler b Wright	25
E P Cross not out	49
Boon run out	3
Extras	12
Total	290

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Lincolnshire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Boon	21.2	7	31	7
Sedgwick	11	4	18	2
Hollowood	13	4	30	1
Mayer	7	1	15	0

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Wright	23	2	70	2
Wilson	25.2	8	65	2
Mack	27	7	64	3
Sutton	20	7	48	1
Munnings	8	0	31	1

FALL OF WICKETS.

Lincolnshire.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	15	16	26	71	75	76	97	102	108

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	18	41	59	107	120	155	191	274	290

MINOR COUNTIES
CRICKET.

Staffordshire Easily Defeat
Lincolnshire.

Good All Round Play by
Sedgwick.

Staffordshire followed up last week's defeat by Lancashire II., at Old Trafford, by scoring an easy victory against Lincolnshire, at Provingham, this week.

Dismissing the home county for 108 in the first innings Staffordshire ran up the big total of 290. Set to get 183 runs to avoid an innings defeat Lincolnshire could only compile 158. Staffordshire thus won by an innings and 24 runs.

Much of Staffordshire success was due to a splendid all-round display by Sedgwick, who hit up 72 and captured five wickets. Boon also bowled splendidly, taking seven wickets for 31 runs in the first innings and getting a wicket in the second, while E. P. Cross (49 not out), L. H. Crump (44), A. W. Ikin (38) assisted materially with the bat.

LINCOLNSHIRE.—First Innings.

B A Bashforth c Bourne b Sedgwick	5
T D Ross b Hollowood	23
Campbell b Boon	1
P E Loeffler b Sedgwick	6
R Flatters c Cross b Boon	2
Rev H Mack b Boon	31
H R Seary b Boon	3
W A Sutton b Boon	9
O Wright c Cross b Boon	11
Major C Wilson b Boon	6
E Munnings not out	3
Extras	14
Total	108

LINCOLNSHIRE.—Second Innings.

T D Ross b Hollowood	20
P E Loeffler c Fitton b Mayer	16
Campbell c Ikin b Hollowood	4
B A Bashforth b Mayer	4
R Flatters b Boon	29
Rev. H Mack b Mayer	48
H R Seary c Hollowood b Sedgwick	20
W A Sutton c Ikin b Sedgwick	2
O Wright run out	6
Major C Wilson c Mayer b Sedgwick	1
E Munnings not out	2
Extras	12
Total	158

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

O A Fitton lbw b Wilson	8
H E Bourne c Bashforth b Wilson	3
L H Crump c Ross b Mack	44
L McEllin lbw b Sutton	13
J S Heath b Wright	6
A W Ikin c Flatters b Mack	38
E Mayers b Mack	21
H Sedgwick c Ross b Munnings	72
R Hollowood c Loeffler t Wright	25
E P Cross not out	49
Boon run out	3
Extras	12
Total	290

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Lincolnshire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Boon	21.2	7	31	7
Sedgwick	11	4	18	2
Hollowood	13	4	30	1
Mayer	7	1	15	0

Lincolnshire.—Second Innings.

Sedgwick	8.5	3	24	3
Boon	20	3	50	1
Mayer	15	3	37	2
Hollowood	15	4	44	2

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

Wright	23	2	70	2
Wilson	28.2	8	85	2
Mack	27	7	64	3
Sutton	20	7	48	1
Munnings	6	0	31	1

SOUTH AFRICANS' VISIT MARRED BY RAIN.

Good Start by Minor Counties Discounted.

CENTURY FIRST WICKET STAND.

There was some dramatic pre-lunch cricket at Stoke to-day when the Minor Counties opposed the South Africans.

Batting first, the Minor Counties were given an excellent start, W. T. Cook and P. F. Remnant being associated in a century first wicket stand, and scoring at a very brisk pace.

Subsequently the game took a dramatic turn, the South African bowlers getting on top, and by lunch six men were out for 169.

Owen-Smith was the bowler to bring about the change, his cleverly-conceived attack having the batsmen in difficulties.

During the interval, rain fell and play has not yet been resumed.

At 4.30, play was abandoned for the day.

impressive Cameron's wicket-keeping was also good to watch, and in accord with the traditions of the Colony, which are high indeed in that department of the game.

None of the bowlers found responsive qualities in the wicket, and there was no slackening off in the rate of run-getting. Quinn commanded an excellent length, but had no fire off the pitch, and MacMillan was freely attacked, particularly by Remnant, who took fours off him in successive overs, the last shot a perfectly-timed stroke the leg all along the carpet.

Eighty runs were signalled after 68 minutes' batting, and shortly afterwards Cook was fortunate to see a skier off Quinn drop just out of harm's way. Catterall made a valliant attempt to reach it, but was a couple of yards short in the end. It was the first semblance of a chance that either batsmen had given.

Century Stand.

The Surrey batsman almost monopolised the scoring for a spell and with the total 84 the opening pair could claim 42 apiece. Then began an interesting race for the half-century.

Three runs later Deane ordered a double bowling change, Owen-Smith relieving MacMillan at the railway end, and Bell returning vice Quinn.

It had an immediate effect, for after Remnant had cut Bell delightfully wide of third man for four to send up the century, Cook was well beaten by Owen-Smith, the Surrey batsman playing late at a delivery which turned from leg. The innings had lasted just an hour. Cook hit four 4's in his last innings.

Remnant continued to hit brilliantly and was particularly severe on Bell, but with the total 121, the Berkshire amateur provided Owen-Smith with his second victim. He had been at the crease 68 minutes and dispatched the ball to the boundary eleven times—a glorious innings which had put the now appreciably-sized crowd on good terms with themselves.

Owen-Smith was bowling very well indeed when E. D. Dynes was joined by the Cheshire amateur, H. W. Hodgson.

MacMillan was tried again vice Bell, and kept both the new batsmen playing.

At 131 Dynes was easily taken by Mitchell at first slip off the new bowler, and, with three wickets more down, the complexion of the innings had changed quickly and dramatically since the departure of Cook.

Dramatic Change.

The Tourist bowlers were getting definitely on top hereabouts, and with the total only advanced to 136, the Durham man, T. K. Dobson, who had only notched a single, was bowled by Owen-Smith, with a delivery that just removed the off-ball.

The crowd had a special cheer for Lockett when the Staffordshire man joined Hodgson.

Owen-Smith demanded extreme watchfulness, as his figures demonstrated up to this stage: Overs 7, maidens 2, runs 15, wickets 3.

Lockett opened with a single off MacMillan and was lucky in that bowler's next over to snick one inches wide of his leg stick, the ball travelling for two. The Oldham professional next despatched the same bowler to the long-off boundary, but in Owen-Smith's next over, he was clean bowled.

Half the side were thus disposed of for 146 when Sidney Barnes joined Hodgson. What a change in the space of half-an-hour—100 for 0, 146 for 5.

A single to Barnes saw 150 signalled when the innings had been in progress 97 minutes, and Hodgson celebrated the occasion by straight-driving MacMillan to the rails.

The Cheshire amateur faced the bowling with rather more confidence than some of his predecessors and had the temerity to take a four off Owen-Smith, a beautifully-timed stroke between point and third man.

With 164 on the board the left-hander, Quinn, came on again and five runs later bowled Hodgson.

Rain Stops Play.

It had been sultry throughout the morning, and it did not occasion surprise when rain began to fall during the luncheon interval. The downpour was fairly steady and there was no chance of a resumption at the appointed time, the covers being brought out at 2.20.

Owen-Smith's figures up to the luncheon interval read: Overs 11, maidens 2, runs 26, wickets 4—an impressive piece of bowling, and quite the best thing he has done during the tour.

Play had not been resumed at 3.15 when rain was still falling.

At four o'clock what had been a steady drizzle had developed into a remorseless downpour.

MINOR COUNTIES.—First Innings.

W T Cooke	b Owen-Smith	45
Hon P F Remnant	b Owen-Smith	62
E D Dynes	c Mitchell b MacMillan	7
H W Hodgson	b Quinn	26
T K Dobson	b Owen-Smith	1
Lockett	b Owen-Smith	8
Barnes	not out	9
Extras		12

Total (for 6 wkts) 169

FINE BOWLING BY OWEN-SMITH.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

ON THEIR visit to the L.M. and S. Sports Ground at Stoke to-day, the South Africans paid the Minor Counties the fine compliment of fielding what approximated to their strongest side. Indeed, it is improbable that the side which H. G. Deane skippered to-day will differ in more than three instances from that which will face the might and power of England in the first Test Match which opens at Edgbaston on Saturday.

In any case the Tourists had an old score to wipe out as far as the Minor Counties were concerned, for in meetings with them on two previous tours they sustained defeat by the narrow margin of 22 runs on the first occasion, and had by no means the best of a drawn battle on the second.

With a powerful all-round side representing the Minor Counties to-day, it was not anticipated, either, that the Colonials would have an easy problem to make it all square.

Visit to Pottery.

Prior to the match, the South African players enjoyed to the full a visit to the Eagle Pottery of Messrs. Meakin in Hanley, where they found much to interest and instruct, particularly the younger members of the Tourists' side who were witnessing the intricacies of the potter's art for the first time.

There were only two changes in the South African eleven from that which came a cropper to the tune of six wickets at Old Trafford, A. J. Bell and MacMillan coming in for Ochse and Vincent.

It was rather a disappointment that W. B. Franklin, the Bucks and ex-Varsity player, who was chosen to skipper the Minor

Counties, was unable to fulfil his engagement, and the responsibility of leadership was taken over by the Surrey amateur, W. T. Cook, Farrimond, the Lancashire reserve wicket-keeper, filling the eleventh place.

There was a fair ring of spectators present when Cook beat Deane in the spin of the coin, and took the obvious course of giving the Minor Counties first knock on a bone-hard wicket.

A Promising Start.

Deane and his men were accorded a splendid reception on taking the field, followed closely by W. T. Cook and the Hon. P. F. Remnant, who opened the Minor Counties batting venture. Morkel and Bell shared the attack, and the latter beat Remnant with his second ball, which just whizzed past the off-stump.

Runs came fairly freely at first, and after Remnant had late cut Bell to the boundary, the Minor Counties skipper straight-drove Morkel past the sight screen for four. Remnant was in particularly aggressive mood and sent up 20, after the innings had lasted the same number of minutes. Moreover, he followed it up by pulling the same bowler to the leg boundary, the over producing 11 runs to the Berkshire amateur.

Bell's length was variable, but Morkel commanded more careful attention. Thirty, however, was signalled without loss, Remnant claiming more than half of them.

A sequel to the free scoring burst of Bell's last over came with the total 31, Quinn, a left arm bowler, taking over from his colleague at the pavilion end.

The Minor Counties had at least made an excellent start, but the wicket was playing beautifully and appeared to be full of runs. Cook emulated his partner by driving Morkel powerfully to the rail to send 40 up, the outcome of half-an-hour's batting.

Quick Scoring.

The excellent rate of run-getting continued, and Remnant scored cleverly all round the wicket, a lovely drive to the long off-boundary off Quinn being the best executed stroke of the innings so far.

At 48, MacMillan relieved Morkel, and the new bowler's initial over saw the half-century hoisted. As the opening pair had only been at the crease 32 minutes it will be readily seen that the devotees of brighter cricket were finding things just to their liking. Anything that was overpitched received its due meed of punishment, and Cook delighted the crowd by jumping out to MacMillan and despatching the ball over mid-off's head to the boundary.

The ground fielding of the Tourists left nothing to be desired, and picking-up and throwing-in of the outfielders were alike



KEEN STRUGGLE FOR RUNS AT STOKE.

Barnes Puzzles the Tourist Batsmen.

CLAIMS FIRST SIX WICKETS.

Facing the moderate total of 201, the South Africans had to struggle for runs at Stoke to-day, when their match with the Minor Counties was continued.

Sidney Barnes, the Staffordshire and world-famous player, had the tourist batsmen in difficulties from the start.

He was treated with the greatest respect, and his first 15 overs yielded only 13 runs and a trio of victims in Mitchell, MacMillan and Morkel. Seven of these overs were maidens.

Barnes continued to bowl in masterly fashion and, dismissing both Taylor and Catterall, half the side were out for 81 runs.

At the tea interval Barnes' analysis was 24 overs, 9 maidens, 28 runs, 6 wickets.

STAFFORDSHIRE MAN'S GREAT BOWLING.

(BY "OUTFIELD.")

DESPITE the overnight rain—and there was an appreciable volume of it—an inspection of the pitch shortly before the appointed time for the resumption of the Minor Counties match with the South Africans at the L.M. and S. Sports Ground, Stoke, this morning, led the umpires to a decision to start at 11.30, providing there was no further downpour, but the clouds were still in unsettled mood, and the prospects for a lengthy spell of play did not appear too bright.

I gather that the wind of the early morning had helped along the drying process appreciably as far as the playing pitch was concerned, though the outfield was still wet. There was a mere handful of people on the ground when preparations were made for the re-start.

In rather less than two hours cricket yesterday, Minor Counties, chiefly through a brilliant opening partnership by their captain, W. T. Cook, and the Hon. Remnant, ran up the score of 169 for six wickets.

The Game Resumed.

Barnes (9) and the Lancashire reserve wicket-keeper, Farrimond, continued the Minor Counties innings at 11.45, the Tourists' attack being shared by Quinn (pavilion end) and Owen-Smith.

A brace to leg by Farrimond off Quinn was the first scoring stroke this morning, but the third ball of Owen-Smith's initial over proved fatal to the Lancastrian, who made a tame attempt to hook the young bowler to leg and simply skied the ball for Cameron to accept an easy chance at the wicket.

R. J. O. Meyer was now associated with Barnes, who got Owen-Smith to the fine leg boundary before a sharp shower drove the players to the pavilion. Play had proceeded for just four overs.

Fortunately, the stoppage was of brief duration and a resumption was possible at 12.5.

Owen-Smith's Fine Bowling.

Barnes made a number of excellent strokes, but with the total at 165 was well beaten by MacMillan, who had taken over from Quinn. The Tourists' bowling was accurate this morning but W. L. Hazleton, the Buckinghamshire amateur, who had joined Meyer, showed a disposition to go for it, and narrowly escaped being stumped in jumping out to MacMillan.

Both batsmen made useful strokes, off both Owen-Smith and MacMillan, but at 104, Mayer, hitting out at MacMillan, was beautifully taken in the long field almost directly behind the bowler by Dalton, who was fielding substitute of I. J. Siedle.

Hazleton continued to drive well, and sent up the double century of MacMillan, but the innings closed one run later, Edmunds being easily caught at slip off Owen-Smith. The Minor Counties' venture had lasted slightly over 2 hours and 40 minutes, which indicates that the rate of run-getting had eased off considerably since the termination of the Cook-Remnant partnership.

Owen-Smith came out with the impressive bowling figures of six wickets for 38, easily the best performance he has accomplished on the present tour. MacMillan's three victims were obtained at a cost of 22 runs apiece.

Barnes' Maiden Overs.

That hero of many Tests, H. W. Taylor, opened the Tourists' innings in company with B. Mitchell, the young Transvaal, Barnes and W. E. Hazleton sharing the attack.

Taylor was cautious in his attitude to the Staffordshire man, and it remained for the young partner to open the scoring account by twice cleverly turning the amateur bowler to leg, each stroke counting two.

I hear that Siedle is slightly indisposed, but may bat rather lower down than usual. He is, of course, one of the recognised opening batsmen of the present touring side.

Barnes opened with a run of three maidens, and kept Taylor playing very warily indeed, but Mitchell showed a keen disposition to get runs off the other bowler.

The fourth over of the Staffordshire man actually yielded a run to Taylor, the outcome of a more or less defensive stroke which sent the ball between point and cover, and the young batsman faced the former England star.

Barnes' fifth over was also a maiden, and the sum total scored off the Staffordshire man up to this stage was a solitary single. His length was traditionally accurate.

Meyer was brought on vice Hazleton when a dozen runs had been registered in 25 minutes, but with the total unchanged Mitchell was bowled by Barnes. Lunch was then taken.

Meyer and Barnes continued the bowling on the resumption, and Taylor was accompanied to the wicket by O. MacMillan.

Two More Barnes Victims.

Barnes continued to command the greatest respect from both batsmen, and the delivery of Meyer provided most of the runs.

MacMillan was not content to sit on the spile, however, and after he had driven an over-pitched ball from the amateur for 6, a

beautifully timed stroke, the same batsman off-drove Barnes to the rails, more runs than any single over from the Staffordshire man had yielded up to this stage.

Taylor was steady as a rock meantime, and waited with quite monumental patience for the right one to come along. It was not an unreasonable attitude on his part either, for this great batsman has yet to run into his best form, and the bowling here could not have been far short of the best the Tourists have encountered so far. The fielding of the Minor Counties, too, was not appreciably below the best standards.

The attendance had increased to useful proportions since lunch and there would be 2,000 on the ground when play was resumed.

The total had only been carried to 47 when MacMillan provided Barnes with a second success, the Transvaal man playing back and removing his own balls in an attempt to keep out one of the Staffordshire man's real teasers. MacMillan's little knock had provided the brightest feature of the South African innings so far.

With Morkel joining Taylor the half-century was signalled in 65 minutes, but the newcomer was soon on his return journey to the pavilion. He reached out to Barnes, missed the ball, and Farrimond whipped off the balls in a trice, and before the batsman could regain his ground. It was a very clever bit of stumping on the Lancashire man's part.

With three wickets down for 51, the Tourists were not so well placed hereabouts.

All-Staffordshire Attack.

Lockett was now bowling vice Mayer, and the crowd had the spectacle of an all-Staffordshire attack. Barnes beat the new batsman, Catterall, twice early on, but missed the stumps.

The power of Barnes was revealed in his bowling figures at this juncture, for his 15 overs had yielded but 13 runs off the bat, and he could lay claim to a trio of victims. Seven of his overs were blanks, as far as the batsmen were concerned.

Both Taylor and Catterall treated him with the utmost respect, but that was one of the tit-bits of the innings—to see two acknowledged exponents of the art of batsmanship, attempting to counter one who still ranks as one of the world's great bowlers.

After hitting Lockett for six, Catterall attempted to drive Barnes, but only succeeded in skying the ball over mid-on and Dobson, running backwards, effected a magnificent catch. Barnes had now taken all the wickets that had fallen for a meagre 17 runs.

At 81 Taylor was brilliantly caught at long-on off Barnes. He had been at the crease 87 minutes for his 28.

Barnes continued to be the destructive factor and Cameron was his sixth victim, the South African wicket-keeper being easily taken by Meyer close in at slip.

Siedle retired ill, and it is uncertain whether he will resume his innings.

MINOR COUNTIES.—First Innings.

W T Cooke	b Owen-Smith	45
Hon P F Remnant	b Owen-Smith	62
E D Dynes	c Mitchell b MacMillan	7
H W Hodgson	b Quinn	25
T K Dobson	b Owen-Smith	8
Lockett	b Owen-Smith	8
Barnes	b MacMillan	17
Farrimond	c Cameron b Owen-Smith	3
R J O Meyer	c sub b MacMillan	11
W E Hazleton	not out	5
Edwards	c M'Millan b Owen-Smith	2
Extras		15

Total 201

SOUTH AFRICANS.—First Innings.

H W Taylor	c Hodgson b Barnes	28
B Mitchell	b Barnes	7
Q MacMillan	hit wkt b Barnes	21
D F B Morkel	st Farrimond b Barnes	0
R H Catterall	c Dobson b Barnes	11
H B Cameron	c Meyer b Barnes	2
I J Siedle	retired ill	2
H G Deane	not out	5
H O Owen-Smith	not out	3
Extras		17

Total (for 6 wickets) 97.

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Minor Counties.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Morkel	5	0	20	0
Bell	5	0	36	0
Quinn	12	2	26	1
MacMillan	18	0	66	3
Owen-Smith	20.4	4	38	6

FALL OF WICKETS.

Minor Counties.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
102	121	131	136	146	169	172	185	194	201

MINOR COUNTIES MATCH ABANDONED.

Prospect of Good Finish Ruined by Rain.

W. T. COOK JUST MISSES CENTURY.

An hour's delay in the resumption of the game lessened the Minor Counties' chances of forcing a victory against the South Africans at Stoke to-day.

The Minor Counties advanced their overnight second innings total to 183 for six when the closure was applied, leaving the tourists to get 246 to win, with about three hours in which to bat.

The feature of the play was another fine innings by W. T. Cook, the Surrey amateur, who only required eight for his century when dismissed.

Another heavy shower shortly after four o'clock caused the match to be abandoned.

A MASTERLY BATTING DISPLAY.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

TWO heavy showers this morning prevented a resumption at the appointed time in the Minor Counties v. the South Africans' fixture at Stoke, and it was obvious a vast improvement in the overhead conditions would be necessary if the match was to be completed.

The clouds were heavy at 1 o'clock following a brief spell of brightness, and when rain began to fall again the covers were requisitioned.

The Minor Counties finished in a commanding position when stumps were drawn last night, and whatever time may be available for play to-day, it seems obvious that only a superlative effort by the Tourists can offer them the remotest chance of success.

I. J. Siedle, one of the South Africans' most dependable batsmen, can take no further part in the match, and it is open to doubt if he will be able to take his place in the first Test at Edgbaston to-morrow.

Apart from a useful stand by Deane and Owen-Smith for the seventh wicket, the remaining Tourist batsmen gave little trouble last night, and when Meyer clean bowled Quinn he just deprived Barnes of obtaining a complete "bag" for Siedle was unable, unfortunately, to continue his innings.

Barnes' figures of eight for 41 represented a magnificent piece of bowling, and gave immense satisfaction to the crowd. The fielding of the Minor Counties, too, was impressive, and Farrimond's wicket-keeping commanded general admiration.

When the Counties' side began their second knock at 5.40 a tragic blunder saw the Hon. P. F. Remnant run out, and on his way to the pavilion before he had received a ball, but Cook found an excellent partner in the Bedfordshire amateur, E. D. Dynes, and the pair were together at the close, when the score of the Surrey batsman, who was again in punishing mood, stood at 42.

Intermittent showers were the order this morning and play had not been decided on up to 12.15.



Game Resumed.

It was possible to make a start at 12.25 and the overnight not-out Cook (42) and Dynes (15) faced the bowling of Quinn and Bell. Dynes glanced Bell's third delivery to the boundary and Cook meted out similar punishment to Quinn, repeating the stroke in the same over and reaching a meritorious half-century, the product of 57 minutes' batting.

Despite the handling of a wet ball, Bell kept an excellent length this morning and had the satisfaction of dismissing Dynes with the total at 81, the Bedfordshire man playing across a delivery which appeared to swing from leg, and having his stumps sadly disturbed.

The Cheshire amateur, H. W. Hodgson, joined Cook who immediately afterwards had the good fortune to see a badly-timed stroke to leg fall out of harm's way. The Minor Counties' skipper hit out frequently and runs came at a fairly good rate.

With the total nearing the century, Hodgson should have been run out, for when his captain called for a really audacious single—the ball scarcely travelled more than three yards from the crease—Cameron had every chance of breaking the wicket before he got home, but the South African "keeper" made a wild shie and missed the stumps.

Century Hoisted.

A lovely drive by Cook saw the century hoisted after the innings had lasted 85 minutes, and the Surrey man had achieved the highest individual score of the match. In view of cheerless conditions it was not surprising to see a meagre attendance this morning. It was distinctly cold as well as cloudy.

The Cheshire representative, Hodgson, never really settled down, and with 105 on the board, Bell beat and bowled him completely with another leg swinger, at which the batsman played hopelessly late.

The Durham amateur, T. K. Dobson, now joined Cook, and we had two left-handers at the crease together. The overhead conditions had improved considerably now and prospects of a full afternoon's cricket were reasonably bright. Cook continued to attack the bowling and was severe on Quinn, while Dobson cleverly turned both bowlers to the leg boundary in turn.

Owen-Smith relieved Bell just before the luncheon interval, and MacMillan came on vice Quinn.

Strong Position.

The sun came out on the resumption, and so long as the clouds were merciful, everything pointed to an interesting, possibly exciting, afternoon's cricket. Unfortunately, the attendance was still meagre.

Quinn and Bell shared the attack on resuming, and after Cook had passed the 80 mark,

Dobson made an upish stroke off Bell, the ball travelling over cover-point's head to safety.

Cook was also favoured when he lashed out at Quinn, and Owen-Smith made a brave but futile attempt to reach the ball. The Minor Counties were now 200 runs on, and in a well-nigh impregnable position.

I hear the South Africans will travel to Birmingham at the close of the match and probably by road.

When 150 was signalled the innings had lasted exactly that number of minutes.

Cook Misses Century.

The batting was now of the risky nature that the situation permitted, and with his score at 22 Dobson was missed by Cotterall in the long field off Bell, but that young bowler received full compensation two deliveries later, when Cook returned one to him in very tame fashion. The Surrey man was only 8 short of his century when this misfortune came his way, but his motto was obvious—to get runs or get out.

Batting for 2hrs. and 10min. the Minor Counties skipper hit 12 4's and revealed a brilliant repertoire of strokes, his driving being particularly impressive.

Meyer was cleverly stumped by Cameron before he had scored, and Dobson was easily taken at the wicket in hitting out at Quinn.

Lockett made some good hits afterwards, but the declaration came with the total at 183, and the South Africans were left with rather less than three hours batting and requiring 246 runs to win.

Bell bowled very well this morning, and came out with the best figures—four for 47. Even so several chances were missed off the tall Western Provinces man.

MINOR COUNTIES.—First Innings.

W T Cooke b Owen-Smith	45
Hon P F Remnant b Owen-Smith	62
E D Dynes c Mitchell b MacMillan	7
H W Hodgson b Quinn	25
T K Dobson b Owen-Smith	1
Lockett b Owen-Smith	6
Barnes b MacMillan	17
Farrimond c Cameron b Owen-Smith	3
R J O Meyer c sub b MacMillan	11
W E Hazleton not out	5
Edwards c M'Millan b Owen-Smith	2
Extras	15

Total 201

Second Innings.

W T Cook c and b Bell	92
E D Dynes b Bell	20
Hon P F Remnant run out	0
H W Hodgson b Bell	8
T K F Dobson c Cameron b Quinn	35
R J Mayer at Cameron b Bell	0
Lockett not out	13
Hazleton not out	2
Extras	13

Total (for 6 wks) 183

Innings declared.

SOUTH AFRICANS.—First Innings.

H W Taylor c Hodgson b Barnes	28
B Mitchell b Barnes	7
Q MacMillan hit wkt b Barnes	21
D P B Morkel st Farrimond b Barnes	0
R H Catterall c Dobson b Barnes	11
H B Cameron c Mayer b Barnes	2
I J Siedle retired ill	2
H G Deane c Meyer b Barnes	20
H G Owen-Smith b Barnes	26
N A Quinn b Mayer	4
A J Bell not out	0
Extras	18

Total 139

SOUTH AFRICANS.—Second Innings.

H W Taylor not out	13
H B Cameron c Farrimond b Barnes	11
Q MacMillan not out	11
Extras	5

Total (for 1 wkt) 40

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Minor Counties.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Morkel	5	0	20	0
Bell	5	0	38	0
Quinn	12	2	26	1
MacMillan	18	0	66	3
Owen-Smith	20.4	4	38	6

Quinn bowled one wide.

Minor Counties.—Second Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Quinn	23	7	65	1
Bell	16	3	47	4
Owen-Smith	8	0	33	0
Morkel	4	1	5	0
MacMillan	7	0	20	0

South Africans.—First Innings.

Barnes	32	11	41	8
Hazleton	4	1	10	0
Meyer	10.1	1	30	1
Lockett	13	3	24	0
Edwards	5	0	16	0

Barnes bowled two no-balls and Lockett one no-ball.

Minor Counties vs South Africans

By "THE CRITIC"

The visit of the South Africans to Stoke immediately prior to the first test match, to meet an eleven of the Minor Counties had aroused a good deal of interest in North Staffordshire, and it was particularly unfortunate that the weather broke down at lunch time on Wednesday, steady rain setting in and preventing any further play that day.

The South Africans paid the Minor Counties the compliment of playing almost their full test side, only two of the bowlers being rested in Vincent and Osche. W. T. Cook, the Surrey left-hander, was the skipper, and Farrimond, Lancashire's reserve wicket-keeper, was included. Barnes and Lockett represented Staffordshire.

A good wicket had been prepared, but it retained just sufficient of the effect of last week's rains to enable the slow bowlers to turn the ball sharply. That the pitch played well was evidenced by the fact that the ball never once rose more than about the height of the stumps. Winning the toss, W. T. Cook took the Hon. P. F. Remnant in with him to open the Counties' innings, and a fine start they gave the side. Two right-handed, fast-medium bowlers in Morkel and Bell opened the bowling, and after a couple of overs at each end the batsmen began to score with great fluency. In Bell's third over Remnant scored eleven, including two fine fours by something of a surprise shot. Playing forward, he caused one to expect an off-drive, but by supple wrist-work he cut the ball at the half volley, sometimes square and sometimes considerably behind point. By this characteristic stroke, which had plenty of power behind it, he got the majority of his boundaries, and he seemed to find the bowling of Bell particularly favourable to the stroke. Quinn, a fast-medium left-hander, with an in-swing, and McMillan, a slow leg-break bowler, relieved the original pair, but while Quinn kept the batsmen fairly quiet, McMillan's length was shocking, and he might have been punished even more severely than he was. As it was 28 were scored from him in five overs. The fifty had appeared in a shade over half-an-hour, and the hundred was reached with the two batsmen still together as the result of a little less than an hour's play. It was thoroughly entertaining cricket, and neither batsmen had made a mistake.

Owen-Smith, another slow leg-break bowler, was put on shortly before the hundred was reached, and he brought about a dramatic change in the game. He spins the ball very well from leg, and mixes it with a top-spinner, which cuts straight through at an accelerated speed from the pitch. At 102 he turned one sharply in to the left-hander, got inside his stroke and bowled him. With Dynes in, Bell resumed bowling, but Remnant got 14 runs from his second over. Twice he cut him to the rails with his half-volley stroke, and hooked a short one to the square boundary. However, Owen-Smith beat him with his top-spin at 121. He had scored practically a run a minute, and hit eleven fours.

A bad time ensued for the batting side, for Dynes edged one up in the slips at 131, and Dobson, the Durham left-hander, who scored a century for his county against the West Indies last season, was bowled, in much the same way as Cook, at 136. Lockett had the misfortune to get on top of a top-spinner and pull it into his wicket, so that half the side were out for 146, and Owen-Smith had taken four wickets for 15 in 7.2 overs. Hodgson, one of Cheshire's best batsmen, was playing the slow bowling exceedingly well, and he and Barnes added 23 before Quinn, resuming in place of McMillan, beat him with an in-swing. Lunch was then taken, and this proved to be the end of the day's play.

THE GREATNESS OF BARNES

The weather was kind on Thursday, and a full day's fascinating cricket was watched by a considerably larger crowd than on Wednesday.

The remainder of the Counties' innings was uneventful. Barnes played the slow bowlers better than anyone else, but he was bowled at 185, and in all the four outstanding wickets only added 32 runs. The two slow bowlers shared the wickets, and Owen-Smith, who had a better command of length than McMillan, came out with the fine record of 6 for 38, which is much the best performance he has achieved during the tour.

Wednesday's rain was not sufficient to seriously damage the pitch, which was not difficult though, of course, it gave spin-bowlers a chance. It was much regretted that I. J. Siedle, who has been the most successful batsman in the party was indisposed. He did not field, and instead of opening the innings as usual, he went in late, and soon retired. It was understood later that he had left the ground to consult a doctor. His friends were naturally anxious in view of the test match to-day. Mitchell accompanied Taylor to the wicket half-an-hour before lunch, and Barnes and Hazleton bowled, the former from the station end with the wind behind him. Barnes was accuracy itself, and his spin from leg several times beat the bat. He bowled 5 overs for one run, and then in his 6th over turned one beautifully from leg to bowl Mitchell's off-stump. Lunch was then taken with one wicket down for 12.

On resuming, Meyer shared the bowling with Barnes, and McMillan lifted the amateur over the rails at long on for six. Taylor could do absolutely nothing with Barnes except steal a short run on the off-side from him every now and then, but the score crept up to 47, when McMillan was driven back by the craft of Barnes and hit his wicket, the ball also hitting the stumps. Morkel, a man with a big reach, who is possibly the best all-rounder South Africa possess, went right out to Barnes, was utterly beaten by the break, and was cleverly stumped—cleverly because the ball came awkwardly to Farrimond, and not because Morkel did not give him plenty of time. One rather short ball from Barnes had been hooked for 4 by McMillan, but he had bowled 13 overs for 12 runs and 3 wickets.

Lockett had taken up the bowling against the wind, and was bowling quite well, but the batsmen covered up to his off-break, and his quick one missed the wicket rather narrowly once or twice. Catterall opened his shoulders to a half-volley and got six for an on-drive, but he tried the same method with Barnes, with fatal results, for he skied the ball to a great height over mid-on and Dobson running back brought off a clever catch. Things still went badly for the Africans, for after Taylor had got a couple from a snick which afforded a possible chance to Farrimond on the leg side from Barnes, and driven him well for 1, he was tempted to his downfall, being easily caught in front of the sight screen. The extent to which Barnes had kept this great batsman in subjection may be gathered from the fact that he had taken almost an-hour-and-three-quarters to score 25. He had played the famous Staffordshire bowler with great skill, but several times he popped the ball up dangerously near the fielders close in. Half the wickets were down for 81, all to the credit of Barnes, and he non-plussed Cameron at 88, the ball turning so quickly from leg that the batsman's attempt to smother it only resulted in the ball glancing off the edge to Meyer in the gully. After Siedle's retirement Deane and Owen-Smith offered some resistance. Lockett gave way to Meyer, and Owen-Smith hooked a short one square for six, whilst Deane was favoured by Barnes with a ball just short of good length and got four for a similar shot. The wicket added 34, and then Deane gave Meyer another catch. He turned to play the ball to leg and was completely non-plussed by the break. Seventeen more having been added, Owen-Smith played forward to Barnes to be completely beaten and bowled by the old England man's quick leg-spin. Barnes had thus taken the first 8 wickets, and with any luck he would have had the left-hander, Quinn, for he was so nearly caught at fine leg close in that he thought he was out, and was retiring when he was called back, and he got a lucky two for a snick that was just out of reach of a slip fielder. He was bowled by the first ball of Meyer's next over, so that Barnes's figures were 8 for 41 in 32 overs. He had bowled throughout the innings of three hours, and had only delivered three balls of a length to be hit. Two rather short ones were hooked to the boundary, and Taylor had one pitched a little too far up which he drove along the carpet for four. Three hitable balls in three hours' bowling! Practically all the remaining runs scored

from him were either snicks or sharply-run singles on the off side. He dispensed with a deep square leg and had a silly point late in the innings, and if this course had been resorted to from the start more than a dozen runs from him would have been saved, and several strokes that were harmless would have yielded wickets. As a piece of endurance and sustained accuracy his feat was simply marvellous for a man who has reached his 53rd birthday, or, indeed, for anyone. And his finger-spin had the best batsmen of South Africa helpless. Even for him it was wonderful.

With a lead of 62, the Counties had about 45 minutes' batting before the close, and though Cook called Remnant for a foolish run off the first ball of the innings and a good wicket was thrown away, the visitors served up some poor bowling, and the Counties left off 120 runs on with only one wicket down. Both Owen-Smith and McMillan bowled a wretched length, and Cook had scored 42 when stumps were drawn.

Minor Counties.—1st Innings

W. T. Cook b Owen-Smith	45
Hon. P. F. Remnant b Owen-Smith	62
E. D. Dynes c Mitchell b McMillan	7
H. W. Hodgson b Quinn	25
T. K. Dobson b Owen-Smith	1
Lockett b Owen-Smith	8
Barnes b McMillan	17
Farrimond c Cameron b Owen-Smith	3
W. P. Hazelton not out	5
R. J. O. Meyer c sub. b McMillan	11
Edwards c McMillan b Owen-Smith	2
Extras	15
Total	201

2nd Innings

W. T. Cook not out	42
Hon. P. F. Remnant run out	0
E. D. Dynes not out	15
Extras	7
Total (1 wkt.)	64

South Africans.—1st Innings

H. W. Taylor c Hodgson b Barnes	28
B. Mitchell b Barnes	7
Q. McMillan hit wkt b Barnes	21
D. P. Morkel st Farrimond b Barnes	0
R. H. Catterall c Dobson b Barnes	11
H. B. Cameron c Meyer b Barnes	2
I. J. Siedle retired ill	2
H. G. Deane c Meyer b Barnes	20
H. G. Owen-Smith b Barnes	26
N. A. Quinn b Meyer	4
A. J. Bell not out	0
Extras	18
Total	139

BOWLING ANALYSIS

Minor Counties.—1st Inns.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Morkel	5	0	20	0
Bell	5	0	36	0
Quinn	12	2	26	1
McMillan	18	0	66	3
Owen-Smith	20.4	4	38	6

South Africans.—1st Inns.

Barnes	32	11	41	8
Hazelton	4	1	10	0
Meyer	10.1	1	30	1
Lockett	12	3	24	0
Edwards	5	0	16	0

Barnes bowled two no-balls and Lockett one no-ball.
Umpires: Field and Morton.

SENT IN TO BAT.

Staffordshire Then Score Freely.

FIRST WICKET STAND.

Homer and Crump Pass 50 Mark.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

TETTENHALL, Monday.

It was unfortunate that Lincolnshire were unable to field anything like their full strength in this return Minor Counties engagement with Staffordshire, at the Tettenhall ground, Wolverhampton, to-day, for the home county were able to place in the field what must be something like their most powerful side.

The interesting feature from Staffordshire's standpoint was, of course, the first appearance in the side this season of Sidney Barnes, who tumbled out the South Africans so unceremoniously at Steke, when appearing for the Minor Counties ten days or so ago.

The former England player is maintaining his form in wonderful fashion, and, though I have not the figures at hand, I fancy he is somewhere round the top of the Central Lancashire League bowling averages. At all events, there is not much to choose between his record and that of Aaron Lockett, who also made a welcome re-appearance in the side to-day.

Staffordshire's Newcomer.

H. W. Homer returned, too, and a first trial was given to A. G. Wilkie, a Wolverhampton youngster, who has batting possibilities.

Lincolnshire lacked the services of R. E. Frearson, the Rev. H. Mack and C. A. Bashforth, each of whom had found other calls more pressing than cricket.

The weather was cool and threatening at the pretty Tettenhall ground this morning, and when the umpires came out at 11.40, they were driven back to the pavilion by a sharp shower before they had reached the pitch. Meanwhile Major Wilson had won the toss, and taken the bold course of putting the home county in to bat—a strategic move that was difficult to understand, as the pitch appeared to be quite firm.

It was possible to make a start at 11.50 and H. W. Homer and L. H. Crump were the opening Staffordshire pair, the bowling being shared by Wright (pavilion end), and Townell, who hails from Gainsborough. Homer opened well and got Wright to the boundary through the covers in that bowler's second over. At times the ball came off the pitch sharply, and watchfulness was demanded of the batsmen. Wright appealed for lbw against Homer in his fourth over, but the decision was in the batsman's favour.

Slow Scoring.

Runs came slowly indeed, and twenty-five minutes batting saw no more than 13 runs on the board. Four of Wright's first five overs were maidens.

At length, Homer entertained the proceedings by pulling a half volley from Townell to the rails. Crump steered his course very steadily indeed, and half an hour's batting had brought him only four runs. Wright continued to maintain a good length but Homer sent up 20 with a late cut to the boundary off Wright. At 29, Major Wilson took the ball from Townell but Staffordshire's opening pair continued undisturbed, and Homer sent the score along with a pretty glide to the five leg boundary off Wright.

With the total 25, the fast bowler—seven of whose eleven overs were maidens—was relieved by Norman, who bowls medium pace right hand. When the Staffordshire innings had lasted an hour the total was only 40, and Crump's individual contribution was a modest five. Homer found the boundary again off Major Wilson—a straight drive just wide of the bowler.

Fifty Up.

A piece of bad fielding by Major Wilson at mid-off enabled Homer to send up the half-century, the product of 65 minutes' batting, and of which the Old Hill batsman's share was 36.

It was a useful beginning, despite the tedium of Crump's display, and, of course, served to show there was little wrong with the wicket—certainly not enough to warrant the Lincolnshire skipper giving the home county first knock. Perhaps, however, it was the presence of Barnes that prompted Major Wilson's decision.

The rate of run-getting improved after the half-century had been passed, and Crump discovered a brighter mood when he turned Norman to leg for a couple. Homer also got the same bowler to the leg boundary, and that batsman reached 50 shortly afterwards, out of a total of 75. The innings had then lasted 80 minutes.

Homer continued to make some excellent strokes, and after he had taken the maximum toll from a loose delivery, on the leg side by Wilson, the Lincolnshire captain gave way to weight, and P. F. Loeffler came on for Norman. In spite of these changes, however, the batsmen stayed together until the luncheon interval, when the total stood at 94, Homer being 62 not out.

Homer Out.

When play was resumed, and with only a single added, Homer fell to a catch in the slips off Townell. The Old Hill man had revealed a repertoire of strokes in his innings of 62, and hit ten 4's in a stay of one and three-quarter hours.

Fitton now became associated with Crump, and Wright shared the bowling with Townell. With the century just reached, however, the West Bromwich Albion footballer was far too late in playing at one of Wright's swingers and his balls were disturbed.

Barnes was accorded a reception by the meagre ring of spectators on going out to join Crump, who was now showing greater freedom.

The veteran's stay was a brief one, for, after collecting a couple of singles, he was taken at the wicket in attempting to turn Wright to leg. Three Staffordshire wickets were now down for 108, and the visiting bowlers had reason to feel satisfied at their post lunch achievement.

Lockett was the incoming batsman and began well by cutting Townell to the rails past third man—a crisp stroke in the Oldham professional's best style.

Rapid Scoring.

Inspired by the example of his partner, Crump now went for the bowling and took two 4's in one over from Townell—the first the outcome of a very pretty glide to fine leg. Worman came on for Wright, but Lockett drove him beautifully to the rails on the off-side, sending up 150—the product of two and a half hours' batting.

The free scoring burst continued, and Crump reached his half-century with a pretty cut off Major Wilson, who had relieved Townell.

Reward came the way of the visitors' skipper shortly afterwards, when he had Lockett comfortably taken at slip. In a brief knock, lasting only twenty-five minutes, the outgoing batsman hit eight 4's and had advanced the home county's total from 108 to 174.

J. S. Heath now joined Crump, who was right on top of the rather listless bowling at this stage, and began well by off-driving Major Wilson to the rails twice in an over.

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

H W Homer c Wright b Townell ..	62
L H Crump b Wilson ..	63
G A Fitton b Wright ..	1
Barnes c Shaw b Wright ..	2
Lockett c Wright b Wilson ..	39
J S Heath c Shaw b Wright ..	23
A D Wilkie not out ..	23
A W Ikin not out ..	26
Extras ..	21

Total (for 6 wkts)260

INNINGS WIN.

Great Bowling by Barnes.

TWELVE FOR 59.

Lincolnshire Fail Badly.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

TENTENHALL, Tuesday.

If the Lincolnshire captain imagined there was guile in the wicket here yesterday and based his generosity towards the home County on such belief, he erred—unmistakably. There is only a very small percentage of the speculative element, if any at all, in a pitch that is capable of producing 344 runs in a day at the expense of only eight wickets.

As a fact the wicket played beautifully all through and I fancy Staffordshire would have touched the 350 mark comfortably had not the closure been applied when only one over had been bowled after the tea interval, for both the not outs, A. D. Wilkie and A. W. Ikin, were seeing the ball well and there was still a useful batsman to come in Roy Hollowood, to say nothing of the wicket-keeper, Cross.

Incidentally, there was just a suggestion of uncertainty as to whether the declaration could be enforced so as not to infringe the M.C.C. rule which sets out that in a two-days' match the closure may not be applied on the first day later than an hour and 40 minutes before the agreed time for drawing stumps.

It was 4.50 when the Staffordshire innings was resumed after the tea break and when J. S. Heath signalled to the batsmen to come in before more than an over had been bowled, Major Wilson, the visiting skipper, shook his head and pointed to the clock. A brief consultation put the matter right, however, and Lincolnshire opened their venture ten minutes later.

In scoring 74 for the loss of two wickets, it may be said that they did rather better than had been expected, but they required 96 to save the follow-on when the match was resumed to-day.

Two Quick Wickets.

It was dull and still cold when Lincolnshire's not outs, Searby (32) and Flatters (16), began this morning against the bowling of Barnes and Boon. The fast bowler had the wind behind him this time, and the pace of his first two deliveries beat Flatters, though missing the stumps. This third wicket partnership came to an unfortunate end, however, in Barnes' second over, Searby turning a ball to the vicinity of square leg and calling his partner for an impossible run. Fitton returned the ball smartly, and though Flatters made a desperate attempt to get home, he was a yard short when Cross whipped off the balls.

The newcomer, Worman, was splendidly caught by Barnes off his own bowling, the Staffordshire man accepting a very hot return, and four wickets were down for 76.

Searby's first scoring stroke to-day was a shot to fine leg off Boon, good fielding by Fitton preventing the hit counting more than two.

All Out!

Half the side were thus out for 79, and Lincolnshire still required 91 to save the follow-on. But there was more than a touch of venom in the Staffordshire bowling this morning, and the visiting county had no batsman capable of removing the sting.

At 84, Robinson was caught at point by Ikin, off Barnes, whose trio of victims this morning had been obtained at a cost of no more than half-a-dozen runs.

The young Searby provided Barnes with yet another "scalp," and five wickets had fallen this morning for the addition of only 13 runs. Wright did a little "mowing" before providing Boon with his first success this morning, and the Forthill pro came near bowling the Lincolnshire captain first ball.

Shaw, the visiting stumper, created something of a sensation by driving Barnes over mid-off and then to the rails, and Major Wilson turned Boon to leg for three.

The skipper was taken at the wicket, however, at 97, and the venture closed at the same total.

Barnes' Impressive Figures.

Eight Lincolnshire wickets had fallen to-day for a paltry 23 runs, and Barnes came out with the impressive figures of seven for 41 for the innings. His figures for this morning read: 10.3 overs, 4 maidens, 15 runs, 6 wickets.

Boon bowled 10 overs this morning for 8 runs and a wicket.

Lincolnshire followed on of course, 173 runs behind and began their second venture at 12.25. There was nothing in the state of the wicket to account for the visiting county's collapse, but Barnes bowled in his best style, and the later batsmen could find no method of dealing with him.

T. E. Loeffler and Shaw were Lincolnshire's opening pair this time, and Lockett shared the attack with Barnes. Loeffler had his wicket wrecked with only ten on the board.

Shaw collected a handful of risky shots, principally off Barnes, but was in amazement when, with the total at 18, Lockett bowled him round his legs.

Slow Scoring.

Runs came very slowly, and when Searby and Brockson threatened to stay, the Staffordshire captain brought on Boon for Lockett. Roy Hollowood was given his first chance with the ball at 28, providing relief for Barnes, who had bowled without a break to-day, but his initial over brought ten runs to the batsmen.

Lunch was taken with the total 35 for two.

Brockson provided Boon with his first victim of the innings after lunch, when the cricket proceeded on sedate lines. Some resistance was offered by Searby and Flatters, and the half-century was signalled without further loss.

The fourth wicket fell at 61, Searby playing on to Boon, who was whereabouts bowling very well.

Worman was cleverly taken by Ikin at third slip off Boon, and half Lincolnshire were out for 71, Flatters who had batted with some resolution, leaving five runs later, a fine delivery by Boon beating him completely.

Barnes came on again at 89, relieving Lockett who had bowled steadily for a long spell, and two runs later H. R. Searby returned one to the bowler.

Wright was bowled first ball, and Major Wilson prevented the "hat trick."

Barnes took 12 for 59 in the match. Going on again in Lincolnshire's second innings he captured four wickets in 3.1 overs at a cost of three runs. Those wickets were taken in seven deliveries.

Staffordshire won by an innings and 78 runs.

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

H W Homer c Wright b Townell ..	62
L H Crump b Wilson ..	63
G A Fitton b Wright ..	1
Barnes c Shaw b Wright ..	2
Lockett c Wright b Wilson ..	39
J S Heath c Shaw b Wright ..	23
A D Wilkie not out ..	27
A W Ikin not out ..	32
Extras ..	21

Total (for 6 wks) 270

Innings declared.

R. Hollowood, E. P. Cross and Boon did not bat.

LINCOLNSHIRE—First Innings.

J R Searby b Barnes ..	34
P E Loeffler c Cross b Boon ..	6
W G Brockson lbw o Barnes ..	17
R Flatters run out ..	16
P L Worman c and b Barnes ..	2
J Robinson c Ikin b Barnes ..	6
H R Searby b Barnes ..	1
G Shaw not out ..	6
G H Wright b Boon ..	3
Major c Wilson b Barnes ..	3
B Townell b Barnes ..	0
Extras ..	3

Total 97

LINCOLNSHIRE—Second Innings.

T E Loeffler b Barnes ..	2
G Shaw b Lockett ..	14
J R Searby b Boon ..	13
W G Brockson b Boon ..	15
R Flatters b Boon ..	18
P L Worman c Ikin b Boon ..	5
J Robinson not out ..	8
H R Searby c and b Barnes ..	11
G H Wright b Barnes ..	0
Major C Wilson b Barnes ..	1
B Townell st Cross b Barnes ..	1
Extras ..	7

Total 98

COUNTY CRICKET

Staffordshire v. Lincolnshire

By "THE CRITIC"

Staffordshire had a fairly strong side to oppose Lincolnshire at Tetenhall on Monday and Tuesday, Barnes being available for the first time this season. A first trial was given to A. D. Wilkie, a young Woolverhampton batsman, who created so favourable an impression that he is pretty sure of further opportunities. Physically well-equipped, with a fine reach, he soon recovered from a slightly nervous start, and played free and attractive cricket. Lincolnshire, unfortunately, were short of some of their best players, amongst them, R. E. Frearson, B. A. Bashforth, T. D. Ross, W. A. Sutton, and the Rev. H. Mack. Monday morning was showery, and a scud of rain delayed the start a quarter of an hour. But there was no weight of rain to affect the pitch much, and in view of the uncertainty of the weather it was somewhat surprising that on winning the toss, Major Wilson called upon Staffordshire to bat first. If the weather took up, there was certainly the possibility that the wicket would play more easily after the first few hours, but the decision looked a rather daring gamble. As a matter of fact, it was justified to the extent that the pitch was playing more easily in the last hour than when Staffordshire started their innings, but the success of the Staffordshire batsmen showed that the bowlers got little help from it at any time. Scoring was very slow before lunch, but the caution of the batsmen seemed to be rendered necessary more by the strong cross wind than from any difficulty in the pitch. Wright, Lincoln's speediest bowler, made the ball swing away a good deal in the wind, and for a long time the bowling was too accurate for rapid scoring. Even so the progress of Crump, who opened the innings with Homer, was excessively slow. At the end of an hour he had scored only five of the 35 runs recorded, and in the first 35 minutes he had only one scoring stroke, a leg glide for three. Homer was cautious, but he occasionally flashed out a brilliant stroke which generally yielded four runs, on-drives, leg glides, and cuts being beautifully executed. The rate of scoring improved a little before lunch, and the opening pair were still together at the interval, with the total at 94, and Homer 62. I was told, though I did not notice it, that he gave a chance in the slips, and he might have been stumped at 61, but the ball was too low for the wicket-keeper to have much chance. He hit ten excellent fours, but immediately after the resumption he played forward to a swinging ball, and edged it up in the slips. Fitton was not comfortable, and was soon bowled, and Barnes was unlucky in being caught on the leg side by the wicket-keeper standing back in trying to glide a leg ball. Three wickets were down for 108, but the partnership of Crump and Lockett added 67 in 55 minutes. Lockett was alert to punish the hitable ball, and soon began to register boundaries in rapid succession. And Crump, having maintained a defensive policy for two hours, was stirred by Lockett's example and opened out in much freer style, hitting to leg with good effect. Lockett fell to a slip catch at 175, and at 196 Crump was bowled trying to drive one of Major Wilson's swingers. He had been at the wicket three hours, and given no chance, save more proving himself a highly serviceable opening batsman. Lockett got all his runs, but seven by boundary hits, and played the game required by the situation. The Captain carried on the same policy and had just scored a couple of sparkling boundaries off successive balls when he went forward to one that was a thought too short, nicked it as it swung away, and was out to a great catch by the wicket-keeper, who, standing well back, threw himself full length to take it on the off side. Six wickets were then down for 212, but the visiting bowlers met with no further success, for Wilkie and Ikin set about the bowling in fine style, and added 58 in just over half an hour before the tea interval. As a declaration on the first day must be made at least an hour and 40 minutes before the time for drawing stumps, only one over was bowled after tea before the closure was applied, giving the visiting county an hour and a half at the wicket before the close. The weather had improved, and even Barnes could get little out of the pitch with the result that Lincolnshire put up a stout resistance, and did quite well to lose only two wickets for 74.

Brilliant Bowling by Barnes and Boon

In the absence of rain during Monday night, the pitch appeared rather faster on Tuesday, and the strong wind having abated one expected Lincoln at least to make a bold effort to save the follow-on, for which purpose only 97 runs were required with eight wickets standing. The wicket certainly did not weight the scales in favour of the bowler. But events proved that the somewhat depleted Lincoln side was not equal to the task of withstanding the Staffordshire bowling. Indeed, the quality of the bowling was such that better teams would probably have been subdued. When the game was resumed in genial weather, Barnes and Boon shared the bowling, and an immediate blunder in running, which threw away the wicket of Flatters without any addition to the score, started a complete breakdown of the Lincoln batting, which no one could check. Worman went forward to Barnes, and gave the bowler a low catch, and Barnes, after keeping John Searby cautiously watching for leg-spin, turned out to bowl his off way at a quicker pace to bowl him off stump. He had maintained a stubborn defence, altogether for an hour and 50 minutes. Robinson could not keep one from Barnes out of the hands of Ikin close in at point, and H. Searby was beaten by a leg break. Then Boon, who had had no luck, sent back Wright with a very fast ball of perfect length, and Barnes got the other two wickets quickly. In an hour and three minutes during the morning the great bowler had delivered 10.3 overs for 15 runs and six wickets, and Boon had sent down 10 overs for eight runs and one wicket. With ordinary luck he would have had better figures, for Cross failed to hold a catch from J. Searby off his bowling, and he certainly hit Major Wilson's wicket, the ball being dislodged from the groove without falling. The Umpire replaced the ball, but after consultation between the Umpires, the batsman was given not out as neither had seen the ball hit the wicket. Lincoln followed on, 173 behind, and Barnes and Lockett opened the bowling against Shaw and Loeffler. With 10 scored, Loeffler, after being caught off a no-ball, was utterly beaten by "the Barnes ball," and though Shaw got two fours by luckily edging Barnes through and over the slips, only 18 had been registered when Lockett whipped one back to bowl the Lincoln stumper, who did not attempt to play it. In spite of the two fluky fours mentioned, Barnes bowled 11 overs for 15 runs, and Lockett sent down nine overs for four runs before they were respectively relieved. Boon took the place of Lockett, and Roy Hollowood bowled at Barnes's end. At lunch the score was 35 for two wickets. After lunch I think Boon bowled as well as he has ever done for Staffordshire. His pace was terrific, and though there was not much life in the pitch and the ball rarely got up sufficiently to be awkward, he took the next four wickets hitting the stumps three times, whilst many balls flashed past that could not have been a great way from the off stump. Hollowood could get nothing out of the pitch, and Lockett remained without success, but with the total at 50 for six wickets Barnes came on again to finish off the innings in dramatic fashion. He bowled one over for a single and then, having loosened his arm he sent down a thrilling over. The first ball was fatal to H. Searby, who could not keep it down, and gave the bowler a rather wide catch, which he secured after knocking it up with the left hand. The next ball turned from leg to beat Wright's attempted drive and chatter the wicket. The next the best of the three, fairly sizzled from the leg, completely beat Major Wilson, and missed the top of the middle stump by the fraction of an inch. So the "hat-trick" was missed by sheer bad luck. Then two scrappy singles came on the leg side neither off the middle of the bat and the last ball of this over was a repetition of Major Wilson's feat, except that it hit the top of the off-stump. Three wickets in the over. Robinson survived an over from Lockett, who relieved Boon and the first ball of Barnes's next over had Townell walking out to meet it, beaten by the spin, and easily stumped. Four wickets in seven balls. This sensational climax gave Barnes an analysis of five wickets for 18 runs (including eight from two bats). Altogether he took 12 wickets for 59 but on Tuesday he had 11 wickets for 35, a marvellous record on such a pitch. Lincoln were beaten by 271 in the first and 78 runs in the second single innings victory of Staffordshire over their old opponents this season.

Staffordshire—1st Innings	
H. W. Homer c Wright b Townell	62
T. H. Crump b Wilson	63
G. A. Fitton b Wright	1
Barnes c Shaw b Wright	2
A. Lockett c Wright b Wilson	39
J. S. Heath c Shaw b Wright	25
A. D. Wilkie not out	27
A. W. Ikin not out	52
Extras	21
Total (inns. closed)	270

Lincolnshire.—1st Innings	
J. R. Searby b Barnes	34
P. E. Loeffler c Cross b Boon	6
W. G. Brockson lbw b Barnes	17
R. Flatters run out	16
T. L. Worman c and b Barnes	2
J. Robinson c Ikin b Barnes	6
H. R. Searby b Barnes	1
C. Shaw not out	6
G. H. Wright b Boon	3
Major C. Wilson c Cross b Barnes	0
Townell b Barnes	0
Extras	3
Total	97

Lincoln.—2nd Innings	
J. R. Searby b Boon	13
P. E. Loeffler b Barnes	2
W. G. Brockson b Boon	15
R. Flatters b Boon	18
T. L. Worman c Ikin b Boon	5
J. Robinson not out	8
H. R. Searby c and b Barnes	11
C. Shaw b Lockett	14
G. H. Wright b Barnes	0
Major C. Wilson b Barnes	1
Townell st Cross b Barnes	1
Extras	7
Total	95

BOWLING ANALYSIS							
Staffordshire.—1st Inns.			2nd Innings.				
O.	M.	R.	W.	O.	M.	R.	W.
Wright	30	12	80	3			
Townell	22	7	57	1			
Wilson	20	3	57	2			
Worman	16	2	65	0			
Loeffler	4	1	2	0			

Lincolnshire.—1st Inns.		2nd Innings.						
Barnes	26.3	10	41	7	13.1	5	18	5
Boon	20	9	41	2	18	4	24	4
Lockett	7	2	12	0	17	9	21	1
Hollowood	—	—	—	—	8	1	25	0

GOOD DAY FOR BOWLERS AT PORTHILL.

Staffordshire Dismissed for 144 Runs.

CHESHIRE HELD BY BARNES.

Batting first against Cheshire, at Porthill to-day Staffordshire were dismissed for 144 runs, but the wicket favoured the bowlers, and the score was probably a better one than it read.

A. W. Ikin was in good form, and in a capital innings he scored 38 not out. He received excellent help from A. Smith, the Great Chell player who was making his first appearance with the County side, and who contributed a useful 20.

Dutton bowled skilfully to secure five Staffordshire wickets for 22 runs. Cheshire found runs very difficult to obtain, and with 76 on the board had lost seven wickets. Barnes at this point had claimed five for 25.

DUTTON'S FINE PERFORMANCE.

PORTHILL, Monday.

Both the Staffordshire and Cheshire teams, which met under the auspices of the Minor Counties competition at Porthill to-day, had sustained defeat but once this season, and, curiously enough, their conquerors were Lancashire II. in each instance.

Since that happened, however, each has shown considerably improved form and, while the home county have taken full measure of Lincolnshire on two occasions, and raised themselves to equal third position in the competition, Cheshire displayed surprisingly good form on their northern tour last week in effecting a draw with Northumberland, and extracting the maximum points from Durham at South Shields, by the impressive margin of eight wickets.

In all the circumstances, however, prospects of a keen contest on the ground of the Porthill Park Club to-day and to-morrow were reasonably good.

Team Changes.

Owing to holidays and other calls, there were three changes in the Staffordshire team from that which overcame Lincolnshire at Tettenhall. H. W. Homer, E. P. Cross, and A. D. Wilkie were absentees, and their places were filled by E. Perry, the West Bromwich Dartmouth batsman, who made two appearances in the county ranks last season and did well, G. B. Green, the Silverdale wicket-keeper, and A. Smith, of Great Chell.

Cheshire had three changes from the side which defeated Durham, prominent absentees including R. P. Fisk, who has been batting well this season, and G. W. Tiplady.

J. S. Heath won the toss, and elected to bat, the home county opening the innings with L. E. Crump and G. A. Fitton, the attack being shared by Dennis and Wilson, the last-named operating from the pavilion end.

Early Bowling Success.

An early success came the way of the visiting county, for, with the last delivery of his initial over Wilson broke through the defence of Crump, when the Burslem man had collected but a single.

The bowling commanded respect, and 25 minutes' batting saw no more than a dozen runs recorded. When Fitton off-drove Wilson for a brace it was the first scoring stroke of note for a long time, but the Staffordshire left-hander improved on that and sent the next delivery clean to the ropes all along the carpet and the first four of the match.

There was a fair ring of spectators this morning, with the prospect of plenty coming in this afternoon, so much had the overhead conditions improved.

Barnes was nearly caught at point off Dennis, the ball passing just wide of Dutton's

outstretched right arm, and when H. W. Hodgson picked up and returned, it went to the boundary for a 4 overthrow. Next ball, however, the same batsman turned Dennis very sweetly to the fine leg boundary. With the total at 25, Barnes left—clean bowled by Dennis.

Lockett now joined Fitton, who continued watchful, and opened with a brace to leg on Wilson, who appeared to be turning the ball appreciably on the soft turf. It was not a pretty shot and, had square leg been standing deeper, he would have had an easy catch.

Crisp Fielding.

The Cheshire ground fielding was crisp and T. W. Jefferson, at mid-off, twice distinguished himself by stopping red-hot drives. Thirty was signalled after the Staffordshire innings had lasted 50 minutes, but Lockett helped matters by getting Dennis prettily to fine leg, the stroke gaining four, and the same number of byes saw the advent of 40.

Dennis made one raucous appeal for obstruction against Lockett, but the ruling was in the batsman's favour. With the total at 43 Dennis was rested in favour of L. N. Jones, who, in his second over provided Lockett with another four to send up the half-century. The next delivery, however, proved fatal to the Oldham professional, who was adjudged l.b.w. when attempting to turn the new bowler "round the corner." Lockett looked very surprised at the decision.

Joined by his captain, Fitton launched out at Jones and was nearly caught by Crookes, standing close in at point. The ball was travelling at a terrific pace, however, and it would have been a magnificent catch if Crookes had held it.

Heath began well getting Jones to the leg boundary, but lost Fitton at 57, the West Bromwich man falling to keep out a shooter from Wilson, who bowled so well that his first 15 overs yielded but 11 runs to the batting side. Fitton was at the crease just over 80 minutes for his contribution of 20, but it was an eminently useful innings in the circumstances.

A. W. Ikin was now associated with Heath, and, though opening warily, took early opportunity of punching a short one from Jones to the leg boundary. After bowling 17 overs, the last five of which were maidens, Wilson gave place to R. M. Dutton, who bowls medium pace left arm, while Dennis came back vice Jones.

Boundary Hits.

Dennis's first two deliveries pitched short and caught but them to the leg boundary very curdily, following up by cutting the same bowler to the rails and sending up 80.

With the score unchanged, however, the Staffordshire captain was caught at slip, a delivery from Dutton cocking up and passing,

apparently off Heath's glove to the direction of second slip, where L. N. Jones accepted quite a spectacular catch. Perry, also, fell a victim to Dutton before lunch, and six wickets were down for 84.

With the wicket all in the favour of the bowlers, there was every prospect of some exciting cricket this afternoon.

Smith's Good Stroke.

On the resumption, A. Smith, the Great Chell player, who was making his first appearance with the county, accompanied Ikin to the crease and runs came freely for a spell. H. W. Hodgson and Wilson bowled. Ikin made some excellent shots all round the wicket, and Smith got Wilson past point to the boundary—one of the prettiest strokes of the innings.

The century was hoisted after two hours and ten minutes' batting. The breezy spell continuing, Wilson came in for a lot of punishment and had conceded more runs since lunch than he did in his long effort this morning. When Jones came on for Hodgson, Smith pulled him to leg for 10 vigorously, and Ikin executed a similar shot in the same over. Thirty-six runs were added in 20 minutes, and the sequel was that Wilson was taken off in favour of Dutton.

Ikin was severe on the new bowler, but it was Dutton who brought this merry partnership to a close, Smith being bowled in having "a go" at the wrong one. Forty-six runs had been added for the seventh wicket in just under the half-hour.

It was the right policy hereabouts to get runs or get out, and Roy Hollowood followed the example set by Ikin and sent Dutton to the long on boundary. He fell, however, in attempting to lift one from Jones out of the field, and made way for Green, who was taken in the slips. Boon failed to score, and the venture closed at 144, Ikin taking out his bat for 38—a capital knock which included four fours.

Dutton came out with the excellent figures of five wickets for 22 runs.

A Cheap Wicket.

H. W. Homer and Nutter opened the Cheshire innings at 3.15 to the bowling of Barnes (pavilion end) and Boon. Nutter off-drove Barnes to the boundary in that bowler's second over, but was out l.b.w. three deliveries later, the first wicket falling with seven runs on the board.

Eyre began well by cutting Boon to the rails, and when Barnes delivered a no-ball to Hodgson, the Cheshire captain lifted it in the direction of the square leg boundary, where Fitton was posted. It was a fairly easy catch, but it was dropped. In any case, it did not matter much.

Runs came freely off Boon, and Hodgson drove the Porthill pro. beautifully through the covers once for four, 20 being signalled after 15 minutes' batting.

Another no-ball by Barnes was pulled for three by Hodgson, Fitton preventing the stroke counting more by a characteristic sprint along the boundary and a smart return.

Lockett came on vice Boon at 27, and the Cheshire captain drove his first delivery past mid-on and to the boundary—a beautiful shot. He did not repeat the stroke, however, for Lockett's fifth ball completely beat the bat and knocked back Hodgson's off stump, the second wicket falling at 31.

Barnes claimed three more wickets cheaply and half the side was out for 36. Jones hit Lockett out of the field for six, and helped to carry the total to 59 before the next wicket fell.

So far Barnes has taken five wickets for 25.

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

H Crump b Wilson	1
G A Fitton b Wilson	20
Barnes b Dennis	9
Lockett lbw b Jones	16
J S Heath c Jones b Dutton	20
E Perry c Eyre b Dutton	4
A W Ikin not out	38
A Smith b Dutton	22
R Hollowood c Hodgson b Jones	7
G B Green c Dennis b Dutton	1
Boon c Jones b Dutton	0
Extras	6
Total	144

CHESHIRE.—First Innings.

H W Hodgson b Lockett	18
Nutter lbw b Barnes	5
H Eyre lbw b Barnes	10
J A Fallows b Barnes	3
Wilson not out	21
T W Jefferson c Heath b Barnes	0
L N Jones c Green b Barnes	16
S R Croke run out	0
S H M Spearing not out	3
Total (for 7 wkts.)	76

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Dennis	12	4	36	1
Wilson	22	10	33	2
Dutton	6.5	1	22	5
Hodgson	4	1	7	0
L N Jones	12	0	41	2

VICTORY WITHIN REACH OF STAFFORDSHIRE.

Cheshire Likely to be Saved by the Rain.

SENSATIONAL BOWLING FEATS.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

PORTHILL, Tuesday.

A PART from a spasm of mild barracking, levelled at Crump and Fitton, Staffordshire's opening pair, there was little incident in the closing stages of the play last night, which saw the home County finish up 80 runs on with nine wickets to fall—a very strong position from which to start operations to-day.

When play was resumed this morning Crump fell to the first ball sent down. He attempted a leg shot off Dennis, who bowled at the pavilion end, but merely cocked the ball up and Crooke, who was fielding close up, threw himself at it and captured it as it fell.

There was a further change in the batting order, presumably with the laudable idea of getting runs quickly and the Chell representative, Smith, came in first wicket down. Unhappily for Cheshire, Jefferson was standing rather too deep at third man to accept a chance which Smith offered from the first ball he received, or another good wicket would have been obtained.

Still, further success was not long denied the visiting bowlers, for, with 15 runs added, Smith, who had quickly reached double figures—and included in his strokes a very pretty cut past point off Dennis—was bowled by Wilson. The Macclesfield bowler had so far sent down 12 overs for but four runs and a wicket.

Lockett fell into Dennis' leg trap before he had scored, providing Crooke with an easy chance, and the fourth wicket fell at 54, Staffordshire being 97 runs on.

Ikin batted freely again this morning, on a pitch that appeared to be giving the bowlers every possible assistance, but Wilson's off-break bamboozled him, when his score stood at 16, and half Staffordshire's men were disposed of for 56.

Four wickets had gone down this morning for the addition of 19 runs.

Perry started confidently, but it was Heath who made the best stroke of the morning—a powerful drive between mid-off and cover, which sped to the boundary all along the carpet. The Staffordshire captain also turned the same bowler prettily to leg for a brace, but narrowly escaped being bowled in Wilson's next over.

One of Wilson's Best.

It did not matter much any way, and Dennis knocked back his off stick with the total at 66, and Barnes joined Perry, who left four runs later, beaten to the world by one of Wilson's best. Barnes provided Dennis with another leg trap success, and the end was in sight.

The Silverdale wicket-keeper, Green, got Dennis to the rails, but fell to the next delivery, Fallows accepting an easy chance at mid-off.

When Hollowood gilded Wilson to fine leg for three they were useful runs, and Boon went one better by putting the same bowler to the rails, but it was only postponing the inevitable, and the venture closed at 83, leaving Cheshire to get 127 to win the match—not an easy task under these conditions.

Nine Staffordshire wickets had gone this morning in fifty minutes for 46 runs—quite a sensational collapse, even allowing for the vagaries of the pitch.

Dennis came out with the impressive figures of six for 38—he claimed all his victims this morning for 28 only—and Wilson came out with three for 15. Prior to his last over the last-named bowler's figures were: Fifteen overs, nine maidens, eight runs, three wickets.

Every credit must be accorded the Cheshire bowlers for the power of their attack this morning, but there was some dreadfully limp batting on the part of some of the home county's representatives, and several were out to wretched strokes.

Cheshire began their second innings at 12.10 with H. W. Hodgson and Nutter facing the bowling of Barnes and Boon. A three to

Hodgson off Barnes' first over was typical of that air of confidence which the Cheshire captain exudes, but Nutter was almost taken in the gully two deliveries later.

Early Success.

Boon bowled to four slips and a third man standing very deep, just in front of the pavilion. With the first ball of his second over the Porthill professional had Nutter well beaten and bowled, the first wicket falling with four runs on the board.

Eyre joined his captain and early glided Boon in the direction of the fine leg boundary, a neat piece of fielding by Crump preventing the stroke counting more than one. Off the next ball, however, Hodgson tried a similar shot, and though the same fielder tried hard to retrieve the ball, he just failed, and it counted four.

At 17 Boon was rested in favour of Lockett, and Hodgson turned the new bowler's initial delivery, a no-ball, for two, sending up 20 by driving to the rails the third in the over, again a no-ball.

Cheshire were certainly making a bid for it, and when Eyre smote one of Lockett's worst for six, a full-blooded drive, 30 appeared on the board.

Both batsmen faced up well to Barnes, but could not get him away, and that bowler's first seven overs yielded seven runs to the batting side.

When the second wicket had put on 27 the Cheshire captain was dismissed by Lockett, as in the first innings, Crump readily accepting a chance at short-leg and helping to bring to an end what threatened to be a stubborn partnership.

The Stockport batsman, Fallows, failed to stay, providing Lockett with another easy victim, and three wickets were down for 33 when Wilson the batting strong man of Cheshire's first innings, joined Eyre. This time, however, he was not destined to provide the steady influence, and Lockett sadly disturbed his stumps when he attempted a forcing shot to the off, the fourth wicket falling at 37.

When Ikin, close in at point, snapped up Eyre when that batsman essayed a defensive stroke against Barnes, half the visiting side were out for 37, and the side appeared to be with Staffordshire.

Rain fell smartly about one o'clock, but play continued and L. N. Jones, who was now associated with Jefferson, turned Barnes neatly to the leg boundary, taking two also off the next delivery through the medium of a similar stroke.

Lockett's Fine Figures.

Lockett was proving the man of the hour, and, when he bowled Jefferson, Cheshire had only four wickets standing and 78 still required for victory. A run later L. N. Jones was clearly l.b.w. to the Oldham professional who at this stage had taken 5 wickets for 18.

Spearing was bowled at 84, providing Lockett with his sixth victim, and lunch was taken at that juncture.

Little Hope of Resumption.

The rain which began to fall just before lunch, developed into a steady downpour afterwards, and at four o'clock there seemed to be little hope of any further play.

It was unfortunate, as the home county had victory well within their grasp, and the probability is that ten more minutes at the crease would have seen the match brought to a conclusion.

Up to the time when play ceased, Lockett had taken six wickets for 22 runs. He nixed his deliveries very cunningly this morning, and was well nigh unplayable.

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

H Crump b Wilson	1
G A Fitton b Wilson	20
Barnes b Dennis	9
Lockett lbw b Jones	16
J S Heath c Jones b Dutton	20
E Perry c Eyre b Dutton	4
A W Ikin not out	38

A Smith b Dutton	22
R Hollowood c Hodgson b Jones	7
G B Green c Dennis b Dutton	1
Boon c Jones b Dutton	0
Extras	6

Total 144

STAFFORDSHIRE.—Second Innings.

L H Crump c Crooke b Dennis	15
G A Fitton c Spearing b Jones	4
A W Ikin b Wilson	16
A Smith b Wilson	10
Lockett c Crooke b Dennis	7
J S Heath b Dennis	0
E Perry b Wilson	4
Barnes c Crooke b Dennis	0
R Hollowood c Jefferson b Dennis	5
G B Green c Fallows b Dennis	4
Boon not out	4
Extras	14

Total 83

CHEESHIRE.—First Innings.

H W Hodgson b Lockett	18
Nutter lbw b Barnes	5
H Eyre lbw b Barnes	10
J A Fallows b Barnes	3
Wilson b Lockett	33
T W Jefferson c Heath b Barnes	0
L N Jones st Green b Barnes	18
A S Crooke run out	0
S M H Spearing c Crump b Hollowood	8
R M Dutton not out	3
Dennis c Heath b Barnes	1
Extras	4

Total 101

CHEESHIRE.—Second Innings.

H W Hodgson c Crump b Lockett	14
Nutter b Boon	1
H Eyre c Ikin b Barnes	16
J A Fallows b Lockett	2
Wilson b Lockett	3
T W Jefferson b Lockett	4
L N Jones lbw b Lockett	9
A R Crooke not out	0
S M H Spearing b Lockett	4
Extras	1

Total (for 8 wks) 54

Lunch.

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Dennis	12	4	35	1
Wilson	22	10	33	2
Dutton	6.5	1	22	5
Hodgson	4	1	7	0
L N Jones	12	0	41	2

Staffordshire.—Second Innings.

Dennis	13.3	4	38	6
Wilson	17	9	15	3
L N Jones	6	1	8	1
R M Dutton	2	0	8	0

Cheshire.—First Innings.

Barnes	18.1	6	40	6
Boon	3	0	14	0
Lockett	9	1	40	2
Hollowood	6	4	3	1

FALL OF WICKETS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	25	51	57	80	84	128	143	144	144

Staffordshire.—Second Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
24	37	52	54	56	66	70	74	83	

Cheshire.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	31	33	36	36	59	59	83	100	101

Cheshire.—Second Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4	31	33	37	37	49	50	54

Staffordshire v. Cheshire

CHEAP WICKETS AT PORTHILL

Staffordshire's Cruel Luck

By "THE CRITIC"

Cheshire paid their usual visit to Porthill on Monday and Tuesday for the first of the annual encounters with their neighbours and old rivals. In the long run of contests between these counties Staffordshire show considerable superiority, but there have been times, particularly since the war, when Cheshire have not only held their own, but have had the satisfaction of inflicting decisive defeats upon Staffordshire. They share with their neighbours the difficulty of keeping anything like a representative side together, and for this match they had to make several changes, following a successful tour in the North. The team is this season captained by H. W. Hodgson, who has been a batsman of class for a good many years, but has not been able to spare the time for much county cricket. It is well for the cheese county that he was free to undertake the duties of skipper, just at the moment that W. E. Jones found himself obliged to relinquish the captaincy owing to the claims of his profession.

Staffordshire pursued the commendable policy of trying out young players of apparent promise, and included for the first time Arthur Smith, one of Great Chell's band of sterling youths, of whom I remember forecasting county honours two years ago. Monday's wicket was not an easy one, though never exceptionally difficult, and Smith gave a captivating display of free, forceful cricket until allowing his eagerness too much rein, he picked the wrong one to drive and was bowled. His batting is of the stamp to delight really discriminating spectators, for he has command of many beautiful strokes. Experience should bring the power to check rash impetuosity, and if he can learn to use his rich repertoire of strokes with just that judgment which will avoid lashing out at the ball which really demands respect, he will be a welcome and valuable member of the county side, more especially as he is a felder of distinction. Following upon the pleasing debut of the young Wolverhampton batsman, A. D. Wilkie, in the preceding match, the form of young Smith serves to prove that there is young talent in the county which augurs well for the future.

Stanley Heath took first innings on winning the toss, but Staffordshire's start against the bowling of Dennis and Wilson was not a good one, for Crump was bowled by a ball which he tried to turn to leg, and which apparently turned enough to beat his stroke and hit the leg stump. This with only five runs scored. Barnes was given four for an overthrow, and got a choice glide to the boundary, but was quite beaten by Dennis at 25. Fitton pursued his imperturbable way, but with Lockett living things up the left-hander followed suit by driving Wilson for 2 and 4. However, at 51 Lockett stepped in to play a straight one to leg and paid the penalty, and six later a shooter got under Fitton's barn-door. The Staffordshire skipper batted really well, and hit Dennis for three fours in one over, but a kicking ball went off his glove into the slips at 80, whilst Perry, after one lovely off-drive, gave an easy catch to third man in trying to repeat the stroke for the next ball, and six wickets were down for 84 at lunch.

The best partnership of the innings was that of Ikin and Smith immediately after lunch. Prior to the interval Ikin seemed very uncomfortable, probably through exaggerated caution in trying not to get out before lunch. Afterwards he played his natural game, and with Smith playing the most attractive cricket 44 runs were added in 25 minutes. Dutton, a left-arm medium-pace bowler, who seemed to "straighten them out" a little, made short work of the later batsmen, and a total of 144 seemed just a fair score in the circumstances. Ikin batted an hour and ten minutes, but made most of his runs in the 40 minutes after lunch, when he put power behind his strokes and didn't look like getting out. As one expected, the bowling of Barnes proved the factor which gave Staffordshire a useful lead on the first innings. For a time, after the application of the roller, the wicket played easily, but when this had worn off, Barnes and also Lockett made the ball

turn a good deal, though the pace was never difficult. Hodgson played confidently until Lockett bowled him with a beautiful break-back, and then wicket after wicket fell to Barnes. Nutter and Eyre were both trapped, after struggling with his leg-break, by balls that cut straight through or came back slightly the other way, and Fallows was bowled by that imitable leg-break. Jefferson tried to hit, but cocked the ball up to mid-off, and though L. N. Jones, as usual, made some good hits, including a six to square leg off Lockett, he jumped in to Barnes to be stumped off the wicket-keeper's pads. Wilson alone played the bowling well, and even he had his escapes when facing Barnes, both from balls that had him beaten and narrowly missed the wicket and others that he could not keep down but were just out of the reach of the circle of fielders clustered round him. He was favoured by a couple of over-pitched balls from Barnes in one over, and drove them both hard and low to the rails. Eventually Lockett turned one in to him to come back on to the wicket off his pads. Roy Hollowood had a spell of bowling, and was so accurate that only 3 runs were scored in six overs, whilst Crump snapped up a quick catch close in at fine leg. Boon had opened the bowling with Barnes, but the wicket was too slow for him, and he was soon relieved.

With a lead of 43 Staffordshire had 55 minutes' batting before the close, and Fitton and Crump, being instructed to avoid the loss of wickets if possible, evoked some sarcasm from the spectators by their passive method. After much banter, during which a spectator perpetrated a pun which caused much merriment by shouting "Now, Fitton, have a fit an' hit one," the Westbromwich plodder responded by attempting a drive and was caught at the wicket. When stumps were drawn at the close of an interesting day's play, Staffordshire were 80 runs ahead with one second innings wicket down.

On Tuesday, with victory within their grasp, Staffordshire were robbed of the full points by the intervention of rain, when another 10 minutes would, in all human probability, have sufficed to enable them to complete a decisive win. Before lunch Staffordshire lost nine wickets for 46 runs, but the pitch was so difficult that it was long odds against Cheshire being able to score the 127 runs they required for victory, and in an hour and 20 minutes they lost eight wickets for 54. They were then still 73 behind, with only two tail-end batsmen to go in, and an over or two would almost certainly have accounted for them. In fact, the visitors were somewhat fortunate to stay in as long as they did, for Barnes, though handicapped by injured fingers, repeatedly had the batsmen beaten, and could do everything but hit the wicket. Hodgson should also have been caught off him before scoring from a sharp chance to Boon in the slips.

As a result of the rain, Staffs. had to take first innings points only. Their percentage is, therefore, 65, whereas if they had had the few minutes needed to secure the other two wickets, the percentage would have been 75. It seems cruel luck that their championship chances should be seriously damaged in this way by loss of percentage in matches which are virtually won. And yet it is the experience of Staffordshire season after season.

There was more life in the wicket on Tuesday morning, and the ball nipping quicker from the pitch, batsmen were always in difficulties. When the game was resumed Crump fell at short leg from the first ball sent down, and though Smith made a couple of excellent boundary strokes on the off from Dennis, Wilson bowled both him and Ikin with good balls. In each case the ball was an in-swinging, with off-spin to help it past the bat. Perry afterwards succumbed to a similar ball, and both Lockett and Barnes were out without scoring to poor strokes, which gave forward short leg easy catches. Dennis turned one in an inch or two to knock the Captain's off-stump out of the ground, and Hollowood and Green were caught on the offside trying to drive the fast bowler. It was a procession, and 50 minutes sufficed for the fall of nine wickets. During this time Dennis had six wickets for 28. Wilson's first 16 overs, including 10 delivered overnight, yielded only eight runs and three wickets, but seven were scored from his last over.

The ball did not "fizz" off the pitch with quite such devil after the use of the heavy roller, but it was quite difficult enough to make Cheshire's task against such bowlers as Barnes' and

Lockett, even though only 127 were required, an exacting one. Boon bowled a few overs with Barnes at the start, and shattered Nutter's wicket with only four runs scored, but it was essentially a wicket for spin bowlers, and he soon gave way to Lockett. Aaron bowled a couple of no-balls in his first over, which were hit by Hodgson for two and four, and in his next over Eyre lifted him out of the ground for six. But he soon got his run settled, and found his length, and his off-spin had man after man beaten. Hodgson turned him into the hands of short leg, and with his departure Cheshire's chance evaporated. From Lockett's first two overs 13 runs were scored, his remaining seven overs produced nine runs and six wickets. And all the time Barnes was bowling without a shade of luck, getting clean past the batsman many times without hitting the wicket, but he was bowling under difficulty owing to an injury to his fingers, and had not quite his usual vim or certainty of length.

Rain had been falling lightly a few minutes before lunch was taken with eight Cheshire wickets down for 54, and a soaking afternoon prevented any further play.

The Staffordshire fielding reached quite a good standard, and it should be added that Green kept the wicket smartly throughout.

Scores and analysis:—

Staffordshire.—1st Inns.

G. A. Fitton	b Wilson	.....	20
L. H. Crump	b Wilson	.....	1
Barnes	b Dennis	.....	9
A. Lockett	lbw b Jones	.....	16
J. S. Heath	c Jones b Dutton	.....	20
A. W. Ikin	not out	.....	38
E. Perry	c Eyre b Dutton	.....	4
A. Smith	b Dutton	.....	22
R. Hollowood	c Hodgson b Jones	.....	7
G. B. Green	c Dennis b Dutton	.....	1
Boon	c Jones b Dutton	.....	0
Extras	.....	.....	6
Total	.....	.....	144

2nd Innings

G. A. Fitton	c Spearing b Jones	.....	4
L. H. Crump	c Crooke b Dennis	.....	15
Barnes	c Crooke b Dennis	.....	0
A. Lockett	c Crooke b Dennis	.....	0
J. S. Heath	b Dennis	.....	7
A. W. Ikin	b Wilson	.....	16
E. Perry	b Wilson	.....	4
A. Smith	b Wilson	.....	10
R. Hollowood	c Jefferson b Dennis	.....	5
G. B. Green	c Fallows b Dennis	.....	4
Boon	not out	.....	4
Extras	.....	.....	14
Total	.....	.....	83

Cheshire.—1st Inns.

H. W. Hodgson	b Lockett	.....	18
Nutter	lbw b Barnes	.....	5
H. Eyre	lbw b Barnes	.....	10
J. A. Fallows	b Barnes	.....	3
Wilson	b Lockett	.....	35
T. W. Jefferson	c Heath b Barnes	.....	0
L. N. Jones	st Green b Barnes	.....	16
A. R. Crooke	run out	.....	0
S. M. H. Spearing	c Crump b Hollowood	.....	8
R. M. Dutton	not out	.....	3
Dennis	c Heath b Barnes	.....	1
Extras	.....	.....	4
Total	.....	.....	101

2nd Innings

H. W. Hodgson	c Crump b Lockett	.....	14
Nutter	b Boon	.....	1
H. Eyre	c Ikin b Barnes	.....	16
J. A. Fallows	b Lockett	.....	2
Wilson	b Lockett	.....	3
T. W. Jefferson	b Lockett	.....	4
L. N. Jones	lbw b Lockett	.....	9
A. R. Crooke	not out	.....	0
S. M. H. Spearing	b Lockett	.....	4
Extras	.....	.....	1
Total (for 8 wks.)	.....	.....	54
R. M. Dutton	and Dennis	did not bat.	

BOWLING ANALYSIS

Staffs.—1st Inns.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Dennis	12	4	35	1
Wilson	22	10	33	2
Dutton	6.5	1	22	5
Jones	12	0	41	2
Hodgson	4	1	7	0

2nd Inns.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Dennis	13.3	4	38	6
Wilson	17	9	15	3
Dutton	2	0	8	0
Jones	6	1	8	1

Cheshire.—1st Inns.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	18.1	6	40	6
Boon	3	0	14	0
Lockett	9	1	40	2
Hollowood	6	4	3	1

2nd Inns.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	13	3	21	1
Boon	4	1	10	1
Lockett	9	1	22	6

CLUB AND LEAGUE CRICKET

North Staffordshire and District League

STONE AGAIN LOSE WITH HONOUR

Chell as Runners-Up

By "THE CRITIC"

The weather was scarcely ideal for cricket in North Staffordshire last Saturday, but cricketers had reason for satisfaction that there was no interference by rain. A heavy thunderstorm in the very early morning ended the rainfall which had brought a welcome termination to the long drought, but the sky was overcast all day, and more rain seemed likely at any time. However, it did not come, and cricket was played on softer wickets than for many weeks, and with a chilly wind blowing. If the cold was uncomfortable for fielders, perhaps it furnished a useful excuse for some dropped catches. Anyway, a cricket ball coming at any speed is a fearsome object when hands are blue with cold.

All the matches were finished. The three bottom-most clubs suffered further "slings and arrows," and five of the first six swelled their points' aggregates by more spoils. Burslem, the dual conquerors of the Champions, tripped at Norton, and so lost their place as runners-up to Great Chell. The season has thus far yielded no more pleasing feature than the consistently good all-round form of this skilful team of young players, who have been honoured this week by the inclusion of Arthur Smith, along with their professional and coach, A. W. Ikin, in the County XI. The success of Longton is almost equally gratifying, and is, to me at least, one of



Stanley Welsh, Great Chell's promising young bowler

the surprises of the season. They have lost fewer matches than any other team except the two at the top of the table, and gained another creditable win on Saturday. The other surprise has been the failure of Crewe, who gave another poor display at Bignall End, and have quite failed to maintain the revival of which their smart win over Porthill seemed to give some promise. Stone must be accounted unfortunate to lose both points after putting together a score of 175 at Nantwich—a fine performance by the Champions.

Table of results to date:—

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Nantwich	13	9	2	2	20
Great Chell	13	7	2	4	18
Burslem	13	8	4	1	17
Porthill	13	8	4	1	17
Longton	13	6	3	4	16
Norton	13	6	4	3	15
Leek	13	7	6	0	14
Silverdale	13	4	6	3	11
Bignall End	13	4	7	2	10
Crewe Alex.	13	3	8	2	8
Stone	13	3	9	1	7
Knypersley	15	0	10	3	3

Nantwich Bowlers Punished

It was an excellent achievement by the Stone batsmen to put up a total of 175 at Nantwich. Lee was the principal contributor with a very sound 67, but the batting was fairly even, with scores of 26 by Frank Ravenscroft, 22 by E. C. Fernie, and 25 by P. R. Sheppard. Lee has scored 372 runs so far for Stone, and in spite of being twice run out when well set, averages 28.61. His consistency is shown by his scores in the 13 matches, which are as follows:—17, 41, 7, 36, 50, 48, 28, 17, 21, 12, 24, 6, 67.

T. W. Maybury took four of the Stone wickets, but they cost him 61 runs. Facing their stiff task, Nantwich batted like a championship side, and ran out winners by six wickets. F. W. Slight came into his own with a fine not out innings of 55. Maybury played good cricket in scoring 44, and T. W. Stevenson helped materially with 33.

In-and-Out Burr'em

After their great win over the Champions, Burslem failed at Norton owing to indifferent and timid batting. They made a bad start, and never recovered, being all out for 100. Both Reynolds and Higgins had spells of good bowling for Norton, and then Meyer went through the tail end, taking the last four wickets for 7 runs. As his previous spell had debilitated him with only four, he came out with a record of four for 11. Norton plodded slowly to victory by three wickets, I. Waterfall (36) and J. Bishop (46) putting them in clover by adding 40 for the second wicket. Taylor stuck to the task of trying to pull the game round, and took five wickets for 34.

At Longton, Leek collapsed before Alf. Smith, who bowled very cleverly to take eight wickets for 30. Arthur Ryder (22) made his usual effort to pave the way for Leek's younger batsmen, but no one responded, and the whole side was out for 70. One misses the names of Harry Ellerton, who has captained Leek for so long, and his son from the Moorland team in recent weeks, and I understand this is due to differences in respect of an incident on the field of play. If that is the case, it seems a pity, and one would like to hear that the trouble had been pleasantly ended.

Longton won the match by four wickets, and went on to 109 for eight. Harold Brassington being top scorer with 20. A. L. Kild's left-arm bowling claimed seven Longton wickets for 58.

Chell and Porthill Progressing

Great Chell at home got the better of Silverdale by 39 runs, and advanced to second place. I have been expecting a big score from Arthur Ikin, for he has not been as prolific this season as usual. I thought someone would probably be catching it one of these days, and having punished the Silverdale bowling to the tune of 70 in an hour and 20 minutes. Ikin is quite likely to proceed to level-up some previous failures by taking toll of other teams. Apart from the professional, there was even scoring by the Chell batsmen, and a total of 177 was reached. When Silverdale batted, Joe Ankers dominated the scene. A mistake in the field which let him off before he had scored might have cost Chell very dearly, for he played a great innings of 87, scoring at the rate of a run a minute, and, if he could have found anyone to hold up at the other end, might easily have won the match. But no one could do it, and the total only reached 138, Stanley Welch having the fine analysis of five for 21, and hitting the wicket every time.

Porthill, for a change, secured a handsome victory on their own ground by nine wickets after losing the toss. When their expert treatment or the refreshing rain during the week, or both, had had a good effect on the wicket, I don't know, but I learnt that it was good enough for anyone, and played truly and evenly throughout. By-the-bye, I

have been informed that there was never any question of the county fixture with Cheshire being removed from Porthill. It is, therefore, perhaps as well to point out that I have never stated that there was any such question. A fortnight ago I gave the facts bearing upon the state of the wicket during this season's drought, and suggested that in view of these facts the committee of the County Club would probably think it desirable to satisfy themselves of its fitness before playing county cricket on it. I understand that is precisely what the committee did, by obtaining expert advice, and am glad they found no occasion for altering the venue of the fixture.

Knypersley were the visitors to Porthill, and they were dismissed for 133, Boon having five early wickets for 47. Porthill knocked the runs off for the loss of the wicket of A. A. Bickerton, who hit a brilliant 57. W. H. Fitchford was slower in scoring 39 not out, and Noel White was not out with a quickly-scored 33.

The Alexandra gave a weak exhibition of batting at Bignall End. Douglas White began the rout of the Crewe men by taking two wickets for no runs, and F. J. Dale afterwards bowled with effect, the whole side being bundled out for 52 without one of the eleven reaching double figures. Dale had 5 wickets for 22. The home side won by 8 wickets, and scored 141 for 6 before stumps were drawn (E. Downing 54, W. Beech 40).

Aldridge v. Lichfield 1st XI.

This match was played at Aldridge on Saturday, resulting in a victory for Lichfield. The scores were:—

Aldridge.—H. Walton b Brown 8, H. Baker b Brown 11, W. Groves b Mann 19, A. Bell b Brown 0, W. Stone c and b Brown 6, R. Clare c Knight b Brown 0, F. Myring run out 3, J. Bird b Slater 0, S. Whitehouse not out 9, B. Emery b Mann 9, R. Aston b Mann 0, extras 16; total, 81.

Lichfield.—Capt. Howard b Baker 23, W. Plant lbw b Myring 40, J. Brown c Groves b Bird 27, D. Parker b Baker 17, G. Ellett b Bird 0, W. Mann c Groves b Baker 3, G. Knight c and b Walton 0, E. Standley not out 11, F. Oram b Baker 3, F. Rudgard c Aston b Baker 2, A. Slater c Stone b Baker 5, extras 1; total, 132.

Walsall's Home Defeat

After their brilliant win against Mitchells & Butlers, at Cape Hill, the previous Saturday, Walsall were expected by their supporters to prove too good for Westbronwich Dartmouth at home, on Saturday. The Saddlers woefully failed, however, and were easily beaten on a pitch that was lifeless. There was no sting in the Walsall bowling, and Dartmouth hit up 163 for the loss of five wickets (Fitton 72 not out), when they declared. Walsall made a good start and Ashwell and Hewson put on 40 between them. None of the other players reached double figures, however, and the whole side were dismissed for 73, Tate taking 5 wickets for 37 runs.

Walsall Seconds had very hard lines at Sandwell Park against Dartmouth Seconds. They scored 117, G. Hemming being top scorer with 30. When Dartmouth's last man went in they needed 16 to win, and when they had scored these the last wicket fell. It was then found that a "wide" bowled by a visiting player had not been accounted for, so the home team won by one run. Hemming did well in bowling as well as batting, and had 5 wickets for 34.

Blymhill v. Apley Park

Played on the ground of the former on Saturday, the home team winning by 15 runs. Scores:—

Apley Park.—G. Evans b Hughes 10, E. Mapp b Hughes 23, F. Canning b Harper 12, N. Sharpe lbw b Altreg 11, W. Mapp b Altreg 1, A. C. Clarke b Altreg 1, J. Tomlinson c W. Smith b Altreg 0, E. Ewens b Altreg 1, B. Syner b Altreg 0, H. Shepherd not out 0, S. Coles b Altreg 0, leg-bye 1; total 60.

Blymhill.—W. R. Smith c Sharpe b Evans 9, S. Smith c Sharpe b Evans 0, W. Lawson c Clarke b Evans 8, N. Mayland b Evans 1, H. Harper c Tomlinson b Canning 9, A. Hughes b E. Mapp 37, F. Altreg b Sharpe 0, F. Averill c Ewens b Sharpe 2, W. H. Price c Evans b Sharpe 7, S. Medlicott lbw b Sharpe 2, L. Pace not out 0; total, 75.

STAFFORDSHIRE DISMISSED FOR 80 RUNS.

Routed by Cheshire's Fast Bowler.

HOME COUNTY'S STRONG POSITION.

Staffordshire made a disastrous opening to their return match with Cheshire, on the Boughton Hall ground, Chester, to-day, being dismissed for 80 runs.

The rout of the visitors was brought about chiefly by Dennis, who did so well in the Porthill match, and was again in deadly form. He claimed five wickets for 27 runs.

A. Smith, the Great Chell player, relieved Staffordshire's failure somewhat with a confident display, scoring 32 not out.

Cheshire were soon in a strong position, thanks to bright batting by H. W. Hodgson, their captain.

A. SMITH'S CONFIDENT DISPLAY.

Chester, Wednesday. Cheshire and Staffordshire met in their return Minor Counties fixture on the prettily situated Boughton Hall ground, to-day, in glorious sunshine, and the heat was scarce tempered by a breeze. There was particular interest in the match, in view of last week's meeting of the teams at Porthill. A bowler's match was then brought to a summary conclusion by rain just when the home county appeared to have full points well within their grasp.

Unfortunately, the opening day of the return fixture clashed with Chester Regatta, and other out-door attractions which were down for decision in the Cathedral city. There was a late change in the Staffordshire team, A. Smith, the Great Chell batsman, coming in vice R. S. A. Hardy, while Cheshire included W. E. Jones, of Boughton Hall, and J. L. White, of Bootle, in place of S. M. H. Spearing and Nutter.

Staffordshire Win the Toss.

On what appeared to be a batsman's wicket, J. S. Heath performed useful service by winning the toss, and the visiting county opened with H. W. Homer and G. A. Fitton, Dennis and Wilson sharing the Cheshire attack.

Dennis bowled at a useful pace this morning, and had an early victim in Fitton, who played a swinging delivery on to his pads, and then on to the stumps.

When this happened there were only half-a-dozen runs on the board, four of which were the product of a pretty leg glide by Homer. Dennis, who was swinging from leg, distinguished himself in the Porthill match, and to-day he needed careful watching. Wilson maintained a steady length. Barnes came in first wicket down, and opened with a brace off Dennis.

With only a dozen on the board the Castleton Moor professional was given out caught at the wicket, thus providing Dennis with a second success.

Apparently there was something in the wicket, for Dennis made the ball jump frequently, and Homer had his fingers smartly rapped by a rising delivery. Lockett took early opportunity of punishing an over-pitched ball from Dennis to the leg boundary. Twenty-five minutes' batting saw 16 runs on the board.

Visiting County's Bad Time.

Unfortunately, the old Bignall End man was unable to supply a steady influence and with only five to his name he was bowled by Wilson—17—3—5.

Worse was to follow, and Heath, who filled the vacancy, was smartly taken behind the stumps before he had opened his account. Once more Dennis was the successful bowler and it appeared that resolute batsmanship would be demanded in order to deal with the Cheshire speed merchant's swingers.

Four wickets were down for 16 when Ikin joined Homer, who could do little more than

defend and wait for the loose deliveries, which were precious few. The Old Hill batsman had good fortune on his side when he nicked Wilson inches wide and first slip, and shortly afterwards experienced an uncomfortable over from Dennis. The fact that fifty minutes at the crease brought only half that number of runs to the batting side was eloquent tribute to the quality of Cheshire's attack.

Half the Side Out.

When Homer was taken in the slips, with the total still 25, half the visiting side had gone. Ikin left with the figures unchanged. The Chell batsman played a delivery from Wilson hard on to his foot, whence it returned, to strike the bottom of the stumps—25—6—4.

With Smith and Perry together a slight improvement was effected, and what was only the second four of the innings was obtained when the South Staffordshire representative turned Wilson to the square leg boundary, although I do not imagine the batsman was entirely responsible for its direction.

This was quite a breezy little partnership and 40 runs were signalled without further loss. It ended, however, with the total at 44 when Perry had his leg stump uprooted by Dennis.

Smith's Confident Batting.

With wickets falling with such frequency, however, it was rather surprising when Dennis was taken off in favour of Dutton, for he had maintained his pace and length for a long spell in the oppressive heat. Smith batted with marked confidence again to-day, and was always ready and eager when the right ball came along. He took a four and a three from one over by Wilson, both well placed shots, and found a steady partner in Ellerker.

The Cheshire ground fielding was again keen to-day, and Dutton distinguished himself by stopping a hard cut towards point by Smith. Seventy was signalled after 100 minutes' batting, and L. N. Jones came on for Wilson at this juncture. Smith continued to play his part nobly, but lost Ellerker at 77 l.b.w. to the new bowler. It was the most productive stand in the Staffordshire innings.

Cross provided L. N. Jones with another victim, and when Boon was bowled at 80, the venture ended. Smith carrying his bat for 32—an eminently useful contribution. The innings had lasted five minutes short of two hours, and was Staffordshire's lowest of the season.

The Cheshire bowling had been keen throughout, and gained considerable help from the fiery nature of the pitch. Dennis came out with the splendid figures five for 27. Wilson had two for 31, and L. N. Jones two for 8.

Lunch was taken at the close of the Staffordshire innings, and on the resumption, the Cheshire captain, H. W. Hodgson, took W. E. Jones out to face the attack of Barnes and Ellerker, the last-named operating from the

pavilion end. Singles were the order for a spell, but Hodgson broke it by pulling a short one from Barnes to leg for 3.

Jones attempted a risky shot off the same bowler a couple of deliveries later, and the ball flew over slip's head for a single.

There was quite a useful ring of spectators this afternoon, and they applauded Jones when he straight-drove Barnes almost to the boundary—another stroke that counted three. It is a matter for comment that the first four overs Barnes sent down yielded no fewer than 17 runs to the batting side.

Meanwhile, neither Hodgson nor Jones could make much of Ellerker's early deliveries, though the first-named, relishing the first opportunity that the bowler provided, drove him to the rails on the off-side.

Twenty runs were signalled without loss, and the upshot was that Boon came on at Barnes' end, allowing the veteran to change over.

There seemed to be less "bite" in the pitch since the wicket had been rolled, and even Boon could rarely make the ball rise more than the height of the stumps. Jones made one very streaky shot off the Porthill professional, and narrowly missed playing on, but there was no doubt about the succeeding stroke by Hodgson, which landed a full toss from the same bowler well over the leg boundary.

With 40 on the board, Cheshire's opening pair were still together.

The Staffordshire total was passed with only two wickets down, but three more wickets fell before the 100 was reached, smart slip catches accounting for two of them.

Hodgson's Fine Display.

Hodgson turned Boon to the leg boundary with a polished stroke—it was a perfect example of timing. The half-century went up as a result of three-quarters of an hour's batting. The Cheshire skipper was very confident, and took seven more runs in the same over. Included among his shots was a delightful late cut which counted four.

Cheshire were certainly shaping for a first, innings lead, and had not lost a wicket.

With the total at 58, Lockett came on for Boon. Believing in the old maxim, "nothing ventured nothing gained," Hodgson launched out at Barnes, and sent the ball high into the gallery. It was a shot which might easily have cost him his wicket, but instead it cleared the field, and three were run.

In Barnes' next over he hit a fast one through the covers, and came within easy distance of his half-century. But he failed to reach it, for, in Lockett's next over, the home captain was bowled with a ball which seemed to turn just enough from leg to beat the bat. The outgoing batsman had played the right type of game and hit five boundaries.

Cheshire were then 13 short of the Staffordshire total.

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

H W Homer c L N Jones b Dennis	11
G A Fitton b Dennis	2
Barnes c Crooke b Dennis	3
Lockett b Wilson	5
J S Heath c Crooke b Dennis	0
A W Ikin b Wilson	4
A Smith not out	32
E Perry b Dennis	12
W H Ellerker lsb b Jones	6
E P Cross b Jones	0
Boon b Dutton	2
Extras	3

Total 80

CHESHIRE.—First Innings.

H W Hodgson b Lockett	47
W E Jones c Lockett b Barnes	16
H Eyre not out	20
J L White c Lockett b Barnes	2
Wilson c Ikin b Barnes	4
J Follows b Boon	0
L N Jones not out	4
Extras	14

Total (for 5 wks) 107

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Dennis	14	2	27	5
Wilson	17	7	31	2
Dutton	6	1	11	1
L. N. Jones	2	0	8	2

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	12	17	18	25	25	44	77	77	80

CHESHIRE WIN BY TEN WICKETS.

Jones Troubles Staffordshire Batsmen.

CAREFUL METHODS OF NO AVAIL.

Staffordshire, who began their second innings to-day 144 runs in arrears, again fared badly against Cheshire, at Boughton Hall, Chester, and in spite of much careful play were soundly defeated by ten wickets.

Dennis, who did the damage in the first innings, was not so effective to-day, and L. N. Jones, with five for 51, gave the visiting batsmen most trouble.

H. W. Homer occupied an hour scoring eight runs this morning, and in the end shared top score with W. H. Ellerker with 27. The wicket gave the bowlers considerable assistance.

INNINGS DEFEAT JUST AVERTED.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

CHESTER, Thursday.

With a lead of 144 runs on the first innings, Cheshire were in an extraordinarily strong position when their Minor Counties' fixture with Staffordshire entered on its final stage this morning.

In all departments yesterday they were superior to their opponents, and the batting displays of L. N. Jones and H. Eyre last evening were of a high order. Incidentally, Jones had the gratification of hitting Barnes for a couple of sixes and of registering five other boundaries—a truly cavalier knock.

For all that, the former England player came out with the best bowling figures of six for 87. The Staffordshire fielding left much to be desired in the later stages of the home county's innings. Several simple catches were dropped and opportunities of running batsmen out were thrown away, owing to frequent wild returns to the wicket-keeper.

An Uphill Task.

Homer and Fitton began the uphill fight for Staffordshire, facing the attack of Dennis (who opened with a maiden to the left-hander) and Wilson.

The weather was dull this morning and much cooler, with the probability of rain not entirely remote.

The first four overs produced no runs, the fact revealing the anxiety of Staffordshire's opening pair to prevent a repetition of what happened in the first innings, but in Wilson's third over Fitton found an opportunity of turning the bowler to the fine leg boundary. Homer was 20 minutes before he opened his account, but forged ahead soon afterwards by making a pretty leg stroke off Dennis, which travelled to the boundary.

With the total at 19 Wilson gave way to L. N. Jones, who appealed unsuccessfully for a catch at the wicket against Homer. Fitton missed several opportunities of taking toll of loose deliveries which Dennis sent down on the leg side, and, though the batsmen were facing up to Cheshire's attack with more resolution than was the case yesterday, runs came slowly, and when play was proceeded three-quarters of an hour 30 had not appeared on the board.

Pitch Less Responsive.

In contrast to yesterday Dennis found the pitch this morning much less responsive, but it was he who had the satisfaction of separating the opening pair. With the total at 36 Fitton was beaten by the Stalybridge professional.

There was a change in the batting order, and J. S. Heath came in first wicket down. Homer's score was 8 after he had been at the crease an hour.

Wilson came back vice L. N. Jones with the score unchanged, and further helped to peg the batsmen down to extremely watchful defensive tactics.

The Staffordshire skipper commenced with a shot to the square leg boundary, but this was the only scoring stroke of any note for a long spell. It was not until the innings had lasted an hour and a quarter that the half-century was holsted.

Hereabouts, Dennis, who had sent down 15 overs for 21 runs and a wicket, was taken off in favour of the left-hander, R. M. Dutton, who was introduced at the pavilion end. Heath took another four off Wilson and the next ball survived an appeal for obstruction.

There was evidence that the pitch was showing some sign of wearing when a short one from Dutton shot up high over Homer's head, the batsman flourishing his bat vainly in an attempt to catch the ball.

A full loss from Wilson was accorded its due meed of punishment by the Old Hill amateur, and 60 appeared on the board without further loss.

Homer's Escapes.

Homer offered a chance to Dennis at first slip when L. N. Jones resumed vice Wilson, but it was not accepted, and the same batsman helped the score along with a four snick to the leg boundary. Dutton ought to have had a wicket when Homer offered a second chance to Wilson at second slip.

The second wicket fell at 73, Heath being brilliantly caught by Dutton, who knocked up a fast travelling ball and captured it as it fell. L. N. Jones was the successful bowler.

When Barnes joined Homer the visiting county were still 71 runs behind, and further misfortune befell them when the Old Hill batsman was taken in the slips off L. N. Jones. He had been at the crease an hour and 50 minutes for his 27. Barnes left at 80, lbw to Dutton.

A. W. Ikin began briskly, but soon lost Lockett, who was caught behind the wicket-keeper by White when he attempted to sweep one from L. N. Jones to the leg boundary, and merely skied the ball.

Half the Side Out.

Half the side were out for 92, and 52 were still required to avoid the stigma of an innings defeat.

The innings had lasted two hours and twenty minutes when the hundred was signalled. Smith, who was now associated with his substitute, brought off a couple of good shots off Jones, but left at 105—beautifully taken by Wilson high up at second slip.

Lunch was taken with Ikin and Ellerker together, and the total standing at 106 for six.

Wickets Still Falling.

Dennis and L. N. Jones bowled on the resumption. Ellerker glancing the fast bowler to leg for

three prettily. With the total only advanced to 113 Dennis performed another useful service for the home county by clean bowling Ikin, and the end appeared imminent.

Staffordshire were still 31 in arrears, and the wicket was developing a speculative element more and more as time went on.

Perry joined Ellerker who glanced Dennis to the fine leg boundary neatly. But the newcomer provided L. N. Jones with his fifth wicket, hitting across a fast delivery, and having his middle stump uprooted.

Ellerker batted with resolution and made excellent strokes off both bowlers, the sequel being that L. N. Jones was rested in favour of Wilson at 139. A four to Ellerker off the new bowler and a brace to Cross averted the innings defeat for Staffordshire, a measure of consolation at all events. When Wilson bowled Ellerker at 147, the visiting country were but three runs on.

The Staffordshire innings closed at 154, when Boon was caught at the wicket, and Cheshire were left with 11 runs to get to win.

N. Jones returned the best bowling figures for the innings—five for 51—and Dennis had four for 59, and nine for 76 in the match.

White and Fallows hit off the required runs, and at 3.15 Cheshire had won the match by ten wickets, Staffordshire sustaining their second defeat of the present season.

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

H W Homer c L N Jones b Dennis	11
G A Fitton b Dennis	2
Barnes c Crooke b Dennis	3
Lockett b Wilson	5
J S Heath c Crooke b Dennis	0
A W Ikin b Wilson	4
A Smith not out	32
E Perry b Dennis	12
W H Ellerker lbw b Jones	6
E P Cross b Jones	0
Boon b Dutton	2
Extras	3
Total	80

STAFFORDSHIRE.—Second Innings.

H W Homer c Dennis b L N Jones	27
G A Fitton b Dennis	24
J S Heath c Dutton b L N Jones	17
Barnes lbw b Dennis	3
Lockett c White b L N Jones	4
A W Ikin b Dennis	21
A Smith c Wilson b L N Jones	7
W H Ellerker b Wilson	27
E Perry b L N Jones	2
E P Cross not out	13
Boon c Crooke b Dennis	0
Extras	5
Total	154

CHESHIRE.—First Innings.

H W Hodgson b Lockett	47
W E Jones c Lockett b Barnes	16
H Eyre b Perry	35
J L White c Lockett b Barnes	2
Wilton o Ikin b Barnes	4
J Follows b Boon	0
L N Jones c Fitton b Barnes	54
A R Crooke c Lockett b Barnes	22
T W Jefferson c Heath b Lockett	5
R M Dutton not out	12
Dennis b Barnes	5
Extras	22
Total	228

CHESHIRE.—Second Innings.

J L White not out	8
J Fallows not out	1
Extras	2
Total (for no wickets)	11

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.				
	O.	M.	R.	W.
Dennis	14	2	27	5
Wilson	17	7	31	2
Dutton	6	1	11	1
L. N. Jones	2	0	8	2
Staffordshire.—Second Innings.				
	O.	M.	R.	W.
Dennis	28.5	10	59	4
Wilson	14	7	24	1
L. N. Jones	20	8	51	5
Dutton	6	2	11	0
Cheshire.—First Innings.				
	O.	M.	R.	W.
Earnes	34.1	6	87	6
Lockett	24	7	44	2
Perry	4	0	19	1
Boon	11	2	47	1
Ellerker	4	2	5	0
Cheshire.—Second Innings.				
	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	1.2	1	5	0
Ellerker	1.0	0	4	0

FALL OF WICKETS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6	12	17	18	25	25	44	77	77	80	
Staffordshire.—Second Innings.										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
36	73	76	80	92	105	113	120	147	154	
Cheshire.—First Innings.										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
87	71	81	95	96	140	179	189	214	224	

Staffordshire v. Cheshire

DISAPPOINTING DISPLAY AT CHESTER

By "THE CRITIC"

The Staffordshire team had an "off" day at Boughton Hall, Chester, on Wednesday, when they commenced the return engagement with Cheshire. In my judgment the winning of the toss was a misfortune, for the wicket played more easily in the afternoon for the Cheshire batsmen than it did before lunch, while Staffordshire were batting. Why that should be so was not easy to explain, but possibly the effect of a heavy dew was to make the ball fly about in the early stages in a way that was not evidenced after lunch. In these circumstances it was not very surprising that Cheshire took a first innings lead. But it was surprising that Staffordshire lost six wickets for 25, and were all out in an hour and 50 minutes for 80. And it was surprising that the visitors should follow up a poor batting display with much ragged fielding, and contribute by their own short-comings in the field to the building up of the formidable lead of 144 runs by Cheshire. There were individual exceptions to the general slackness, but taken on the whole the ground fielding was not clean, the catching was faulty, and the throwing-in was execrable. I have no hesitation in saying that had the work in the field been up to the county's customary level, the Cheshire total would have been at least 100 runs smaller than it was. There was hardly an accurate throw-in during the Cheshire innings, and Cross was constantly throwing himself full length in a vain attempt to take returns, whilst a simple return to the bowler was more than once tossed over his head to give away an overthrow. One palpable, and several possible opportunities of running batsmen out were wasted by wide returns to the wicket-keeper.

In the Staffordshire team there were three changes, Homer, Ellerker, and Cross taking the places of Crump, Hollowood, and Green, and Cheshire had W. E. Jones and J. L. White, the latter, a young Birkenhead batsman, having his first trial, in place of Nutter and Spearling. In the absence of the last-named, Crooke kept the wicket, and did so smartly. A. D. Wilkie, of Wolverhampton, would have played for Staffordshire, but for the fact that he was away on tour with the Wolverhampton team.

When Homer and Fitton started batting for Staffordshire, Dennis, the fast bowler, got any amount of fire out of the wicket, and made the ball swing from leg appreciably. His length was good, and he had the Staffordshire batsmen in great difficulties, whilst Wilson, at the other end, was very accurate, and both swung and spun the ball, Fitton being a left-hander. Dennis's swing came in to him, and he was twice hit on the legs with rather painful effect before he edged one on to his pads, whence it turned back on to the wicket. Barnes stayed with Homer 10 minutes, but then nicked one of these fast swingers, and was caught by the wicket-keeper standing well back. Lockett hit the fast bowler square for four, but then tried to drive Wilson with disastrous results, and Stanley Heath fell precisely as Barnes had done. Homer and Ikin struggled along for 20 minutes, and then both left. Homer to a brilliant catch in the slips, and Ikin very unluckily hitting a ball hard on to his foot to see it rebound into the wicket. Homer had survived for 50 minutes. Six for 25 was a deplorable state of things. Each bowler had sent down 10 overs, and Dennis had taken four wickets for 16, and Wilson two for nine. Arthur Smith found Wilson too accurate and Dennis too fiery to bring off any of the attractive strokes which he executed at Porthill, but he and Perry were less uncomfortable than their predecessors until at 44 Perry missed one from Dennis which upset his middle stump. Ellerker also played with some confidence, and shaped well, and with Smith opening out, 35 were added in 25 minutes, and a double change of bowling made before the Smethwick man stopped an in-swinging with his pads. Cross was bowled by a similar ball at the same total, and Boon beaten by a break back from the left-hander. Thus Staffordshire were out for the smallest score of the season, and Smith alone saved the side from an even worse debacle.

Cheshire went in after lunch, and it was obvious at once that the wicket was easier after rolling. Barnes and Ellerker bowled, and 17 runs came from the former's first four overs. He then changed ends, and Boon shared the attack. W. E. Jones and Hodgson played well together, and though few runs now came Barnes, the young, fast bowler was erratic, and Hodgson took considerable toll of him. The Cheshire Captain scored 47 out of 67 in an hour, and then Lockett, who had superseded Boon at 53, got through his defence with his quick ball. Barnes's first wicket came in his 14th over, Jones being beautifully taken in the slips by Lockett, who took another clever catch to dismiss White, whilst Wilson popped one up to Ikin close in at point. Boon resumed, and beat Fallows by sheer pace, and matters had taken a welcome turn in favour of the fielding side. With five wickets down Cheshire had only a lead of 16, and Eyre should, before this, have been caught mid-on by the Staffordshire Captain off Barnes. It was a lofty half-hit, and the fielder had to run back to get under it, so that it was an awkward ball, but a clear chance. The mishap proved to be the turning point in the game, for Eyre stayed on, and L. N. Jones, as usual, took his courage in both hands, and went for the bowling. Perry bowled for a time in place of Barnes after tea, and eventually beat Eyre with a bailer at 140. When Barnes resumed, Jones hit him for three fours and two sixes before skying one to Fitton, who made a well-judged catch at long-on. After this Barnes and Lockett bowled many overs, and the later batsmen added too many runs, chances being missed off both bowlers, and runs being

conceded by loose fielding. Barnes bowled throughout, except for four overs, and should have had vastly better figures. To deliver 34 overs on a hot afternoon, and be bowling well at the finish, in spite of disheartening luck, was a wonderful feat of endurance.

The Staffordshire batsmen again had a struggling time on Thursday morning, and in the prevailing conditions did not do badly to save the single innings defeat. The wicket was much worn, especially at one end and L. N. Jones was able to make good length balls fly up so abruptly as to make batting a precarious business. At the other end Dennis only reared badly when he was short, but several times the ball whizzed past the batsman's head. It was soon obvious that Staffordshire could not hope to escape defeat, and to send the home men in again was no mean task. Homer and Fitton scored 36 for the first wicket, but it took them over an hour, and the left hander, mainly by means of glides and snicks, got two-thirds of them. Heath and Homer then added 37, but Homer was twice let off in the slips, once by Dennis off L. N. Jones, and again by Wilson off Dennis. The Captain had no such luck, for he was playing well when he fell to a wonderful catch at point. He cut a short one from Jones very hard, and the ball appeared to be flashing over Dutton's head, but the fielder shot up one hand, knocked the ball up, and caught it at the second attempt. Seventy appeared with only one wicket down, but the dismissal of Heath was the beginning of a troublous time for Staffordshire. Homer gave his third chance in the slips, and no mistake was made this time. His 27 was made out of 76 in an hour and 50 minutes, which means that throughout his long stay he was fighting with his back to the wall, so to speak. With the ball kicking and flying about, it was a considerable test of skill to keep his wicket intact so long, even allowing for the chances named at 17 and 22. Barnes seemed surprised by the decision which gave him lbw to a ball he tried to push away to leg, but the ball may have swung from leg on to the wicket. Then Lockett skied the ball over his head in trying to hook a short one that rose shoulder high, and Arthur Smith, after one dazzling cut, was beautifully taken high up at short slip. The ball was well up, and he tried a forcing shot through the covers, but it got up so short that he edged it. One looked for a rather lucky four over the slips, but Wilson shot his hand up, and held it at top reach. Ikin had been batting warily, but he failed to connect with one from Dennis that was almost a Yorker, and his middle stump was shot down. Then, after lunch, Ellerker held the stage, and played the best cricket of anyone on the side. I can only describe his batting as polished. Most of his runs came from cleverly getting both Dennis and Jones away on the leg side, but he

played well all round until Wilson resuming, the clever Macclesfield bowler turned one back sharply from the off to beat him. In the meantime Perry had thrown his wicket away by a wild swipe all across a straight ball, and Cross had assisted Ellerker to save the innings defeat. The wicket keeper was batting really well, and cut Dennis for four, and hit him square for three, but Boon fell behind the wicket, and Cheshire had only 11 runs to get for victory. Cross seems to be earning a higher place in the batting order, for in five innings he has scored 81 runs for once out.

Five minutes batting sufficed to give Cheshire a ten wickets win.

Scores and analysis:—

Staffordshire.—1st Innings

H. W. Homer c L. N. Jones b Dennis	11
G. A. Fitton b Dennis	2
Barnes c Crooke b Dennis	3
Lockett b Wilson	5
J. S. Heath c Crooke b Dennis	0
A. W. Ikin b Wilson	4
A. Smith not out	32
E. Perry b Dennis	12
W. H. Ellerker lbw b L. N. Jones	6
E. P. Cross b L. N. Jones	0
Boon b Dutton	2
Extras	3
Total	80

Staffordshire.—2nd Innings

H. W. Homer c Dennis b L. N. Jones	27
G. A. Fitton b Dennis	24
J. S. Heath c Dutton b L. N. Jones	17
Barnes lbw b Dennis	3
Lockett c White b L. N. Jones	4
A. W. Ikin b Dennis	21
A. Smith c Wilson b L. N. Jones	7
W. H. Ellerker b Wilson	27
E. Perry b L. N. Jones	2
E. P. Cross not out	13
Boon c Crooke b Dennis	0
Extras	9
Total	154

Cheshire.—1st Innings

W. E. Jones c Lockett b Barnes	16
H. W. Hodgson b Lockett	47
H. Eyre b Perry	35
J. L. White c Lockett b Barnes	2
Wilson c Ikin b Barnes	4
J. Fallows b Boon	0
L. N. Jones c Fitton b Barnes	54
A. R. Crooke c Lockett b Barnes	22
T. W. Jefferson c Heath b Lockett	5
R. M. Dutton not out	12
Dennis b Barnes	5
Extras	22
Total	224

Cheshire.—2nd Innings

J. L. White not out	8
J. Fallows not out	1
Extras	2
Total	11

BOWLING ANALYSIS

Staffs.—1st Inns.	O. M. R. W.			2nd Inns.		
	O.	M.	R.	O.	M.	R.
Dennis	14	2	27	5	23.5	10
Wilson	17	7	31	2	14	7
Dutton	6	1	11	1	6	2
L. N. Jones	2	0	8	2	20	7
Cheshire.—1st Inns.						
Barnes	34	16	87	6	12	1
Ellerker	4	2	5	0	1	0
Boon	11	2	47	1	0	4
Lockett	24	7	44	2		
Perry	4	0	19	1		

STAFFORDSHIRE BOWLERS IN FORM.

Notts II. Dismissed for 142 at Trent Bridge.

BARNES TAKES FIVE FOR 57.

The Staffordshire bowlers accomplished a good performance in dismissing a strong Notts II. side at Trent Bridge to-day for a moderate total.

The home team made a promising start, but following the capture of the first wicket, five more wickets went down for 46 runs, and half the side were out for 92.

Little resistance was forthcoming from the later batsmen, and the whole side were out for 142. Barnes came out with the best figures, taking five for 57. Boon and Lockett shared the remainder.

BATSMEN SHOW MARKED RESTRAINT.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

The sun beat down mercilessly on this historic cricket ground this morning, when Notts II. and Staffordshire began conclusions in a Minor Counties fixture.

TRENT BRIDGE, Wednesday

Conditions looked favourable to a high scoring match, for there has been no great weight of rain as yet, and the pitch, on which to-day's match was started, looked firm and true.

From the side which cut up so badly against Cheshire last week Staffordshire had three changes, H. E. Bourne, the Nantwich batsman (who scored a brilliant 97 for his club on Saturday), Roy Hollowood, and J. Woodhouse, of Old Hill, coming in vice J. S. Heath, E. Perry and A. Smith. Woodhouse, a promising all-rounder, but pre-eminently a batsman, was making his first appearance in the county side.

In the absence of J. S. Heath, H. W. Homer took over the captaincy of the visiting side.

Notts fielded a strong eleven, including four amateurs, and were skippered by E. S. Robertson. R. D. F. Bland, the old Shrewsbury boy, who has assisted the Notts. first team in several matches this season, is also in the side.

With the luck of the toss going in their favour, Notts. had the good fortune to take first knock, and S. D. Rhodes and Keeton faced an attack shared by Barnes and Boon, the Porthill professional operating from the pavilion end. Five runs came from Barnes' opening over, and neither batsman appeared to experience any difficulty in dealing with either bowler, though Rhodes survived an appeal by Boon when a swinging delivery demanded that he should cover up quickly.

Quick Scoring.

The first score of the match came from the bat of the amateur, who late-cut Boon so sharply that the ball flew between second and third slip to the boundary, Hollowood chasing it in vain. Twenty-five runs were on the board in as many minutes, and Rhodes helped the score along by punching a loose one from Boon to the leg boundary. The Porthill man provided more opportunities for crisp strokes on the leg side, and each batsman in turn took full toll, half-an-hour's cricket seeing 40 on the board.

Lockett relieved Boon with the total 43, and there followed a slackening in the pace of run-getting.

Once or twice Barnes had the amateur feeling for the break, but there were no serious consequences, and the half-century was signalled with the opening pair still together.

The runs had come rather better than one a minute, and this was not surprising either, for the wicket appeared to be a traditional Trent Bridge cast-iron affair.

Two Quick Successes.

Still the Staffordshire bowlers pegged away, and with the total at 51 Barnes broke through

the defence of Rhodes, whose spell at the crease had been quite entertaining.

Harris, who made a big score against Lancashire II. last week, then joined Keeton.

There was a notable improvement in the Staffordshire fielding to-day from that we saw in the Cheshire match, although there were occasions when more energetic picking up would have saved runs.

Another success came the way of the visiting bowlers at 57, when Keeton, turning Lockett gently to the leg, was readily snapped up by Woodhouse, standing close in. As the outgoing batsmen batted with resolution and skill, it was surprising to see him fall so easily into such an obvious trap.

With two good batsmen got rid of for fewer than 60, Staffordshire had something to congratulate themselves about.

Hardstaff, son of a famous father, now joined Harris, and we had the spectacle of two young men facing one who is still ranked among the world's great bowlers.

They treated him with what should be youth's respect for age, and runs came at infrequent intervals hereabouts.

Nothing loose was sent down by either Barnes or Lockett, and Harris came near falling into the Oldham professional's leg trap.

Scoring Pace Slackens.

It was sufficient testimony to the accuracy of the Staffordshire attack at this period to note that whereas at the beginning runs had been coming at the rate of one a minute, they were now being signalled at less than half that pace.

An hour and a half's batting had seen the total advanced only to 75, and then Harris fell, very well caught by Roy Hollowood at long on when he attempted to make a big drive off Barnes. It was an excellently judged catch, for which the Burslem man deserved much credit.

The new batsman, Knowles, began well by putting Barnes to the leg boundary, and inspired Hardstaff to take similar action against an over-pitched delivery from Lockett, though the stroke which counted four in the second instance was a beautifully timed drive between mid-off and cover. A touch of the old Hardstaff, if you like!

Boon was given another trial at 85 vice Lockett, and bowled Knowles at 89 with a ball which kept low.

Lunch was taken with the Notts total 89 for four.

Restraint the Watchword.

Restraint continued to be the watchword of the Notts. batsmen immediately after lunch, and Copley, who had joined Hardstaff, had a most uncomfortable over from Boon, being

missed at the wicket by Cross and otherwise showing little method of how to play the Staffordshire fast bowler.

Hardstaff was now a deliberate plodder, though he had taken useful advantage of a let-off early in his innings when Homer dropped him off Barnes.

With only three added after the resumption, however, Hardstaff departed, well taken in the second slip by Lockett. Boon, who had bowled extremely well since his return, thus obtained his second success, and half the home side were out for 92.

Taylor was snapped up at short leg by Boon, off Barnes, at 97, a catch that was very near the ground—and with six wickets down, Notts were not so happily placed as appeared likely at one period.

Five wickets, indeed, had gone down for 46 runs since the opening pair were parted.

With the Notts skipper, E. S. Robertson in, the century was signalled after the innings had lasted two hours and 20 minutes.

Barnes pegged the batsmen down to singles for the most part, and occasionally beat the bat without hitting the stumps. At 104 Lockett came back at the pavilion end, vice Boon and in Barnes next over but one Robertson launched out when a "no-ball" was called and drove it straight past the bowler for four.

A Six!

After a long spell of sheer doggo cricket, reminiscent of a notorious first-class game here not many days ago, Copley amazed the small ring of spectators by pulling Lockett for six. When the Notts. captain got one up from Barnes, Ikin and Boon both went eagerly for it, and the sequel was an undignified collision, and the ball safe on the ground.

Nine runs later, however, Robertson nicked one from Lockett, and Barnes at first slip eagerly accepted the chance.

Bland succumbed to Lockett's first ball, and eight wickets were down for 128.

There was some mild barracking from the popular side when Copley was adjudged lbw to Barnes, after the umpire had appeared hesitant in arriving at his decision, and there were shouts of "Play the game," and "They are as bad as Yorkshire."

Wheat made some useful hits off Lockett, but the Notts venture closed at 142, when Robinson was smartly caught by Woodhouse, fielding at mid-on, off Barnes.

It was a capital performance on the part of the visiting county, allowing for the fact that the pitch was, as I have stated, perfectly sound. Barnes bowled unchanged throughout and returned the excellent figures of five for 57, Lockett taking three for 42, and Boon two for 34.

Staffordshire had only needed these three bowlers to dispose of a side that had achieved some tall scoring against Lancashire II. last week. The innings had lasted three and a quarter hours.

Badly Run Out.

Staffordshire began none too well, Bourne being badly run out with only 12 scored. Pitton played a ball to square leg and his partner called for a run. The West Bromwich Albion footballer heated, and Bourne pulled up. Then Pitton decided to go and the outcome of it was that the Nentwich man was a yard short when the ball was returned.

NOTTS II.—First Innings.

S D Rhodes	b Barnes	20
Keeton	c Woodhouse b Lockett	31
Harris	c Hollowood b Barnes	5
Hardstaff	c Lockett b Boon	24
Knowles	b Boon	5
Taylor	c Boon b Barnes	4
Copley	lbw b Barnes	12
E S Robertson	c Barnes b Lockett	20
R D F Bland	b Lockett	0
Wheat	not out	9
Robinson	c Woodhouse b Barnes	4
Extras		8

Total 142

STAFFORDSHIRE—First Innings.

G A Pitton	not out	21
H E Bourne	run out	2
H W Homer	not out	20
Extras		5

Total (for 1 wkt) 48

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Notts.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	34	9	57	5
Boon	12	1	34	2
Lockett	21	5	43	3

FALL OF WICKETS.

Notts.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
51	57	75	89	92	97	128	128	130	142

NOTTS II. MAKE GOOD RECOVERY.

Deficit of 92 Runs Wiped Out.

FOURTH WICKET STAND ADDS 112.

Staffordshire found themselves in a strong position this morning in their match with Notts II. at Trent Bridge.

Taking their first innings total to 234, Staffordshire gained a lead on the first innings of 92, and then proceeded to dismiss three Notts batsmen very cheaply.

Hopes of an early victory, however, were thwarted by Harris and Knowles, who in a fourth wicket stand added 112 runs, taking the total from 33 to 145. Harris was then dismissed for a valuable 51.

Knowles was out soon after for 79 and at tea Notts led by 105 with half their wickets intact.

YOUNG BATSMEN HOLD THE FORT.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

TRENT BRIDGE, Thursday.

WITH a lead of 19 runs, and half their wickets standing, the Staffordshire team were excellently placed for dictating the policy of today's cricket, to some extent, in their match with Notts II.

They were greatly indebted to H. W. Homer for a really capital innings last evening—his best of the season to date—and, in smaller measure, to Fitton, whose innings was workmanlike, and Ellerker, who batted with style and freedom.

The debutant, Woodhouse, had no more than 15 minutes at the crease last night, but, as his first three strokes counted four each, he may be reckoned the type of aggressive batsman the County requires.

The Game Resumed.

Ellerker (30) and Woodhouse (14), the overnight not-outs, began confidently again this morning, when Harris and R. D. F. Bland (pavilion end) shared the attack.

Bland can boast a nice easy delivery, and he also bowls left arm, but his length is not one of sustained excellence. Again this morning Woodhouse revealed an impressive repertoire of strokes and he keeps the ball consistently on the carpet. Even on such brief acquaintance I feel like asserting that in him the Staffordshire County authorities have made a find.

After surviving a loud appeal for obstruction, with the total at 175, Ellerker straight drove Harris to the rails—a very powerful shot—and Woodhouse square cut the same bowler for four in his next over. When the partnership had put on 43 however, Ellerker provided Harris with his second victim of the innings, being palpably lbw to that bowler.

His departure made way for Lockett, who, to my mind, deserves a higher place in the batting order than this.

With a single off Harris, Woodhouse caused the 290 to be hoisted, after the innings had lasted five minutes over the three hours, and Staffordshire were 63 runs on.

Woodhouse's Admirable Debut.

At 205 the Notts skipper G. S. Robertson, who plays with Nottingham Forest Amateurs, took over from Harris, and he had the satisfaction of dismissing Woodhouse at 213, with a ball that kept low, and which the Old Hill batsman made little attempt to play.

Cross hit the first ball he received to the leg boundary, but gave a simple catch in the gully off the next, so that, with two wickets standing, Staffordshire enjoyed a lead of 75.

Joined by Hollowood, Lockett hit our merrily

and was severe on Robinson, who had been brought on at the pavilion end, vice Bland.

The Oldham professional also pulled a loose one from Robertson to the square-leg boundary, but in attempting a big cut off the next ball he missed it, and retired. It most obligingly to the Notts captain. Hollowood was well caught by Hardstaff at long-on, and the innings closed at 234, or 92 runs on.

Backs to the Wall.

Seeing that five wickets had been captured this morning for the addition of 73 runs, the home county were not in as difficult a position as seemed probable at one period when they began their second venture with S. D. Rose and Keaton at 12.15, the bowling being shared by Barnes and Ellerker, the former again operating from the Trent Bridge end.

Each batsman took a four off Ellerker's first over, and the amateur pulled a short one heftily to the square leg boundary when Barnes presented him with the temptation. So bony was this opening that ten minutes' batting saw 17 runs on the board.

Ellerker bowled with a leg trap which included Homer, Ikin and Woodhouse standing very close up, but neither batsman seemed inclined to take a ball. As a matter of fact, Ellerker did not prove himself a particularly astute angler, for quite four out of every over were pitched dead on the wicket or slightly to the off.

At all events, the visiting county had not long to wait for a success, as with 26 on the board, Keaton was well beaten by Barnes's break, playing a very tame defensive stroke and having his off and middle stumps disturbed.

Harris came in first wicket down, and took early opportunity of lifting one from Ellerker to the leg boundary, but at 31 Rose provided Barnes with a second victim, playing hopelessly late, and across the line of flight at that.

Hardstaff did not relish the former English veteran to-day and, with only two added, he offered Boon a simple chance at short leg, the same being gladly accepted. The Notts youngsters were now definitely fighting with their backs to the wall, and much seemed to depend on whether Harris could pull out his best in a critical situation.

Opportunity Missed.

The new batsman, Knowles, or his partner, might have been run out at 37, for either would have been well out of his ground had Woodhouse returned the ball with his usual precision.

Both batsmen played the bowling with extreme deliberation afterwards, but it was an eminently useful stand for all that, and made it almost certain that Staffordshire would be called upon to bat again, for the wicket was only showing slight signs of wear.

At lunch the pair were still together, and 21 were only required to avert the innings defeat.

Determined Resistance.

It was a determined resistance these two young batsmen, members of the ground staff, were putting up and Knowles delighted the crowd on resuming by taking three quick 4's off Sidney Barnes—two of them drives and the other a prettily executed leg glance.

By this policy the deficit was quickly wiped out, and it was significant that in the first fifteen minutes after lunch, 22 runs were added to the total.

Boon, who bowled from the pavilion end, was hit high over the heads of the slips once by Harris, and Knowles faced up to Barnes with courage and a straight blade.

It seemed, heretofore, that Staffordshire's task was not to be such a simple one after all.

When the total had been advanced to 93 Barnes was given his first rest in either innings. He had sent down 50 successive overs in the match up to this stage, and must have been tired of trundling them down.

Lockett succeeded him, but the pair were still together when the century was signalled, after the innings had lasted one and three-quarter hours.

Barnes, of course, excepted, the shortcomings of the Staffordshire attack were being exposed, and I was surprised that Homer delayed his first call on Roy Hollowood until the partnership had realised 71. The Burslem man then took over from Boon, who had rarely looked like achieving a success since the adjournment.

Partnership Broken.

On a wicket that was hardly the type to suit him, Hollowood showed good command of length, and once cleverly deceived Knowles, beating the bat and barely missing the stumps, while in his next over he had an equally annoying experience.

At 118 Woodhouse also got his first trial, but his initial delivery was of such an order that Knowles had difficulty in keeping it from his face. It was a gross exaggeration of an over-pitched ball. Harris smote the worst delivery that Hollowood had sent down to the front pavilion, and so the process of extinguishing the visiting county's hope of victory went on.

There was an interesting race for the half-century, and Knowles won it. The partnership had now realised 100, and the batsmen assumed a distinctly aggressive role. When the total had been carried to 145, however, Harris was caught at point by Lockett, though the batsman gave the appearance of having very grave doubt about the legitimacy of the catch. The pair had added 112 to the total, and Harris had half a dozen boundaries in his score of 51.

Notts were 53 runs on when this valuable wicket was captured. Knowles now appeared well set for his century, and by well placed shots all round the wicket kept the fieldsmen on their toes.

NOTTS II.—First Innings.

S D Rhodes b Barnes	20
Keaton c Woodhouse b Lockett	31
Harris c Hollowood b Barnes	5
Hardstaff c Lockett b Boon	24
Knowles b Boon	5
Taylor c Boon b Barnes	4
Copley lbw b Barnes	12
E S Robertson c Barnes b Lockett	20
R D F Bland b Lockett	0
Wheat not out	9
Robinson c Woodhouse b Barnes	4
Extras	8

Total 142

NOTTS II.—Second Innings.

S D Rose b Barnes	12
Keaton b Barnes	14
Harris c Lockett b Woodhouse	51
Hardstaff c Boon b Barnes	1
Knowles c Fitton b Lockett	79
Copley not out	17
Taylor not out	9
Extras	14

Total (for 5 wkts) 197

STAFFORDSHIRE—First Innings.

H E Bourne run out	2
G A Fitton c Harris b Bland	36
H W Homer lbw b Rhodes	52
A W Ikin b Robertson	10
W H Ellerker lbw b Harris	39
Barnes b Harris	7
J Woodhouse b Robertson	45
Lockett c and b Robertson	23
E P Cross c Harris b Robertson	4
R Hollowood c Hardstaff b Robinson	4
Boon not out	0
Extras	12

Total 234

Staffordshire v. Notts. 2nd

RETURN TO FORM AT TRENT BRIDGE

By "THE CRITIC"

The Staffordshire team showed a welcome return to form when they met Notts II. at Trent Bridge, on Wednesday, and quite overplayed the young Notts hopefuls. It was cricket under ideal conditions — a classic and splendidly-appointed ground, a perfect summer day, with a refreshing breeze to temper the heat, and one of those wickets on which one almost wonders why batsmen ever get out. And in these circumstances a thoroughly interesting day's cricket was played, with the gratifying outcome, from a Staffordshire point of view, and a substantial advantage to the visiting county at the end of the first day. There were three changes in the Staffordshire team, J. S. Heath, A. Smith, and E. Perry fell out, and were replaced by H. E. Bourne, Roy Hollowood and F. Woodhouse. H. W. Homer deputised for the absent captain, and Woodhouse, the Old Hill player, had his first experience of county cricket. He is the third new batsman who has been tried in recent matches to create a highly favourable impression on his initial appearance. His debut was, indeed, unique, for I certainly don't remember a young batsman going in for the first time in a county match and cutting the two first balls he received brilliantly to the boundary. Yet this was how Woodhouse made his bow. Previously he had fielded well, and taken two catches, one close in at short leg and the other at mid-off, and the second was a spectacular effort, for he ran to the ball, took it very low, and rolled over in doing so without losing his grip of the ball. There were several new names in the Notts XI, amongst the most recent promotions to the first team being Gunn (G. V.), and Shipston. In the absence of L. Kirk, G. S. Robertson acted as captain.

When Homer lost the toss a day's fielding seemed likely for Staffordshire, but the home side made poor use of their opportunity. S. D. Rhodes and Keeton gave the side a good, though slow start. Barnes and Boon bowled so well that the batsmen found run-getting no easy task, and over an hour was occupied in scoring 51. Rhodes scored rather freely from the fast bowler after a time, and at 43 he gave way to Lockett, but Barnes separated the pair when Rhodes went right back, but was beaten by what looked like an off-break and bailed. Then Staffordshire took a strong grip on the game. Keeton, who had strung together 22 singles in his score of 31, mostly by pushing the ball away to the on, put one into the hands of short leg, and Hardstaff, son of the old Notts batsman, should have been caught in the same position by Homer off Barnes before scoring. Harris, who scored a century in both matches against Staffordshire last season, was very subdued, and when after 35 minutes of plodding, he essayed to drive Barnes, he was well caught at deep mid-on. Hardstaff batted stubbornly after his let-off, but Boon, resuming at 84, bowled faster than before, and his speed was too much for Knowles, whilst Hardstaff edged one into the slips. With Taylor snapped up at forward short leg from Barnes, six wickets were down for 97, a surprising collapse on such a wicket. Copley was tedious, except when he lifted a half-volley from Lockett to leg for six, and the Notts captain was lucky, but at 128, Lockett, who had again relieved Boon, got Robertson caught in the slips and bowled Bland with an off-break in one over. Barnes got the remaining two wickets, Copley having batted over an hour for 12, half of which came in one stroke.

All the Staffordshire bowlers were deserving of credit, for the three of them bowled well and Lockett kept a good length and turned the ball quite a lot sometimes. But one must pay special tribute again to the greatness of Barnes, who bowled throughout the innings and scarcely delivered a bad ball. For 3½ hours on a hot day, on a ground as hard as adamant, this amazing veteran maintained his accuracy, his vim, and his subtlety. Neither missed catches, lucky snicks, nor uppish strokes that just failed to go to hand affected either his skill or his spirit, and his record of six wickets for 57 in 34 overs enshrines yet another marvellous piece of bowling. A special mead of praise is due to Cross, who did not concede a single bye, though his taking of the ball was not

quite so clean as usual owing to a badly injured finger, which was ample excuse for failing to hold one or two awkward low catches.

Staffordshire had 2 hours and 25 minutes' batting, and gave a much better display than their opponents had done. Certainly the bowling was not up to Staffordshire's standard, but it was quite good and never loose. Bland is an amateur left arm bowler, who has already made a considerable mark with the 1st XI, and on a wicket to suit him one can imagine him a very tricky bowler. He started bowling slow and spinning the ball a lot, but found the wicket so little responsive that he changed his style, took a longer run, and bowled at a good medium pace, apparently relying chiefly on making the ball swing with his arm. Robinson is a tall left-hander, with in-swing and a nice action, the other four bowlers tried being right-arm, medium pace.

A most unfortunate bungle in running cost Bourne his wicket with only 12 scored. It seemed that he called Fitton, who momentarily hesitated. Bourne stopped, but Fitton had then started, and Bourne decided to go, but the delay was fatal. Fitton and Homer played all the bowling comfortably, both making some excellent strokes. In an hour 65 were added, and then Fitton fell in the slips, having the unusual proportion of five fours in his 36. Ikin settled down nicely, and a further 32 were added, but both he and Homer indulged in sudden impulses, lashing out at straight balls, hitting across them and paying the penalty. Homer's half-century was well made by solid rather than spectacular methods, and he was at the wicket an hour and 40 minutes. Barnes got in two minds and was beaten by a bit of off-break, but Ellerker was in his best form, scoring quickly and playing most attractive cricket. It was rather an ordeal for Woodhouse to have to make his debut 12 minutes off time, but I have indicated how he made it. The two South Staffordshire men were batting admirably when the day's play ended, with Staffordshire leading by 19 runs with 5 wickets in hand.

First Innings Points Only for Staffordshire

The Trent Bridge wicket proved too good for the completion of the match in two days, and so Staffordshire had to be content with first innings points. Thursday's play was, however, interesting, and no part of it more so than the last hour, what time Aaron Lockett treated the spectators to as dazzling a bit of hitting as one has seen for many a day in pursuit of a forlorn hope. If Aaron had been able to keep it up to the end of the extra time, and if there had been someone at the other end who could attack the bowling with the same ferocity, the seemingly impossible might have been achieved, and 165 runs scored in an hour and 20 minutes to win the match. But these are very big "ifs." There was no one who could emulate Lockett's example, and he himself fell in attempting a mighty drive. He had scored 68 out of 94 in less than an hour, and hit 13 fours. And there was not a fluke amongst them. His leg hitting was wonderful for its accuracy in timing, and he pulled, drove, and cut with such brilliance that the bowlers must have been at a loss how to bowl to check his onslaught. When he was adjudged leg-before, the Nottingham spectators greeted him with an outburst of applause, which continued until he had disappeared into the pavilion—a great tribute to an opponent of the home team for a large-hearted and spectacular display of all-round smashing. Though the task was practically impossible, the Staffordshire Captain would not abandon the attempt so long as Lockett was at the wicket, and claimed the extra half-hour. But when Aaron was out at 6.38, with 71 runs required in 22 minutes, the stumps were pulled up.

Staffordshire added 73 to their overnight score of 161 for five wickets, and so gained a lead of 92. The chief feature of the batting was the excellent form of F. Woodhouse, who had seven boundary strokes amongst his hits, and these were mostly wristy cuts. Not only did he reveal skill on the off-side, but his defence was strong, and there was a pleasing suppleness about the stroke by which he killed many good-length balls. Before the Notts 2nd innings had been in progress long, Barnes sent back three batsmen in eight balls, and at the end of seven overs had taken three wickets for 15 runs. But Harris and Knowles offered resistance, and gradually Barnes was worn down. That is to say that with feet and legs aching from so many hours of bowling on the iron ground, he lost some of his effectiveness. He

bowled 16 overs before he was relieved for the first time in the match, making 50 overs unchanged. He came on again later, and bowled a further 12 overs, and with the batsmen trying to force the pace, his last two overs were maidens. The trouble was that when he could no longer command the needful vim, no one else could do the needful on the easy wicket. But this should be qualified by the assertion that Boon would, in all probability, have won the match if he had been well supported by the slip fielders. Four catches were missed off his bowling in the slips, and one, if not two, behind the wicket. This was cruel luck for the young bowler, as well as disastrous for the side. It may be said that the ball came to the fielders at a great speed, but that is the virtue of his bowling, and on such a wicket his great speed is futile unless catches in the slips and behind the wicket are snappd up.

Harris was missed at 23 and 27, and Copley at 15, and Taylor was also missed. Two of these errors were made by Barnes, one by Ikin, and one by Lockett, all very reliable as a rule. If these chances had been taken, not only would Boon have had a good analysis, instead of being debited with 59 runs without a wicket, but Notts would almost certainly have been dismissed in time for Staffs. to win comfortably. Knowles played by far the best innings for Notts, but even he would probably have been caught behind the wicket off Boon had Cross's fingers been sound. He hit a six and eleven fours.

Notts II.—1st Innings

S. D. Rhodes b Barnes	20
Keeton c Woodhouse b Lockett	31
Harris c Hollowood b Barnes	5
Hardstaff c Lockett b Boon	24
Knowles b Boon	5
Copley lbw b Barnes	12
Taylor c Boon b Barnes	4
G. S. Robertson c Barnes b Lockett	20
R. D. Bland b Lockett	0
Wheat not out	9
Robinson c Woodhouse b Barnes	4
Extras	8
Total	142

2nd Innings

S. D. Rhodes b Barnes	12
Keeton b Barnes	14
Harris c Lockett b Woodhouse	51
Hardstaff c Boon b Barnes	1
Knowles c Fitton b Lockett	79
Copley not out	45
Taylor not out	34
Extras	20
Total (inns. closed)	256

Staffordshire.—1st Innings

H. E. Bourne run out	2
G. A. Fitton c Harris b Bland	36
H. W. Homer lbw b Rhodes	52
A. W. Ikin b Robinson	10
W. H. Ellerker lbw b Harris	39
Barnes b Harris	7
F. Woodhouse b Robertson	45
Lockett c and b Robertson	23
E. P. Cross c Harris b Robertson	4
R. Hollowood c Hardstaff b Robinson	4
Boon not out	0
Extras	12
Total	234

2nd Innings

H. E. Bourne not out	13
G. A. Fitton b Robertson	0
A. W. Ikin c Harris b Robertson	1
Lockett lbw b Rhodes	68
Extras	12
Total (3 wkts.)	94

BOWLING ANALYSIS

Notts II.—1st Inns.		2nd Inns.	
	O. M. R. W.	O. M. R. W.	
Barnes	34 9 57 5	28 7 70 3	
Boon	12 1 34 2	20 3 59 0	
Lockett	21 5 43 3	17 6 43 1	
Ellerker	— — — —	6 2 23 0	
Hollowood	— — — —	7 0 24 0	
Woodhouse	— — — —	8 1 17 1	

Staffs.—1st Inns.		2nd Inns.	
	O. M. R. W.	O. M. R. W.	
Bland	25 5 57 1	6 2 20 0	
Harris	10 0 58 2	3 0 32 0	
Knowles	3 0 11 0	— — — —	
Robinson	15 4 2 2	— — — —	
Robertson	11 4 23 3	11 5 22 2	
Rhodes	7 2 16 1	2 2 0 8 1	

COUNTY CRICKET WASHED-OUT.

Long and Dreary Wait at Porthill.

SEVEN MATCHES OFF.

Rain-sodden wickets played havoc with County cricket to-day.

No fewer than seven first-class matches were abandoned, these being: Yorkshire v. Lancashire, Surrey v. Notts, Sussex v. Middlesex, Kent v. Gloucester, Hampshire v. Somerset, Derbyshire v. Warwickshire and Glamorgan v. South Africa.

Late this afternoon no play had been possible at Porthill, in Staffordshire's Minor Counties fixture with Buckinghamshire.

At Porthill, it was still unfit for play at four o'clock, but it was decided to wait another hour in the hope that play might be possible.

POOLS OF WATER. Staffordshire's Match Held Up.

PORTHILL, Tuesday.

When stumps were drawn at Porthill last night, the Minor Counties game between Staffordshire and Buckinghamshire was left in an interesting position, the home county being 67 runs behind with six wickets in hand.

Buckinghamshire's patient display came to an end shortly after the tea interval, the two outstanding wickets falling for an addition of 13 runs. The visitors batted for two hours and 50 minutes.

Barnes was once again the prime instrument of destruction, and his figures of seven for 43 are impressive even for the former England bowler.

Except for a bright interlude by O. C. Battcock, the only left-hander in the side, who hit a couple of 4's off Barnes, the cricket was extremely sedate. Battcock was out to a brilliant running catch on the boundary by Ellerker, the most dramatic incident of the day.

When Staffordshire batted the wicket was getting more difficult, and the home county lost four wickets for 38 runs before play ceased for the day.

Start Delayed.

Torrential rain during the night made a punctual resumption of the game this morning out of the question. At eleven o'clock, when play should have started, water was standing on some parts of the pitch, and the umpires announced that it might be some hours before a resumption was possible.

At 11.30, although a number of dark clouds still hung about, the sun came out and encouraged hopes of the wicket and outfield drying more rapidly than had seemed possible a little earlier.

A further inspection of the wicket was made at mid-day, when it was decided there could be no play before lunch, which would be taken at the usual time. Water was still visible in the middle of the pitch.

After lunch the wicket was still scarcely fit for play, and it was decided to make a further inspection at three o'clock.

Still Waiting.

It was 3.10 when the captains, who had taken out of the umpires' hands the responsibility of deciding upon the fitness of the wicket, again inspected the pitch.

After a lengthy consultation, they decided a further wait would be necessary, as the pitch was still very wet.

The stumps were pitched, and the light roller was put on.

A fair-sized crowd waited patiently for the game to resume.

Yesterday, in spite of the unsettled weather, over £50 was taken at the gates.

When the captains inspected the wicket at four o'clock, they decided it was still unfit for play. It was stated that an early tea would be taken, and, if the wicket proved to be still unfit when yet another inspection was made at five o'clock, the game would be abandoned.

In the Minor Counties Competition five points count for a win, three for a win on first innings, and one point is gained by the county behind on first innings. In the event of no decision, the game does not count in the championship.

BUCKS.—First Innings.

W B Franklin c and b Barnes	13
R H Brooke c Green b Boon	12
A G Skinner b Lockett	41
W E Hazelton c Green b Boon	2
F M Walker b Barnes	1
Pitchford c Ikin b Barnes	2
W H Southall b Barnes	6
E H Stevens-Davies c Bourne b Barnes	0
O C Battcock c Ellerker b Barnes	12
R H Rutter not out	9
Edwards b Barnes	0
Extras	7

Total 105

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

G A Fitton b Edwards	15
H E Bourne not out	20
L H Crump c Stevens-Davies b Pitchford	2
W H Ellerker b Pitchford	0
A W Ikin b Edwards	0
J Boon not out	0
Extras	1

Total (for 4 wks) 38

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Bucks.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	30.4	12	43	7
Lockett	29	3	35	1
Boon (J.)	10	4	20	2

Lockett bowled three no-balls.

Bucks.—First Innings.									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
17	33	41	42	46	67	67	81	104	105

1	2	3	4
27	34	34	37

SEDATE BATTING AT PORTHILL.

Barnes and Boon Trouble Bucks. Batsmen.

EIGHT WICKETS DOWN.

August Bank Holiday Week is also Potteries Cricket Week, for the Staffordshire county eleven have fixtures with Buckinghamshire and Lancashire II.

A wet wicket delayed the start of the match against Bucks. at Porthill to-day.

Effective bowling by Barnes was a feature of the early play, the visiting batsmen treating his deliveries with great caution. Consequently scoring was slow.

Half the Bucks. side were out for 46 runs, thanks to consistently good bowling by Barnes and Boon.

The eighth wicket fell late this afternoon.

when Boon superseded Lockett, who had bowled steadily for an hour.

With only a single added, Boon, with the last ball of his second over, got Brooke caught at the wicket, Green taking a sharp chance smartly on the leg side. Boon's pace was troubling the batsmen, and W. E. Hazelton, who was now partnering Skinner, knek very little about the ball which found its way into the slips, for Barnes to make a great effort at a catch. The ball dropped just short of the fieldsman. Hazelton, having failed in one or two attempts at a big hit, tried to cut Boon, and was well taken by Green with the total at 41.

Half the Side Out.

F. M. Walker, the exact man in, had an uncomfortable five minutes against Barnes before succumbing to the veteran with the score advanced by only a single.

Four wickets were now down for 42. Pitchfield, who is private coach and groundsman to Mr. Anthony de Rothschild, joined Skinner the Oundai boy, and having scored two singles, knocked up a delivery from Barnes to skin, fielding close at point. Half the side were now out for 46 runs, after 85 minutes' batting.

W. H. Southall, who comes from Slough, and has put up some good performances in London club cricket, joined Skinner, and play proceeded as sedately as ever. The only sound which broke the stillness for some time was the cry of an umpire no-balling Lockett for the third time in the innings.

The 50 went up after 100 minutes' batting.

BUCKS.—First Innings.

W B Franklin c and b Barnes ..	13
R H Brooke c Green b Boon ..	12
A G Skinner not out	57
W E Hazelton c Green b Boon ..	2
F M Walker b Barnes	1
Pitchford c Ilkin b Barnes	2
W H Southall b Barnes	6
E H Stevens-Davies c Bourne b Barnes	0
O C Battcock c Ellerker b Barnes	12
R H Rutter not out	0
Extras	7

Total (for 8 wkts) 92

WET WICKET DELAYS START.

PORTHILL, Monday.

It was unfortunate for Staffordshire that the weather was so unpromising this morning, for there was only a handful of spectators at Porthill when their attractive holiday match with Buckinghamshire, in the Minor Counties Competition should have started.

No doubt the news that the heavy overnight rain had saturated the wicket to such an extent as to make play at the advertised time impossible, had spread.

Several inspections had been made during the morning, and the only decision the umpires could arrive at was to inspect the wicket again at mid-day.

The wicket was in fair condition, but the water had drained off the covers, and lain in pools on the pavilion side of the pitch.

Sawdust was plentifully applied, and, when the captains viewed the wicket again at noon, they agreed to take an early lunch, and start at 1.45, providing there was no more rain.

Visitors' Strong Team.

There was no change in the selected Staffordshire team, and Buckinghamshire, for their first visit to the Potteries, had brought a representative side. W. B. Franklin, who has kept wicket for the Gentlemen at Lord's, was captain, and W. E. Hazelton, a bowler, who played for the Minor Counties against the South Africans at Stoke this year, and Edwards, who has been professional for Haslingden, in the Lancashire League for five years, were included in the team.

A number of young public school and University players completed the side.

W. E. Franklin won the toss for Buckinghamshire, and decided to bat.

The heavy roller was put on, and this brought some moisture to the top at the marsh end.

The umpires had the captains out to inspect the pitch, but the skippers decided to play immediately, and W. B. Franklin and R. H. J. Brooke opened the visitors' innings at 1.55 p.m.

Batsmen Cautious.

Barnes opened from the pavilion end with a maiden to Brooke, who, by the way, achieved some little distinction early this season by carrying his bat in every innings for St. John's College, Oxford, for a period of nearly two months. Lockett was the bowler at the other end, and Franklin glanced his first ball to leg for a couple. An on drive for four by the visitors' captain off a no-ball from the Oldham professional was the only other scoring stroke in the first four overs.

Barnes demanded careful watching, and it was not until the last ball of his third over that Brooke square-cut him for a single.

Neither bowler was easy to score from, and the innings had been in progress 20 minutes when the ten was signalled.

Despite the fact that it was dull and threatening overhead, there was quite a good ring of spectators, and they saw some well judged running, several sharp singles being snatched.

When he was 10, Franklin was missed behind the wicket off Lockett, and he signalled his appreciation of the escape with a pretty shot to leg for two next ball. Ellerker was applauded for a smart piece of fielding on the boundary, which robbed Franklin of a four.

With the score 17, Franklin, with his own total on the mark which the superstitious call the "unlucky 13," was splendidly caught by Barnes, off his own bowling.

This was the last ball of the famous bowler's sixth over, and play had lasted nearly 35 minutes.

Play continued slow, and A. G. Skinner joined Brooke. Both batsmen found it necessary to cut the pitch frequently—a sure sign of uneasiness, for they were beaten several times by balls which just missed the wickets.

Forty-five minutes' play yielded 25 runs, and in his first eight overs Barnes conceded an average of one run per over.

Cooke, who scored 99 against Kent II. at Bletchley Park last week, showed a sound defence against Barnes. Having batted 55 minutes for seven, he was missed by Boon at second slip, off Barnes, and hit the English bowler to square-leg for four next ball.

First Bowling Change.

The first bowling change was made at 32.

CLAIMS FIVE OF FIRST SIX WICKETS.

Run-getting Difficult at Stoke.

FIELDING BLUNDERS.

Despite several fielding lapses, the Staffordshire bowlers were definitely on top in their match with Lancashire II. at Stoke to-day.

A wet wicket caused an hour's delay in the start of the game, but by lunch two men were out for 43, both victims of Barnes.

After the interval, Barnes continued to puzzle the visiting batsmen and half the side was out for 68 runs. The sixth wicket fell at 79, the former England bowler claiming five of them.

With the fall of the seventh wicket at 107, bad light caused play to be suspended.

most part he was content to keep a straight bat to balls that at times ripped off the pitch smartly.

When a loose one came along, however, he was not afraid to mete out the punishment it deserved, and a short one from Lockett went to the square-leg boundary at express speed.

This was not Arthur Ikin's lucky day. At 76 Booth cut Barnes sharply, but Ikin failed to hold the catch, though admittedly it was a sharp chance.

Without addition to the total Lockett gave way to Boon, and Butterworth survived an appeal for a catch at the wicket in the fast bowler's first over.

More Blunders.

Another appeal by Boon was refused and then Cross failed to hold a catch by Booth, just as the fast bowler turned appealingly to the umpire.

It was still dull and cold, and only a small crowd saw Lockett bring off a brilliant catch at first slip to dismiss Butterworth. The Oldham professional took the ball with his right hand as it was swerving away from him, and although he rolled over, retained his hold.

Farrimond, Duckworth's capable understudy, now partnered Booth, and hit Boon to leg for four, but was then missed by Ellerker in the slips off the fast bowler, while Woodhouse, at cover, dropped Booth, Barnes again being the bowler to suffer. Barnes, at this point, had taken five for 41.

Like the weather, the cricket was dull, the 100 being signalled after two hours and 25 minutes, a pretty leg glance by Booth, at Barnes' expense, sending up the three figures. By cricket that was obviously correct, Booth and Farrimond were making a useful stand.

The pair advanced the total to 107 when Booth was caught at the wicket off Boon. With Rushton in, an appeal against the light was upheld, tea being taken.

LANCASHIRE II.—First Innings.

Halliday c Cross b Lockett	23
Parkinson b Barnes	13
Horridge b Barnes	0
Latchford c Smith b Barnes	27
H R W Butterworth c Lockett b Barnes	6
P Higson lbw b Barnes	1
Booth c Cross b Boon	20
Farrimond not out	12
Rushton not out	0
Extras	5

Total (for 7 wks) ... 167

Bad light stopped play.

FALL OF WICKETS.

Lancashire II.—First Innings

1	2	3	4	5	6
21	21	67	67	68	79

CAUTIOUS BATTING.

STOKE, Wednesday.

After the heavy rain during the night the wicket at the Old County Ground, Stoke, was so wet this morning that the start in the Minor Counties match between Staffordshire and Lancashire II.—the second game of the Potteries Cricket Week—was delayed.

At 11.40, ten minutes after the advertised time of starting, an inspection of the wicket was made, and it was agreed to start at 12.30.

Peter Higson, who is skippering the Lancashire II. team, won the toss, and decided to bat.

Three changes were made in the Staffordshire team compared with the side which lost on the first innings yesterday against Buckinghamshire, at Porthill, H. W. Homer and J. Woodhouse, of Old Hill, and E. P. Cross, the Moseley wicket-keeper, taking the places of H. E. Bourne, L. H. Crump and G. B. Green.

In the Lancashire II. team two changes were made from the side that took first innings points from Yorkshire II. at Old Trafford yesterday, Preston and Wilson coming in for Paynter and Holroyd, who are playing for the first team in McDonald's benefit match against Middlesex to-day.

Holroyd took seven for 57 in the Yorkshire II. innings, and Paynter scored 87 after going in first for the second team of last year's champions.

Ellerker, from the station end, and Boon opened the bowling for Staffordshire, Parkinson, who was partnered by Halliday, getting a single off Boon's opening over.

The game batsman pulled Ellerker to leg for a pretty 4 and the 10 went up after 15 minutes batting.

Barnes' Two in Two.

Barnes, fulfilling the unusual role of first change bowler, displaced Boon at 19. Parkinson drove his second ball nicely through the covers for two, only to be bowled middle stump two balls later.

The newcomer, Horridge, was completely beaten the next ball. He played forward and had his middle stump knocked back.

Would Barnes do the "hat trick"? That was the question. Latchford disappointed an expectant crowd by playing the last ball of the over safely to mid-off.

A quieter period followed until Halliday made a lofty hit in the deep off Ellerker.

Halliday, of course, has played fairly regu-

larly for the first team this season, without quite fulfilling his promise, but Latchford is quite a youngster coming from the Leigh district.

The pair played confidently, but Halliday was lucky once when he tried to drive Barnes, and the ball flew high over the slips. Yet he made amends with a nice on-drive for 4 off the same bowler a little later.

Aaron Lockett came on vice Ellerker at 38, and, quickly finding his length, yielded only a single in his first two overs. It was dull overhead, and, with the absence of sun, the wicket was playing fairly easily.

Halliday and Latchford, playing sound cricket, sent the score along steadily, lunch being taken with the total 45 for two, scored in an hour.

It became very dull during the luncheon interval, but the threatened rain kept off, and play was resumed punctually.

This morning the pitch had not been responsive to spin, which accounts for Ellerker, who bowls swingers, opening the attack with Boon.

Barnes and Lockett were the bowlers upon the resumption, and Latchford, who bats in a free and attractive style, off-drove Barnes for 4, but then cocked the ball up dangerously near Ikin at point.

Halliday also gave Ikin a chance, the Chell man falling to take the ball in his left hand, Barnes being the bowler to suffer.

Staffordshire's fielding was passing through a shaky period at this time, for after Halliday had survived an uncomfortable over from Lockett, Latchford was missed by Homer at mid-on.

Half the Side Out.

A smart catch behind the wicket by Cross off Lockett sent Halliday back at 67, scored in 85 minutes.

Without addition to the score, Latchford, in attempting to hit Barnes out of the ground, was well taken on the boundary by Smith.

Higson now joined H. R. W. Butterworth, the Cambridge Blue, who played in this year's Varsity match.

They were not together long, Higson being out lbw on Barnes' appeal, after adding a single.

This meant half the side were out for 68, and with Booth and Butterworth together they played continuously as the position of their side demanded.

Butterworth hit the ball through the pavilion window at Old Trafford yesterday, but he did not attempt a similar feat to-day. For the

INCONSISTENT DISPLAY BY HOME TEAM.

Valuable Second Wicket Stand.

40 RUNS ADVANTAGE.

Staffordshire, though showing inconsistent form, gained first innings lead over Lancashire II. at Stoke to-day.

A bad start was retrieved by Homer and Woodhouse, the Old Hill batsmen, who had a second wicket partnership of 87 runs. Both were unfortunate to miss the half-century.

Ellerker and Ikin also made useful scores, and a lead of 40 runs was gained, the innings closing for 190. Preston took five for 62.

SLOW SCORING AT START.

STOKE, Thursday.

For the first time during the four days of the Potteries Cricket Week, it was possible to make a punctual start to-day, H. W. Homer and G. A. Fitton beginning Staffordshire's first innings against Lancashire II, promptly at 11 o'clock.

After a delayed start and two stoppages for rain, the visitors had scored 150 after 3 hours and 40 minutes actual play on the opening day.

Barnes, with the splendid figures of seven for 55, was once again the mainstay of the home attack.

The night had passed without a heavy down-pour, and it was agreeably bright when play was resumed this morning, although a number of dark clouds still hovered overhead.

A Quiet Start.

Preston, a fast right hand bowler, who operated from the pavilion end, and Booth, also a right hander, but of medium pace, opened the attack, and the start was as quiet as anything seen yesterday, four overs yielding only a single to Fitton, who glanced the last ball of Preston's opening over to leg.

Homer opened his account by glancing a ball from Preston neatly through the covers for two.

With eight runs scored in 25 minutes, Fitton had his middle stump disturbed by Preston, the batsman being beaten by the pace of the ball off the pitch.

J. Woodhouse, the promising Old Hill player, joined his club mate, and the pair found the greatest difficulty in getting the ball away, only 10 runs being on the board after 40 minutes play.

Lancashire's field was well placed, and their ground work clean, factors which accounted in part for the fact that nine of the first fifteen overs sent down were maidens.

Two Boundaries.

A pretty cut by Woodhouse off the fast bowler, and a leg hit by Homer yielded boundaries which sent the 20 up when the innings was 50 minutes old.

Booth changed ends at 21, Rushton, another right hand medium pace bowler, operating from the station end.

The change did not appear to benefit Booth, for he gave Homer a full toss which the batsman straightway sent to the boundary. Wilson, slow left hand, took Booth's place next over.

Two overpitched balls from the left-hander were converted into 4's by Woodhouse but for the most part the batsmen were content to play for safety, and the cricket was singularly uneventful.

Steadily the runs mounted up, and if the partnership lacked sparkle, it was certainly

laying a solid and useful foundation to the home county's innings, and the small crowd was fully appreciative of the good strokes which flashed out from time to time.

Woodhouse, who made his debut at Trent Bridge a fortnight ago, when he scored 49, again showed that in time the county have made a real "find." He has a watchful defence, and can hit with power his shots through the covers being delightfully made.

So obstinate were the Old Hill pair proving that repeated bowling changes were made, Latchford coming on at 51 and Butterworth at 59. The Cambridge player, who enabled Wilson to change ends, opened with a maiden. He was the sixth bowler tried.

By carefully placed shots along the ground, the score mounted by one's and two's, and at 72 Preston were recalled, this time being tried at the railway end.

Another Bowler!

After the recent heavy rains the outfield was dead, and this tended to reduce the rate of scoring in this admirable partnership.

As all the efforts of the Lancashire bowlers were being defied, a seventh weapon in the visitors' armoury was tried at 84, Butterworth giving way to Horridge. The newcomer's leg breaks had no more effect than his predecessors' efforts and it was left to Preston to break the partnership, after it had added 87 in practically 1 1/2 hours.

Woodhouse tried to turn the fast bowler and was taken by Halliday at fine leg, the fieldman taking the ball smartly above his head. In an extremely valuable innings, the Birmingham League player had batted without a mistake, his strokes including four 4's.

Four byes resulted in the hundred being signalled after two hours and 20 minutes batting, the home county having put up the three figures in five minutes less than the visitors took yesterday.

Barnes, who came in when the second wicket fell at 85, was nearly a quarter of an hour before he scored by hitting Booth for two.

There was a disappointment in Store in the last over before lunch. Homer, after batting faultlessly for 2 1/2 hours, being given out for obstruction, on an appeal by Booth, when one short of his 50.

Barnes Out.

It was dull when the game was resumed with Staffordshire needing 40 runs for the first innings lead.

Barnes did not last long, for with three runs added he was bowled by the last ball of Preston's over, and Lockett came out to partner the Staffordshire captain.

Lockett lost no time in getting off the mark, and straight drove and pulled Preston to leg for 4's off successive balls.

Fight for the Lead.

Lockett punched the fast bowler for another

4 before being caught at the wicket off a delivery which got up quickly and caught him in two minds.

This left the game in an interesting position for half the side were now out, and 21 runs were still remaining for first innings lead.

Booth was bowling particularly well, and no one was comfortable against him. When he bowled Smith at 142, only three runs had been knocked off him in the last four overs.

Preston, too, required careful watching, and without addition to the total Heath fell a victim to him, being caught by Halliday at fine leg.

Nine runs were required for the lead when W. H. Ellerker and A. W. Ikin came together.

Ellerker, by the way, did not miss a catch on the slips yesterday. The ball rebounded off Barnes, and the Smethwick man made a gallant effort to snap up the rebound.

A four by Ikin brought the scores level, and a single from the same player gave Staffordshire the lead, after 3 1/2 hours' batting.

Ellerker, before he had scored, was missed by Higson at mid-off. The pair had added 34 runs when Ikin jumped out to Wilson and was easily stumped.

The Farrimond-Wilson combination also dismissed Cross and Boon, the innings closing for 190—a lead of 40.

LANCASHIRE II.—First Innings.

Halliday c Cross b Lockett	23
Parkinson b Barnes	13
Horridge b Barnes	0
Latchford c Smith b Barnes	27
H R W Butterworth c Lockett b Barnes	6
P Higson lbw b Barnes	1
Booth c Cross b Boon	20
Farrimond not out	28
Rushton b Barnes	11
Preston b Ellerker	9
Wilson c Fitton b Barnes	2
Extras	10

Total 150

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

G A Fitton b Preston	2
H W Homer lbw b Booth	49
J Woodhouse c Halliday b Preston	44
Barnes b Preston	4
J S Heath c Halliday b Preston	7
A Lockett c Farrimond b Preston	17
A Smith b Booth	2
W H Ellerker not out	19
A W Ikin st Farrimond b Wilson	20
E P Cross c Farrimond b Wilson	1
Boon st Farrimond b Wilson	4
Extras	21

Total 190

Later.—Lancs., 21 for 1.

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Lancashire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	31.3	9	55	7
Boon	15	4	43	1
Lockett	17	7	24	1
Ellerker	10	3	18	1

Lockett bowled two no-balls and Boon one wide.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

Preston	31	13	62	5
Butterworth	4	1	13	0
Booth	28	12	36	2
Rushton	7	2	13	0
Horridge	4	2	6	0
Wilson	11.4	2	33	3
Latchford	2	0	6	0

FALL OF WICKETS.

Lancashire II.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
21	21	67	67	68	79	106	120	145	150

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	95	111	114	137	142	142	176	178	190

STAFFORDSHIRE TEAM TO MEET

NOTTS II.

Two places remain to be filled in the Staffordshire team to meet Notts II. at Stoke next Monday and Tuesday. H. W. Homer and J. Woodhouse are unable to play, otherwise the side will be the same as against Lancashire II.

STAFFS.' BRILLIANT VICTORY.

Lancashire II. Beaten by Eight Wickets.

Although it was not until 3.50 that Staffordshire, in their Minor Counties match with Lancashire II. at Stoke yesterday, completed their first innings to gain a lead of 40 runs, in the comparatively short time left for play they succeeded in gaining an amazing victory by eight wickets.

A brilliant piece of bowling by Barnes, who took nine for 32, including six for 15 after tea, and some wonderful slip catching by Ellerker, saw Lancashire dismissed for 65, and claiming the extra half-hour Staffordshire knocked off the 26 runs required for the loss of two wickets, with a quarter of an hour to spare.

The Lancashire second innings lasted one hour 55 minutes. While Farrimond and Butterworth were together the visitors appeared to have a slight chance of saving the game, but four wickets fell at 62, three to great catches by Ellerker, and the way was clear for Staffordshire's great victory.

It was a bowlers' wicket and Barnes took full advantage of it. Only Halliday, who hit him for a 6 and 4, before being caught on the boundary, faced him with any confidence.

LANCASHIRE II.—First Innings.

Halliday c Cross b Lockett	23
Parkinson b Barnes	13
Horridge b Barnes	0
Letchford c Smith b Barnes	27
H Butterworth c Lockett b Barnes	6
P Higson lbw b Barnes	1
Booth c Cross b Boon	20
Farrimond not out	28
Rushton b Barnes	11
Preston b Ellerker	9
Wilson c Fitton b Barnes	2
Extras	10
Total	150

Lancashire II.—Second Innings.

Halliday c Fitton b Barnes	21
Parkinson c Lockett b Barnes	0
Horridge lbw b Barnes	5
Letchford c Cross b Barnes	16
H Butterworth c Ellerker b Barnes	4
Booth b Barnes	5
Farrimond c Ellerker b Barnes	0
Rushton c Smith b Barnes	0
P Higson c Ellerker b Lockett	0
Preston not out	3
Wilson c Ikin b Barnes	0
Extras	3
Total	65

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

G A Fitton b Preston	2
H W Homer lbw b Booth	49
J Woodhouse c Halliday b Preston	44
Barnes b Preston	4
J S Heath c Halliday b Preston	7
A Lockett c Farrimond b Preston	17
A Smith b Booth	2
W H Ellerker not out	19
A W Ikin c Farrimond b Wilson	20
E P Cross c Farrimond b Wilson	1
Boon st Farrimond b Wilson	4
Extras	21
Total	190

Staffordshire.—Second Innings.

A Lockett b Preston	9
F Woodhouse c Higson b Booth	2
A W Ikin not out	6
W H Ellerker not out	8
Extras	1
Total (for 2 wkts)	26

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Lancashire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	31	3	9	55
Boon	15	4	4	43
Lockett	17	7	7	24
Ellerker	10	3	3	18

Lancashire II.—Second Innings.

Barnes	20	1	5	32
Ellerker	2	1	1	8
Lockett	15	9	9	15
Boon	3	0	0	7

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

Preston	31	13	62	5
Butterworth	4	1	13	0
Booth	28	12	36	2
Rushton	7	2	13	0
Horridge	4	2	6	0
Wilson	11	4	33	3
Letchford	2	0	6	0

Staffordshire.—Second Innings.

Booth	3	0	8	1
Preston	2	0	13	1
Wilson	1	0	4	0

FALL OF WICKETS.

Lancashire II.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
21	21	67	67	68	79	106	120	145	150

Lancashire II.—Second Innings.										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	26	26	33	33	62	62	62	62	65	
Staffordshire.—First Innings.										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8	95	111	114	137	142	142	176	178	180	
Staffordshire.—Second Innings.										
1	2									
11	11									

First Encounter with Bucks A SOFT WICKET AT PORTHILL

By "THE CRITIC"

It is rather singular that though Staffordshire and Bucks, have been participating in the Minor Counties Competition continuously since the beginning of the century, the two counties had never met until Monday, when Buckingham opened Staffordshire's annual Wakes cricket festival and provided a strong attraction at Porthill. Happily there was a marked improvement in the weather, but heavy rain in the night had left the ground so wet that the start was delayed until almost two o'clock, and this, no doubt, had a detrimental effect on the attendance. There was, however, a nice ring of spectators in the afternoon to watch a keen struggle between bat and ball on a pitch which was not difficult at the start, but became tricky later. Staffordshire were not at full strength. H. W. Homer and E. P. Cross being amongst the absentees.

W. B. Franklyn, distinguished both as wicket-keeper and batsman, seemed to have gained an advantage for his county in winning the toss, but the visitors found the Staffordshire bowling so accurate that, even when it was not easy to turn the ball, they were kept on the defensive, and did not attempt forcing tactics. Franklyn, following a highly prolific season in 1928, has struck a bad patch this time, and has latterly tried going in first in an attempt to charge his luck. So he opened the innings with R. H. J. Brooke, and certainly seemed to be in luck when, with his score at 10 he was let off at the wicket by Green from Lockett's bowling. However, he tried straight-driving Barnes, who shot out his right hand and held a catch that made the spectators gasp. Brooke, who played a fine innings of 99 for the county against Kent II. the other day, was patience personified and, with A. G. Skinner adopting a somewhat similar role, progress was very slow. Both Barnes and Lockett bowled well, and the veteran's leg-break had both batsmen completely beaten a number of times. When Brooke had been at the wicket 55 minutes and scored 7 he should have been a victim to Barnes, for he edged one up to Boon in the slips, but the fielder allowed it to hit him in the chest and failed to secure it. Boon vice Lockett was a successful change, for Brooke, trying to glide a leg-ball, was well caught by the wicket-keeper, and Hazelton fell in the same way in trying to cut the fast bowler. Then Barnes's consistently good bowling met with reward, for Walker was bowled in attempting a drive, and Pitchford cocked one up to point; whilst after Southall had helped Skinner to add 21 he was bowled by a beauty from Barnes, and Stevens Davis put up an easy catch to mid-on. Seven wickets were down at this point for 67, and Barnes had bowled 22 overs for 23 runs and 5 wickets. O. G. Battecock, a left-hander, used the long handle to Barnes, but his first hit should have been fatal. Ellerker misjudging a catch on the easy leg boundary. It counted four instead of a wicket, and he got another for an off-drive in the same over, but lifting another one to leg he was out to a fine running catch by Ellerker. Skinner had a life with his score at 31. Barnes failing to hold a low catch in the slips off Boon, and the 9th wicket added 23, the best partnership of the innings, before Skinner momentarily lost his restraint, "had a go" at Lockett, and was bowled. He had played a great game for his side, and had been at the wicket 2 1/2 hours. Edwards gave no trouble, and Barnes came out with the splendid analysis of 7 for 43. Boon also bowled very well, but I thought Lockett was hardly at his best, though he deserved better figures than he got. Fielding errors certainly added materially to the visitors' total, and these slips have been too frequent of late. The slip catching has been faulty, though an exception must be made of Lockett.

Staffordshire had the anxious task of starting their innings on a wicket rapidly getting more difficult, at the fag-end of the day, and, as so often happens, had a disastrous time. Fitton and Bourne opened with promising confidence against Hazelton and Edwards. The amateur is a medium-pace right-arm bowler, and the professional slow left-arm, and both have made big reputations. All went well for 40 minutes,

but then the effect of the roller was obviously wearing off, and Edwards having changed over, and Pitchford, slow right-arm, come on at the Marsh end, matters went badly indeed. Edwards turned one back to bowl the left hander, and seven runs later Crump was caught at short leg and Ellerker bowled in the same over. It was a shooter that beat the Smetwick man, as it would most batsmen.

Another disaster followed, for Edwards, whose forte usually is the left-hander's natural break-back, made one go with his arm the other way to knock back Ikin's middle stump. Again it was a ball to bowl anyone. With five minutes left Boon went in and avoided further loss. Bourne had played watchful and skilful cricket for 70 minutes, and the position was an intriguing one when stumps were drawn with 4 wickets down for 33.

A Disastrous Fifty Minutes

A further downpour during Monday night ruined the match, and revealed the Porthill ground in a bad light. Tuesday was a fine and bright day, but the pitch dried so slowly that it was not possible to resume play until 5.15. And then the wicket played so queerly that the task of making a further 63 runs for the six remaining wickets was obviously far from an easy one. Such a collapse as took place, however, had no sufficient excuse, either in the state of the wicket, or the excellence of the bowling. Fifty minutes' play sufficed to give Bucks a first innings win by 31 runs, and from the Staffordshire point of view it was a doleful day. A wait from 11 o'clock to 5 o'clock while the sun shone, and fifty minutes of inglorious batting, with rain falling steadily for the last quarter of an hour.

The play calls for little description. Bourne and Barnes were responsible for the only bit of creditable batting, and having added 21 runs for the 6th wicket, both departed, Barnes leg-before to a ball he would generally play without difficulty, and Bourne most unluckily caught in the slips from a ball that popped up short to glance off his glove. He had played the bowling practically without mistake for an hour and 50 minutes, and though scoring so slowly could not be blamed, for the conditions were always difficult, and the position critical. Most of the other batsmen fell easy victims, and Edwards had the remarkable record of nine overs, six maidens, three runs, and four wickets, giving him six wickets for 23 for the innings. He bowled cleverly, and the pitch helped him materially, but he was flattered by some inept batting.

Scores and analysis:—

Bucks.	
W. B. Franklyn c and b Barnes ...	13
R. H. J. Brooke c Green b Boon ...	12
A. G. Skinner b Lockett	41
W. E. Hazelton c Green b Boon ...	2
L. M. Walker b Barnes	1
Pitchford c Ikin b Barnes	2
W. Southall b Barnes	6
B. H. Stevens-Davis c Bourne b Barnes	0
O. G. Battecock c Ellerker b Barnes	12
R. H. Rutter not out	9
Edwards c Boon b Barnes	0
Extras	7
Total	105
Staffs.	
G. A. Fitton b Edwards	15
H. E. Bourne c Rutter b Edwards	23
L. H. Crump c Stevens-Davis b Pitchford	2
W. H. Ellerker b Pitchford	0
A. W. Ikin b Edwards	0
Boon b Edwards	6
Barnes lbw b Pitchford	14
J. S. Heath st Franklin b Edwards	2
Lockett lbw b Edwards	0
A. Smith not out	2
G. B. Green c Franklin b Pitchford	4
Extras	1
Total	74

BOWLING ANALYSIS

Bucks.					
	O.	M.	R.	W.	
Barnes	30	4	12	43	7
Lockett	20	3	35	1	1
Boon	10	4	20	2	2
Staffs.					
	O.	M.	R.	W.	
Hazelton	9	4	23	0	0
Edwards	22	12	23	6	6
Pitchford	15	6	27	4	4

Staffordshire v. Lancashire II. ANOTHER GOOD PERFORMANCE BY BARNES

By "THE CRITIC"

The weather was again unkind to Staffordshire on Wednesday, for another night of heavy rain was followed by a dull, threatening, and chilly day. The start was delayed until 12.35, had light and fine rain caused stoppages from four o'clock to five o'clock, and from 5.10 to 5.45, and the actual cricket was curtailed to three hours and 25 minutes. Such conditions, of course, spoiled the attendance, and the fact that there were perhaps a thousand people present on such a day is sufficient evidence that the Stoke ground is at least as good as any in the county from the point of view of gate receipts.

Staffordshire had three changes, Homer, Woodhouse, and Cross coming in vice H. E. Bourne, L. H. Crump, and G. B. Green. Lancashire sent a strong side, though the left-hand batsman, Paynter, and the diminutive left-arm bowler, Holroyd, were playing with the first XI. I believe eight members of the team have appeared for Lancashire in County Championship matches, of whom Halliday, Rushton, Preston, and Farrimond have had considerable experience in first-class cricket.

The outcome of the day's play was that Lancashire, having won the toss, completed an innings for 150, which was a materially larger score than they would have made if a good proportion of the chances offered to the field had been snapped up. But there was one of those epidemics that are not catching, to repeat a now rather hoary pun, Staffordshire's prospects, as well as the bowlers' analysis, suffered severely in this chapter of mishaps, and Lancashire profited in inverse ratio. The rate of scoring was slow, the 150 runs occupying nearly 3 1/2 hours, and all the batsmen who got runs did so because of favours vouchsafed by the fielders. In this respect Barnes had a trying experience, but was able, by his sustained skill, to triumph over ill-fortune, and bring off another remarkable performance, taking seven wickets for the second time this week, and in successive innings. But Boon was deserving of the utmost sympathy, for he had atrocious luck. He ought to have had a good analysis, instead of which he had a poor one. Though the conditions did not suit him, he had one or two spells of fine bowling. Lockett and Ellerker also bowled well, and Aaron had his taste of the prevailing ill-luck when he completely beat Booth with a pretty break-back, which was a fraction of an inch over the middle stump, and so near that Cross gave it up, and so failed to stump the batsman, who was a couple of yards out of his crease.

Stanley Heath again failed in the spin of the coin, and Peter Higson had no hesitation in taking first innings. I should say the wicket was always too dead to be difficult, though at one period the spin bowlers seemed to be getting rather more out of it. But the light showers after four o'clock took the edge off again. Halliday and Parkinson were first opposed by Ellerker and Boon, but the fast bowler only delivered three overs before giving way to Barnes, and the advent of the old International was somewhat startling, for in his first over he got a ball of nice pace and perfect length back from the off just enough to have Parkinson well beaten and bowled, whilst, with the craft of a master, he surprised Horridge (a highly promising young batsman) with a speedy yorker for his first ball. The batsman was too late, and Syd had taken two wickets in two balls. Halliday and Latchford stayed until lunch, when the score was 45 for two wickets.

With the pitch quickening just a little, wickets should have fallen rapidly after lunch. Halliday had two narrow escapes from Barnes. He could not keep the ball down, and one stroke was just out of the reach of Ikin close in at backward point, whilst a second lobbed over the same fielder's head. Ikin was a little late in going back for it, but reached it with his left hand, and failed to get a grip of the ball. Almost immediately afterwards Latchford, playing forward, gave a low catch to Homer at mid-on, which was not accepted, also off Barnes. But Latchford was getting bold, and after on-driving Barnes for four, was neatly

taken near the boundary in the same position. The pair had added 46 for the third wicket in 50 minutes, but both left at 67, for Halliday had just previously been well and truly snapped at the wicket off Lockett. The Lancashire Captain got in front of a straight one from Barnes a run later, and though Butterworth seemed to have a charmed life for a time, he fell to a brilliant slip catch by Lockett at 79. Boon had resumed bowling vice Lockett at 75, and started with three maidens, in which he ought to have had several wickets. First Butterworth was favoured by a remarkable decision in answer to a general appeal for a catch by Cross standing back. He played the ball so hard as to be clearly heard in the Press box, but was given "not out." He popped up a sharp catch off Barnes to Ikin's right hand at point, but it was not held, and then edged one which Cross touched, and Lockett dived full length to take it near the ground with the left hand—a spectacular catch. Booth and Farrimond then came in for fortune's favours. The former touched one of Boon's expresses, and was let-off by Cross, and Farrimond, with his score at four, edged another to Barnes in the slips, and escaped. Then Booth gave Woodhouse a catch at cover-point off Barnes, but the fielder slipped, and failed to hold it, and the same batsman should have been a victim to Lockett when he again relieved Boon, as already mentioned. Thus Booth gave four distinct chances, and when he tried to hit Barnes, was fortunate to see a skier fall just short of Fitton on the off-side.

Eventually Barnes had a rest, and Boon, replacing him, got Booth caught behind the wicket at 106. After the stoppages Farrimond, Rushton, and Preston gave some trouble. Barnes resumed at 114, and bowled Rushton's off-stump with his inimitable leg-break at 120, whilst Ellerker was brought on again at 141, and got a nice nip from the off to bowl Preston's middle peg four runs later. Wilson fell into Barnes's short-leg trap, and gave the veteran a record of seven wickets for under eight runs apiece, four missed catches, and many fluky strokes that did not quite go to hand. Boon had two palpable catches missed, besides being deprived of a wicket by a curiously mistaken decision. I thought Stanley Heath managed his bowling with particularly good judgment.

A Brilliant Win: Barnes Unplayable

Thursday was fine and there was a fairly good attendance, nearly £50 being taken at the gates. But if the day's happenings could have been foreseen there is little doubt that the crowd would have been a great deal larger. For a memorable day's cricket was served up, ending in a surprise victory for Staffordshire by eight wickets at a quarter to seven. To all appearances the most to be hoped for was first innings points, and as late as five o'clock a win outright seemed scarcely possible. But then one of these dramatic episodes supervened, during which thrill follows thrill, and the almost impossible becomes an accomplished fact. The spectators were worked up to a pitch of enthusiasm more often associated with football.

First of all, the two Old Hill batsmen, Homer and Woodhouse, collaborated in an hour and forty minutes partnership for Staffordshire's second wicket, which carried the score from eight to 95. The wicket, no doubt, played rather easier than it did later; it always gave the bowlers a chance, and care and watchfulness were essential. Homer was as hard to beat as usual, and Woodhouse watched the ball closely, was sound in defence, and made some sparkling strokes. In his first county innings at Trent Bridge he made 45, and now followed this up with a really meritorious and invaluable 44. And he was unlucky in his dismissal, for he hit a leg ball hard and clean, but a fine leg fielder happened to be in the direct line, and caught a fast-travelling ball. Both Preston and Booth exploited the leg theory a great deal, bowling repeatedly outside the batsman's leg, and Preston got two of his wickets at fine leg from quite good strokes, the other being that of the Staffordshire Captain, who, by the way, played some remarkably good bowling for three quarters of an hour.

Homer also narrowly missed his 50, being leg before to a ball that kept low. He was batting almost 2½ hours. After the departure of these two, matters went badly. Lockett went for the bowling, and made a few fine hits, but could not get away from a kicking ball, and was

caught by the wicket-keeper. Seven wickets were down for 142, and Ellerker should have been caught at mid-off by the Lancashire skipper before scoring. He took advantage of his good fortune, and with Ikin quickly put Staffordshire in front. Then policy dictated fast scoring to establish a useful lead in the least possible time, and Wilson coming on with his slow spinners, the last three wickets were sacrificed in the effort to force the pace.

Forty runs behind, Lancashire opened their second innings at four o'clock, and were soon in difficulty with Barnes. Halliday might have gone without scoring, for he edged one that Cross touched, but could not grasp, whilst at the other end he appeared to give a chance to Barnes off Ellerker, with only one scored. However, Parkinson fell at 11, a leg-spinner from Barnes being popped up in the slips to provide a "sitter" for Lockett. With Horridge in, Halliday adopted a policy of desperation. He lifted Barnes on to the roof of the stand for six, and on-drove him for four, but his next attempt gave Fitton a catch at long-off, whilst Horridge got his feet in a knot with a quicker ball, and was lbw. Tea was taken with three wickets down for 29.

Resuming at five o'clock, Booth was bowled by a beauty, but Latchford and Farrimond contrived to stay for half an hour, when any possible chance of an outright decision seemed to have evaporated. But then the fun began. Fifty had gone up with only four wickets down, but at 53 Latchford over-reached himself, and was stumped, and with the total at 62 Ellerker took three catches and Smith one. Two of Ellerker's were thrilling catches in the slips off Barnes, and the other a sharp one at short leg from Lockett, whilst Smith judged a running catch in the long field beautifully, though Fitton, running in the other direction, seemed likely to balk him. Wilson could not avoid tapping Barnes into the hands of Ikin close in at point, and so six wickets had been captured in 40 minutes for a dozen runs, and since tea Barnes had taken six for 15, giving him nine for 32 in the innings, and 16 for 87 in the match. Lockett bowled well, but could not get quite enough "nip" out of the pitch to be deadly, a fact which emphasizes the brilliance of Barnes's bowling. The skilful young Lancashire players simply could not negotiate his leg-break. His accuracy was such that they were compelled to keep trying to play him, and simply could not keep the ball down. It glanced off the bat in unintended directions. In fact, batsmen who have played in the Lancashire 1st XI, were made to look like novices, and that on a wicket which the other bowlers could get little real assistance out of.

Staffordshire had to claim the extra half-hour, and won the match with a quarter of an hour to spare.

Scores and Analysis:—

Lancs. II.—1st Inns.

Halliday c Cross b Lockett	23
Parkinson b Barnes	13
Horridge b Barnes	0
Latchford c Smith b Barnes	27
H. R. W. Butterworth c Lockett b Barnes	6
P. Higson lbw b Barnes	1
Booth c Cross b Barnes	20
Farrimond not out	28
Rushton b Barnes	11
Preston b Ellerker	9
Wilson c Fitton b Barnes	2
Extras	10
Total	150

Lancs.—2nd Inns.

Halliday c Fitton b Barnes	21
Parkinson c Lockett b Barnes	0
Horridge lbw b Barnes	5
Latchford st Cross b Barnes	16
H. R. W. Butterworth c Ellerker b Barnes	4
P. Higson c Ellerker b Lockett	0
Booth b Barnes	5
Farrimond c Ellerker b Barnes	8
Rushton c Smith b Barnes	0
Preston not out	3
Wilson c Ikin b Barnes	0
Extras	3
Total	65

Staffs.—1st Inns.

H. W. Homer lbw b Booth	49
G. A. Fitton b Preston	2
F. Woodhouse c Halliday b Preston	44
Barnes b Preston	4
J. S. Heath c Halliday b Preston	7
Lockett c Farrimond b Preston	17
A. Smith b Booth	2
W. H. Ellerker not out	19
A. W. Ikin st Farrimond b Wilson	20
E. P. Cross c Farrimond b Wilson	1
Boon st Farrimond b Wilson	4
Extras	21
Total	190

Staffs.—2nd Inns.

F. Woodhouse c Higson b Booth	2
Lockett b Preston	9
W. H. Ellerker not out	8
A. W. Ikin not out	6
Extra	1
Total (for 2 wks.)	26

BOWLING ANALYSIS

Lancs. II.—1st Inns.		2nd Inns.	
	O. M. R. W.	O. M. R. W.	
Ellerker	10 3 18 1	2 1 8 0	
Boon	15 4 43 1	3 0 7 0	
Barnes	51.3 8 55 7	28.15 32 9	
Lockett	17 7 24 1	15 9 15 1	

HIGHEST SCORE OF THE SEASON.

Misses Century by Twelve Runs.

ALL OUT FOR 270.

In their last home match of the season, against Notts II. at Stoke, Staffordshire gave a bright display of batting.

Though two wickets were down for 32 runs, the home county made an excellent stand, thanks chiefly to Aaron Lockett.

The Oldham professional played his highest innings of the season in scoring 88 in 2½ hours. It was a typical Lockett innings, including twelve 4's.

When the venture had lasted approximately three hours, the second century was hoisted.

The innings closed for 250.

ENTERPRISING BATTING.

STOKE, Monday.

Staffordshire entered on their last home fixture in the Minor Counties tournament to-day when Notts II. provided the opposition on the L.M. and S. Ground, which was the scene of a thrilling victory for the home county last Thursday.

The men. Bridge youngsters have been performing very well of late, particularly in the batting department, and it will be recalled how resolutely they fought their way out of a difficult position when opposed to Staffordshire at Trent Bridge just over a couple of weeks ago.

Both sides had changes to-day. R. Howl, brother of Clifton. Howl, and E. Mayer, the Norton all-round coming into the Staffordshire eleven; vice H. W. Homer and F. Woodhouse, who. Notts were in the position of being able to field a much stronger team than was the case at Trent Bridge. T. N. Knight, who has played a good deal this season for Julius Gunn's eleven, skipped the side, and Shipston and G. V. Gunn both of whom have had first team experience, were included. Young Gunn is, of course, the son of the illustrious George.

A Brisk Start.

Winning the toss, J. S. Heath elected to take first knock and G. A. Fitton and W. H. Ellerker began Staffordshire's first venture, the attack being shared by Bland, who bowls slow left arm, and Harris.

A fair ring of spectators saw a brisk opening and double figures appeared quickly, with both batsmen helping themselves to singles at short intervals, and Fitton helping the score along by snickling Bland to the rails.

When Harris tempted Ellerker with a half-volley on the leg-side, the batsman made the most of a golden opportunity and the ball was sent crashing to the boundary. The batsmen were confident and their strokes were crisply executed.

Ellerker showed a nice penchant for the late cut once, and the ball eluded the slips and traveled to the boundary. Harris again being the bowler to suffer.

Thirty runs were signalled after 25 minutes batting and the home county could congratulate themselves on a useful start. Before another run had been added, however, Ellerker only half-hit a well-pitched up delivery by Bland and was easily taken by the Notts. skipper, fielding at mid-off.

R. Howl, who plays for the Wolverhampton club, came in first wicket down, but at 32

Fitton was taken at the wicket by Wheat, who is a very alert little man, and the usefulness of the early runs may soon be apparent.

Joined by Lockett, who put up an impressive all-round performance on Oldham's behalf on Saturday, Howl, who had begun shakily, revealed a measure of resolution in several scoring strokes. Harris now bowled with one slip and a fairly deep third man. He kept a splendid length for the most part and his methods dictated a watchful attitude even on the part of the Oldham professional.

The rate of run getting had now steadied down appreciably and Bland was fighting his deliveries cleverly.

Boundaries for Lockett.

When, at length, Lockett found opportunity of turning Harris round the corner for a brace it was the first scoring shot of any note for quite 10 minutes, but he was able to repeat it in the same over, 40 being registered without further loss. Howl also turned Bland's faster ball to the fine leg boundary, and when Lockett took two 4's off Harris in one over the half-century went up after 63 minutes batting.

When Copley took over from Harris at 58 it was the first bowling change of the innings. As it happened it was a double change for Gunn relieved Bland at the railway end, Lockett marking the occasion by square-cutting Gunn beautifully to the rails.

Copley, who bowls slow left arm, sent down an assortment of deliveries in his first two overs, and two full tosses escaped punishment surprisingly.

Finding his happiest mood, Lockett was severe on Gunn, and took a couple of fours off that young bowler first a handsome leg-hit, and the second a sweeping stroke to the fine leg boundary. He found a steady partner in Howl and with 70 on the board the pair were still together.

Third Wicket Down.

Whenever opportunity presented itself Lockett availed himself to the full and a straight drive off Gunn was a perfectly-timed shot that allowed for no argument.

Copley occasionally made the ball turn quickly from the off but very rarely was he able to beat the bat.

The third wicket fell at 84, Howl playing a cross bat to one of Gunn's better deliveries, and having his stumps seriously disturbed. His contribution of 13 had occupied him over an hour, but it was a helpful sort of cautiousness. The partnership had realised 52.

With Heath joining Lockett, a further bowling change was made. Bland resuming at the pavilion end vice Copley just before lunch.

Lockett smote another loose one from Gunn to the square leg boundary, and four byes helped to send up the 100 after an hour and 10 minutes' batting.

Lockett's Fifty.

Bland and Harris bowled on the resumption, and Lockett reached his half-century by square-cutting the amateur bowler with power and precision to the tennis courts.

Two deliveries later, however, Bland derived a measure of consolation by getting Heath taken at the wicket. Wheat snapping the ball cleverly as the Staffordshire captain snicked a ball to the off. Heath had collected several good scoring spots before the adjournment, principally to the on.

Harris bowled this time from the railway end, and with the sun getting through periodically and the clouds fairly high, there seemed to be prospects of a full afternoon's cricket.

Again Lockett took full toll of a short-pitched delivery from Harris on the leg-side, and the Staffordshire total began to assume useful proportions.

When Bland overpitched one the Oldham pro. bumped it straight to the boundary, and he provided the real problem for the Notts. bowlers. His was the praiseworthy policy of treating the bowling on its merits.

After driving Bland to the off-boundary, and including several other good strokes in his brief knock, Barnes provided that bowler with his third victim of the innings, being well beaten in playing back to a delivery which came quickly off the pitch. Half the side were out for 152 when Ikin became associated with Lockett.

The Great Chell man got off the mark quickly with a crisp shot to the leg boundary off Harris, who gave way next over to Gunn. Runs continued to come freely, and the new bowler showed only a moderate command of length.

Lockett Out.

Lockett easily passed his previous best effort for the County this season, and appeared to be well set for his century. In the eighties he made a risky shot over square leg's head off Gunn, but it can hardly be regarded as a chance. Bland gave him most trouble and appeared very confidently once for a catch at the wicket.

Fortune smiled on the Oldham pro. when he drove the ball hard and high in the direction of the square leg boundary where the amateur, Rhodes, was posted, but the fieldman just failed to reach it in such a position as to have a reasonable chance of bringing off the catch, and Ikin was unlucky to see a skier off Gunn fall just out of harm's way.

Later, Ikin swept one from Gunn to the leg boundary, but at 180 he lost Lockett who, after an uncomfortable spell against Bland, was well beaten by that bowler when only a dozen short of his century. It was a characteristic Lockett innings, marked by clever driving and well-placed shots to leg. He hit twelve fours during his two hours at the crease.

With the Staffordshire total approaching the second century, S. D. Rhodes was given a trial at the railway end vice Gunn, but runs continued to come at a merry pace, both Ikin and Smith bringing off good strokes, principally to the on.

The 200 was signalled after the innings had lasted just over three hours. Smith immediately off-drove Rhodes to the rails, and Ikin meted out similar treatment to Harris, who had resumed in place of Bland.

STAFFORDSHIRE—First Innings.

G A Fitton c Wheat b Harris	9
W H Ellerker c Knight b Bland	18
R Howl b Gunn	13
Lockett b Bland	88
J S Heath c Wheat b Bland	17
Barnes b Bland	11
A W Ikin c and b Rhodes	32
A Smith hit wkt. b Gunn	33
E Mayer b Gunn	6
E P Cross b Bland	15
Boon not out	16
Extras	12
Total	270

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

Bland	36.2	8	82	5
Harris	25	5	76	1
Copley	6	4	3	0
Gunn	19	2	73	3
Knowles	2	0	12	0
Rhodes	4	1	12	1

FALL OF WICKETS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
30	32	84	120	152	133	213	229	252	270

LOCKETT PLAYS A BIG PART.

Takes Six Wickets for 45 Runs.

NOTTS II. OUTPLAYED.

Staffordshire gained a brilliant victory over Notts II. at Stoke to-day, winning by an innings and 35 runs.

Lockett, who yesterday played a fine innings of 88, followed up that performance by an equally meritorious piece of bowling.

His analysis was six wickets for 45 runs. Barnes and Ellerker shared the other four.

ALL OVER BY LUNCH.

(BY "OUTFIELD.")

STOKE, Tuesday.

Just as day in the hands of the potter were the young Notts batsmen in the hands of Sydney Barnes between 5 and 6 o'clock last evening. That the side contrived to put together a total of 59 in their first innings was almost entirely due to the resolution of young Victor Gunn, who had the satisfaction of carrying his bat through the innings, and to quite a brave little display late on by Copley.

In capturing seven wickets for 4 runs apiece in 13 overs, Barnes only added to his remarkable sequence of bowling performances for the County this season, 9 for 32 and 7 for 55 against Lancashire II., 7 for 43 against Bucks, 6 for 40 against Cheshire, 7 for 41, and 5 for 18 against Lincolnshire, and so on.

Following on 211 behind, Notts II. fared rather better, though it was a bitter pill for them when Victor Gunn was beaten and bowled by Lockett with what proved to be the best ball of the day. As they had still 161 runs to get in order to avert an innings defeat, it will be seen what a stern task awaited Shipston, Harris and Co. on the L.M. and S. ground this morning.

I should have mentioned that Barnes was not called upon to bowl at all in the Notts second innings as far as it went, last night.

Unsettled Weather.

The weather was dull and cool about the time fixed for the resumption of play this morning, and light rain was falling when Shipston and Harris went out to continue the Notts. innings. Lockett bowled from the railway end, and, as was to be expected with conditions so unsettled, Barnes was called upon to share in the attack.

Shipston began the day's scoring by turning Barnes to leg for two, and in the next over cut the same bowler high over the head of the slips for the same number.

Facing Lockett, Harris was a model of cautious batmanship, and 15 minutes saw no more than seven runs added to the overnight score. Shipston hazarded a big drive off Barnes, but there was a scout in the deep, and the effort only counted one. Barnes often had the batsmen in difficulties, but they managed to extricate themselves.

More than once Shipston displayed impatience with the process of being pegged down, and when Barnes sent along the right one, he lifted the ball very cleverly into the stand at the pavilion end. Another straight drive by Shipston, also of Barnes looked a certain four, till the safe hands of Pitton intervened on the boundary's edge.

Shortly afterwards Shipston hit out at a no-ball from Lockett, who accepted a catch high over his head with one hand, but the

batsman stated out, of course.

It was all Shipston in the early stages of the play, and after he had cut Barnes to the rails, dogmatically he lifted one from the same bowler between Heath and Howl, the last-named saving a four by a quick sprint. Eighty was skinned without further loss, and Shipston had made practically all the runs this morning.

Barnes Rested.

Boon superseded Lockett in the attack, and a couple of overs later Barnes was rested in favour of Mayer, whose initial delivery Shipston square-cut to the boundary, a stroke of marked beauty and precision. As the same batsman hit him to leg for 3, the Norton man's first over yielded 7 runs.

When he had been at the crease 45 minutes, Harris had notched just a single. Meantime, his partner had collected 35 by excellent forcing methods.

With the change in attack, however, Harris discovered a brighter vein, and runs came quite briskly. The 100 went up with the same pair together, and Shipston cut Boon to the rails handsomely.

Evidently the Notts youngsters were determined, to make a big effort to pull the game out of the fire if at all possible.

With 110 on the board, Ellerker was requisitioned in place of Boon the third bowling change of the morning. I was successful, too, for Shipston nibbled twice at off-balls, and the second time proved fatal. Boon snapping him up very neatly at third slip, sixty-two had been added for the third wicket, and Shipston claimed no less than 49 of them. The outgoing batsman had hit a six, and four 4's in his resolute innings.

When Knowles joined Harris, Notts required 98 to stave off the innings defeat. Rain was falling heavily hereabouts and one gathered that the bowlers were operating under a considerable handicap.

Lockett's Third Victim.

Lockett resumed vice Mayer and immediately claimed his third victim of the innings when Harris was adjudged lbw. In just reaching double figures, Harris had been occupied five minutes over the hour. It was a glorious display, but, I suppose, intended to be a useful one.

The next bowling move was the return of Boon at the railway end in place of Ellerker, who had performed useful service in breaking up the most irritating partnership of the innings, but Lockett was the bowler who gave most trouble this morning, and with the total at 125, he completely beat the amateur Rhodes. With half their wickets down now, Notts were still 86 runs in deficit, and victory for the home county seemed well in sight.

Knowles batted with confidence, but had a huge slice of luck when he launched out at Lockett and was missed in the deep—by Pitton above all people. It appeared that the fieldsmen had plenty of time to judge the catch, but he got too far under the ball and it bounced out of his hands.

The Notts captain, T. N. Knight, also had a life off Lockett when he stepped a yard out of his ground and missed the ball. Fortunately for him it eluded Cross too, and went for byes. Ellerker was brought back at the railway end and came near bowling Knight with a ball that got right through and just missed the stumps.

Once more, however, it was Lockett who claimed definite success, for he clean bowled Knowles with a deceptive sort of delivery that had the batsman in a maze. The sixth wicket fell at 150 and the seventh two runs later.

Innings Victory.

Another cleverly-judged slip catch by Boon brought about the dismissal of the Notts, captain, and the end was in sight when R.D.F. Bland joined Hardstaff, and Barnes took over at the end from which Lockett had operated so successfully this morning, the Oldham professional relieving Ellerker at the other end.

Bland fell immediately a victim to Barnes, and three runs later Hardstaff was bowled. The rain was falling smartly now and it was as well for Staffordshire that such good progress had been made during the morning.

The venture closed when Lockett clean bowled Copley at 176, Staffordshire winning by an innings and 35 runs.

Lockett came out with the best bowling figures, six for 45, and Barnes and Ellerker claimed two victims at a cost of 31 and 25 runs respectively.

STAFFORDSHIRE—First Innings.

G A Pitton c Wheat b Harris	9
W H Ellerker c Knight b Bland	18
R Howl b Gunn	13
Lockett b Bland	88
J S Heath c Wheat o Bland	17
Barnes b Bland	11
A W Ikin c and b Rhodes	32
A Smith hit wkt. b Gunn	33
E Mayer b Gunn	6
E P Cross b Bland	15
Boon not out	16
Extras	12

Total 270

NOTTS II.—First Innings.

Gunn (G V) not out	26
Keeton lbw b Ellerker	1
Shipston lbw b Barnes	1
Harris b Barnes	4
T N Knight b Barnes	0
S D Rhodes c Boon b Barnes	2
Knowles b Ellerker	7
Hardstaff c Boon b Barnes	1
R D F Bland lbw b Barnes	0
Copley c and b Boon	13
Wheat c Boon b Barnes	4

Total 59

NOTTS II.—Second Innings.

Gunn (G V) b Lockett	31
Keeton lbw b Lockett	17
Shipston c Boon b Ellerker	49
Harris lbw b Lockett	10
Knowles b Lockett	20
S D Rhodes b Lockett	1
T N Knight c Boon b Ellerker	2
Hardstaff b Barnes	4
R D F Bland b Barnes	3
Copley b Lockett	9
Wheat not out	7
Extras	23

Total 176

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Bland	36.2	8	82	5
Harris	25	5	76	1
Copley	6	4	3	0
Gunn	19	2	73	3
Knowles	2	0	12	0
Rhodes	4	1	12	1

Notts II.—First Innings.

Barnes	13	1	28	7
Ellerker	11	4	26	2
Boon	1	0	5	1

Notts II.—Second Innings.

Barnes	11	1	31	2
Lockett	27.3	7	45	6
Ellerker	14	3	25	2
Boon	11	1	42	0
Mayer	6	3	10	0

FALL OF WICKETS.

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
30	32	84	120	152	183	213	229	252	270

Notts.—First Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	27	21	21	23	30	33	33	54	59

Notts II.—Second Innings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
47	51	113	119	125	150	152	157	160	176

COUNTY CRICKET

Staffs. v. Notts. 2nd

A FINE DAY'S WORK AT STOKE

Barnes and Lockett as the Stars

By "THE CRITIC"

The return match between Staffordshire and Notts II, was begun at Stoke on Monday, when a fairly good crowd saw the home team in one of their dominant moods, the young Notts team being so utterly over-played that when stumps were drawn in the evening they were in a hopeless position, having lost two wickets in their second innings and requiring 161 runs to avoid being beaten in a single innings. The form of the Staffordshire team has been singularly variable this season. There have been times when the play has been mediocre—the batting spineless and the fielding below par. But there have also been occasions when the side has played in a manner much more worthy of Staffordshire's reputation during the last quarter of a century. On Monday they touched about the highest level they have reached this season. The Notts bowling was weaker than usual, and they took toll of it, and then they supported smartly another supremely great spell of bowling by Barnes.

There were two changes in the side. Homer and Woodhouse were unable to play, and E. Mayer, professional to the Norton club, and R. Howl, of Wolverhampton, took their places. The last-named is younger brother of Clifford Howl, who was a regular member of the team a few years ago, and he had his first experience of county cricket. Seeing that he batted for an hour and five minutes without giving a chance, he must be credited with a satisfactory debut, but he seemed a little over-awed and was very slow. Whether it is his natural bent I don't know, as I have not previously seen him bat, but one would have liked to see a little more freedom after he had been long enough at the crease to get a good sight of the ball. He fielded well and will probably get further opportunity.

Stanley Heath won the toss for a change, and the wicket on which Staffordshire took first innings was, to my mind, just what a cricket pitch ought to be. That is to say, it was a wicket which gave batsman and bowler a reasonably equal chance. The ball could be made to turn on it, but not a great deal, and it played well, very few balls getting up at all awkwardly. Both good batting and good bowling had its opportunity, and as most of the good batting and good bowling was on the Staffordshire side the visitors were overwhelmed.

Fitton had an unusual opening partner in Ellerker, but the two played well together for half-an-hour against the left-arm bowling of Bland and the right-arm, medium-paced attack of Harris. Ellerker was, of course, much freer in style than the left-hander, and he had scored the major portion of the runs when at 30 he fell to his most frequent error. He drove Harris straight back with such force that the bowler could not hold the catch, but he did not profit by the warning, for he tried to drive the next ball, failed to keep it down, and was caught at mid-off. Fitton has had an unfortunate time this season, and once more he failed just when he looked settled for a long stay. He went feeling for an off-ball, and was caught at the wicket. Then came an hour's partnership between R. Howl and Lockett, and again there was a strong contrast. Howl was passive, Lockett was aggressive. He had not been long at the wicket before he brought his penchant for leg-hitting into play, and both bowlers were crashed to the boundary. He made most of the 52 added for the third wicket, and he and Stanley Heath played entertaining cricket after the departure of Howl. But the break for lunch was fatal to the captain, for he was snapped at the wicket immediately after the resumption from Bland's spinner. This young amateur bowls with the left arm, and he can turn them back from the leg nicely and also swing in the other way, and he varies his pace. He has done well in the 1st XI, several

times, and he was much the best bowler on this occasion, the team being more sparsely furnished with bowling talent than I ever remember. He beat Barnes by a ball which must have turned a good deal, for the veteran played back and missed it completely. With Ikin, Lockett went on hammering the bowling with great impartiality but with discrimination, until he tried to pull the left-hander and was bowled. It looked too good a length to take liberties with, and probably Lockett was beaten by a bit of extra pace off the pitch. He had played a fine innings, including a dozen fours, had batted 2½ hours, and had given only one real chance, and that a tremendously hot return very low to Gunn's left hand with his score at 31. When he left the total was 183 for 6 wickets, and the good batting was by no means over. Ikin and Arthur Smith added 30, and the former had hit five consecutive fours when he tamely returned one to Knowles. Then Mayer stayed while the young Chell batsman got runs, chiefly by slashing off-drives, so that a further 39 were added. Cross also batted well, and Boon had a few big hits, including a mighty six to long-on off Harris. So the total reached the satisfying figure of 270 as the result of five minutes less than four hours' batting.

The Rout of Notts.

My strong impression while Staffs. were batting was that they were piling up a score that would prove to be far beyond the reach of the visitors. That they had accomplished a really good batting performance was made very evident when Notts. faced the Staffordshire bowlers. Not only were they helpless before the genius of Barnes, but they found Ellerker far from easy to play, and whilst dismissing them for a paltry 59 in an hour and 20 minutes, Staffordshire had such a bowler as Lockett in reserve. Certainly, the pitch had worn a little at one end, but there was no change to account for the disparity between scores of 270 and 59. G. V. Gunn was alone able to play the bowling at all. And I think if he had chanced to receive either of several of Barnes's deliveries, which were fatal to his colleagues, he also would have been numbered among the slain. However, that is not to detract from the merit of his batting, for he played with great skill to carry his bat through the innings. I don't think he gave a chance, and the several balls that completely beat him beat the wicket also. Ellerker was swinging well, and got the first wicket when he had Keeton lbw, but then Barnes began his cake-walk through the team. Shipston, a fine, forcing bat, was beaten by greater pace off the pitch and trapped leg-before at 17, and Harris, a dour sticker, and the Notts. skipper bowled by successive balls at 21. Both succumbed to exactly the same ball, the merit of which was emphasised by the fact that the cautious Harris went back to it, and was beaten, whilst the amateur played right forward in an attempt to smother it, with the same result. In each case the ball pitched practically on the leg stump, and flashed across to hit the off. And the deadly length can be judged by the fact that one batsman was driven back, the other drawn forward, though the two balls pitched on the same spot, as nearly as one could tell. It was, "the Barnes ball," which will be famous long after Barnes's career has ended. The left-hander breaking back from leg simply cannot get that paralysing acceleration of speed from the pitch together with the break. Indeed, I have never seen any other right-hander who could bowl it like Barnes, not even like Barnes can yet.

Then the leg-trap was set for Rhodes, who, as if quite willing to oblige, popped the ball into the hands of Boon at short leg. The lengthy Knowles, another highly promising youngster was well beaten by Ellerker, and with 33 on the board, Hardstaff gave Boon another sharp catch, and Bland was lbw to the next ball—two in two balls for the second time. Copley and Wheat each hit Barnes for four, but with Boon relieving Ellerker, the end soon came, and Barnes had another wonderful analysis with seven for 28. In four successive innings in eight days he had taken 30 wickets for Staffordshire at an average cost of 5.26, and in no case was the wicket a really difficult one, such as any spin bowler might be expected to work havoc on.

Before the close of play Notts, who followed on 211 behind, scored 50 for the

loss of two wickets, and on Tuesday they batted till lunch time to carry their score to 176. Barnes bowled seven overs when play was resumed, but Shipston hit out with such resolution, that the great bowler was relieved without having got a wicket. Shipston drove him on to the roof of the stand for six, and in another over hit him for 2, 4, and 3. One or two strokes were a bit streaky, but Barnes could not check his hitting, whilst Harris played a passive role at the other end, scoring one run in three-quarters of an hour. Lockett and Ellerker bowled well, and after the departure of Shipston, caught in the gully, when one short of his fifty, the batting broke down. Lockett turned the ball both ways, and more than once beat the bat, the wicket, and the wicket keeper by his break. He bowled with more vim than on several preceding occasions, and in taking six wickets for 45, obtained a fine analysis, which might easily have been better, for one or two chances were missed off him, notably one in the long field by Fitton, which was a bad mistake. Barnes had another turn late in the innings, and clean bowled Bland and Hardstaff before another run was scored from him, just to show that he could do it again, if required. Staffs. won by an innings and 35 runs. Scores and analysis:—

Staffordshire.—1st Inns.

G. A. Fitton c Wheat b Harris	9
W. H. Ellerker c Knight b Bland	13
R. Howl b Gunn	18
Lockett b Bland	88
W. H. Heath c Wheat b Bland	17
Barnes b Bland	11
A. W. Ikin c and b Rhodes	32
A. Smith hit wkt. b Gunn	33
E. Mayer b Gunn	6
E. P. Cross b Bland	15
Boon not out	12
Extras	16
Total	270

Notts II.—1st Inns.

G. V. Gunn not out	26
Keeton lbw b Ellerker	1
Shipston lbw b Barnes	1
Harris b Barnes	4
T. N. Knight b Barnes	0
S. D. Rhodes c Boon b Barnes	2
Knowles b Ellerker	7
Hardstaff c Boon b Barnes	1
R. D. F. Bland lbw b Barnes	0
Copley c and b Boon	13
Wheat c Boon b Barnes	4
Extras	16
Total	59

2nd Innings

G. V. Gunn b Lockett	31
Keeton lbw b Lockett	17
Shipston c Boon b Ellerker	49
Harris lbw b Lockett	10
T. N. Knight c Boon b Ellerker	2
S. D. Rhodes b Lockett	1
Knowles b Lockett	20
Hardstaff b Barnes	4
R. D. F. Bland b Barnes	3
Copley b Lockett	9
Wheat not out	7
Extras	23
Total	176

BOWLING ANALYSIS

Staffordshire

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Bland	36.2	8	82	5
Harris	25	5	76	1
Copley	6	4	3	0
Gunn	19	2	73	3
Knowles	2	0	12	0
Rhodes	4	1	12	1

Notts. II.—1st Inns.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	13	1	28	7
Ellerker	11	4	26	2
Boon	1	0	5	1

2nd Inns.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	11	2	31	2
Ellerker	14	3	25	2
Boon	14	1	42	0
Lockett	27.3	7	45	6
Mayer	6	3	10	0

CLUB AND LEAGUE CRICKET

North Staffordshire and District
League

NANTWICH CONSOLIDATE —
PORTHILL CRACK UP

Stone's Great Victory

By "THE CRITIC"

There was no interference with cricket in North Staffordshire, on Saturday, and all the league matches were played to a mish in pleasant conditions, and in most cases furnished some interesting cricket. There were thrilling finishes at Silverdale and Norton, which redeemed otherwise rather drab games. Of the four clubs still in the running for championship honours, Nantwich, Burslem, and Great Chell obtained pronounced victories, and as the victims of the first-named were Porthill, the champions safely negotiated a rather dangerous obstacle, whilst the Wolstanton team cracked badly in the race home, and must be regarded as definitely "out of the hunt." The batting of the team at Nantwich was totally unworthy of their prowess, even allowing for the fact that the strong Nantwich bowling was suited by the prevailing conditions.

Thus the championship issue was narrowed down to a triangular struggle, in which Burslem and Chell are making heroic efforts to break the South Cheshire dominance. In spite of this dual challenge, however, the odds are certainly on Nantwich, whose remaining matches are Longton and Leek away, and Crewe and Knypersley at home. This is a programme which should not very seriously test the champions if form could be depended on, but in cricket one never knows, and either Burslem or Chell may yet get their chance if they stick to it and make no mistakes. For, on occasion, the mighty fall when least expected. Burslem, one point behind the leaders, have to meet Silverdale at home, and go to Bignall End, Stone, and Chell, and Great Chell, besides this final clash with Burslem on September 7, have to go to Crewe (to-day) and Knypersley, and entertain Leek. If Nantwich should stumble, the actual championship issue might conceivably depend upon the result of the Chell-Burslem encounter on the closing day of the season.

As Silverdale allowed their home match with Crewe to slip through their fingers after a winning start, and Stone brought off their handsomest win of the season by completely crushing Leek, the colliery village have dropped to the eleventh place, with only Knypersley, the plucky victims of misfortune, below them.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Nantwich	18	12	2	4	28
Burslem	18	13	4	1	27
Great Chell	18	10	2	6	26
Porthill	18	10	6	2	22
Norton	18	8	6	4	20
Longton	18	6	7	5	17
Leek	18	7	9	2	16
Bignall End	18	6	10	2	14
Crewe Alex.	18	5	9	4	14
Stone	18	6	10	2	14
Silverdale	18	4	10	4	12
Knypersley	18	1	13	4	6

Thrilling End to a Tame Match

Pleasantly situated on an eminence on the Keele side of the colliery village, the Silverdale ground commands a panoramic view of Newcastle, Wolstanton, the northern part of the Potteries, and the country beyond, and on a sunny day is a quite delightful spot. If one's long-distance sight is good, the players can be seen moving about on the Porthill ground. And what improvements have been effected since I first knew the home of the Silverdale club, with its steep embankment not so many yards from the pitch on the one side, its far-stretching slope, down which fielders disappeared from view, on the other, and the circumscribed dressing accommodation of its little, old pavilion. Years ago that embankment was cut away, and the material used to level up the slope (just

as was done on the Wolverhampton club's beautiful ground at Tettenhall). But at Silverdale the embankment was much more abrupt and much higher than at Tettenhall, and the slope on the other side more pronounced. And years ago also a commodious pavilion, with roomy dressing apartments, a large central tea-room, and tiers of seats for spectators completed the equipment of a ground worthy of the long and honourable traditions of Silverdale cricket. And for several seasons now the tennis section have enjoyed the use of a couple of excellent hard courts. How much the club owes to its two long-service officials, its honoured President, Mr. Morris, and its loyal Hon. Secretary, Mr. Rushton, cannot be calculated. They have seen the entire transformation which I have described come about during their official tenure, and still they carry on. I expected to meet these two devoted gentlemen when I renewed acquaintance with the Silverdale ground for the first time this season, and I was not disappointed.

But "the play's the thing," so to the play. There were familiar faces missing from both the Silverdale and Crewe teams. The Alexandra Committee are, I understand, so anxious to find new blood that they are giving some of the older players a rest, and the home side were without their Captain, J. Coeks, their professional, Jack Cooper, and E. Groome. And there were cripples, too, on both sides. Herbert Sedgwick was suffering from such a badly sceptic thumb on his right hand that playing at all seemed unwise, and the same might be said of A. Salmon, the Silverdale bowler, who was severely handicapped by boils. J. Ankers met with an injury in a mid-week knock-out match, which was a trouble to him, and C. F. Rushton, though he played the best cricket of the afternoon, was suffering from biliousness. It was a disappointment that Salmon was scarcely able to bowl at all, for it was my first opportunity of seeing him in action. He has made a successful debut in league cricket this season, after being in the Army in India for five years, and playing a good deal of cricket out there. He is a fast-medium right-arm bowler, and I am told can make the ball come very quickly from the pitch, and sometimes turns slightly from the off and sometimes swings away. The two or three overs I saw him deliver were no criterion whatever, as he was obviously in pain, and was unable to continue. I saw enough, however, to confirm the idea that he is a very useful recruit for Silverdale, and he also hit so well in the last crucial moments of the game that it was sheer bad luck that he did not win the match. He is a native of Leyceet, a mining village a mile or so from Silverdale.

Crewe made such a disastrous start that they lost four wickets for 19. Two young players opened the innings, R. Kirkham and G. Garrett, and another new Silverdale bowler, G. O. Holland, shared the bowling with Ben Griffiths. The last named did not bowl as well as I have seen him, but Garrett turned one into five leg's hand with only three scored. Holland was Silverdale's best bowler. Delivering the ball from a big height, he kept a good length, and bowled at a nice pace, and some of his deliveries went away a little with his arm. He is a student at Leeds University, where he has recently taken a degree, but I gathered that he is likely to be available for Silverdale in the future. Kirkham shaped well, playing his defensive strokes with a commendably straight bat, and he was perhaps a little unfortunate to pull a full-pitch from Holland on to his off-stump. Sedgwick and H. H. Owen, another recent promotion, then came together, and the professional dropped straight into the form which has brought him such a harvest of runs lately, in spite of his bandaged thumb. He was playing with such confidence that I had visions of another big score,

which were rudely dissipated when Owen ran him out, by calling him for a foolish run. Then Holland made one rear to get Fred Walker caught in the slips, and Silverdale seemed to have a winning grip on the game, especially when, with Salmon and Beech bowling, Owen and J. Prince had gone, and six wickets were down for 35. From that point, however, Crewe were allowed to pull the game round. J. Dickenson offered resistance, but Holland bowled him with a bailer. Seven wickets down for 53. But then G. Banks (25) and H. Norman

(28), took the score to 92. Banks played an extraordinary innings, for he drew right away from every ball, and played with his bat all a-slant. The first ball he touched went over the heads of the slip fielders. But no attempt was made to place the field for him, and Griffiths sent him three half-volleys in one over, which were lofted to the "off" boundary, with no fielder to either take catches or save fours. When eventually Banks was bowled by a straight half-volley, his feet were almost a yard back from the line of the wicket as he made his swipe. The 25 runs he scored cost Silverdale the match, and—well, they ought not to have been scored. Norman battea quite well until Ward came on, and tossed up slows, which yorked both him and Woodhall. The total reached 114. It was a poor exhibition of batting against very moderate bowling, and the rate of scoring was slow to wearisomeness.

Holland and Beech were the best of the bowlers, and the former had three for 31, but the crying need was for a spin bowler. There is too much of a sameness about the Silverdale attack, and a bowler who could spin the ball and keep a length would be a "god-send" to them. A team of virile batsmen, as, for example, Great Chell, would have taken heavy toll of most of the stuff that was served up on this occasion. But the Crewe batting was no better, to say the least, than the Silverdale bowling.

With the Silverdale innings, it was quite different. Both the bowling and batting were of better class. How Herbert Sedgwick managed to bowl at all with a thumb that had been operated on only a day or two before was a matter of surprise, but he did, and cleverly, too. He mixed his fast ball up with a slow one, which he pitched well up, and turned both ways, and C. Coffin kept a good length, and at intervals made the ball turn from leg. If these two could have bowled at their own side, they would have made fewer runs. But J. O. Davies and A. Ward, who opened the innings, batted well. I should like to see Ward have a trial for Staffordshire. He has a weakness in lunging at "off" balls, which should be left alone, without getting his foot across, but he can surely get out of that. This should have cost him his wicket quite early, for Coffin missed him in the slips off Sedgwick. The professional's slow one bowled Davies and Ankers, the latter making a bad stroke, perhaps because he was hampered by his injured groin, and perhaps because he was expecting leg-break, which wasn't there. Anyway, he played across a simple ball. Ward and J. Cook, a young player promoted from the second XI., were bowled by Coffin, with balls that turned from leg, and Ward's dismissal was curious. He did not attempt to play the ball, but in covering up with his pads, left room for the ball to hit the off-stump. It was a foolish lapse, for the ball must have been pitched so nearly on the wicket as to demand playing. He had played some good bowling, and his 20 comprised several beautiful strokes.

J. Whalen (acting captain) and Beech stayed for a time, and Sedgwick was superseded by Banks, mistaken tactics to my mind. Banks, however, bowled well, making the ball swing away and keeping a good length. He got Beech caught at the wicket, and with five wickets down for 50, Silverdale were obviously in danger. But Whalen was batting in his old form, and when Charlie Rushton joined him, Silverdale stock rose. The left-hander played like a class batsman from the first ball he received. The pair got within 20 runs of victory before Whalen (29) was tempted by Sedgwick's slow ball, and edged it up on the "off." Then Norman was tried with slow off-spinners, and Holland influenced probably by inane shouts from the ring to "hit him," jumped in, and was stumped. Griffiths did likewise, and Green was bowled by Coffin, so that four wickets had gone in rapid succession, and Salmon went in last with 17 runs still required. He promptly hit Norman for four, and altogether 11 were added, amidst growing excitement. Norman had a fielder near the boundary at deep leg, but when Salmon got well hold of a leg ball, it locked a thousand to one on its counting four runs. The ball was travelling very fast, but Owen sprinted some ten yards, and leapt high in the air to take an extraordinary one-handed catch, and win the match for Crewe by five runs. It was bad luck for both Salmon and Silverdale, for the stroke would have been a boundary 99 times out of a 100. But it was a catch that

deserved to be a match-winner. Huston was not out 25, which represented the classiest batting in the match. Norman got his three wickets for six runs, Sedgwick had three for 38, and Coffin three for 32.

Thus a featureless game had a dramatic and memorable termination. And the end was quite in keeping with my own experience of the Silverdale ground, which includes quite a number of sensational finishes. One of them is, perhaps, worth recalling. It happened many years ago when Porthill went to Silverdale with Bennett and King as their two professionals. King (brother of the famous Leicestershire player) was more of a batsman than a bowler. But on this occasion when Silverdale had rallied from a bad position, and wanted two runs to win, with three wickets in hand, King was called up to bowl. With his first three balls he did the "hat-trick," and Porthill won by one run. And I could tell of other excitements at Silverdale if space permitted.

Porthill's Crash at Nantwich

Porthill revealed inability to rise to a big occasion at Nantwich. If they could have subdued the champions, it would have made the championship issue very open, but their batting was a failure, and Nantwich gained a comfortable win to greatly enhance their prospects of a hat-trick of championships. J. S. Heath once more ploughed a lovely furrow, for though G. A. F. Bagguley maintained a good defence for nearly an hour, and helped his Captain to add 54 for the fourth wicket, he got no other support, and his 41 was about the only redeeming feature in the visitors' innings of 104. It was L. Haighton who worked most of the havoc in the Porthill ranks, for he took five wickets for 32 by some clever bowling. F. W. Slight (31) and H. E. Bourne (22) put the champions well on the way, and they won by six wickets, finishing at 150 for eight.

Burslem continued their victorious march, putting Kynpersley out at Cobridge for 89 (Taylor five for 36, R. Hollowood four for 25), and won by the same margin as Nantwich, though they went on to hit up 162 for the loss of only five wickets. The chief run-getters were A. Birch 49, Roy Hollowood 45, and E. A. Oliver 36 not out.

Great Chell made a sorry mess of Longton, for, declaring at 221 for 6, they dismissed the visitors for 44. W. Vodrey and Ikin each made 62, and W. Warburton played another good innings of 44 before being run out. S. Welch (4 for 15) and Frank Vodrey (4 for 26) were responsible for the utter collapse of Longton.

E. J. Johnson's Freak Analysis

Lee were the visitors to Stone, and the match was one I should dearly have liked to see, if only for an amazing piece of bowling by my old friend and club-mate of long ago, E. J. Johnson. But to take things in order, Stone batted first, and though some of the regular players were absent, they had the assistance of Bernard Meakin, which meant a great deal. F. Ravenscroft (25) and Lee made a useful stand for the second wicket, and Lee and B. Meakin then settled down to a fine partnership in which the batting was of high class. Lee, who was let off early at mid-off missed his fifty by one run, but the old county captain contributed 59 of the best. The importance of fielding is often emphasised, and one wonders what would have happened in this instance if Lee had been out immediately, instead of staying to get 49. Not improbably, if the catch had been accepted, it would have changed the whole character of the game. However, Lee and Stone profited by the slip, the batsmen got definitely on top, and Stone ran up the good score of 180 for five wickets, and declared. Then Ernest Johnson "took the stage," so to speak, and bowled for about an hour and a quarter for two runs. He delivered 14 overs, 12 of which were maidens, for two runs and five wickets. If his own idea that each maiden over should be worth so many runs to the fielding side that had been in operation, he would have scored heavily for Stone. But then his theory is that if the penalty were imposed, there would be few maiden overs. The batsmen would have to score or get out. I wonder which in this case. Anyway, five of them could not help getting out, though there was no such inducement to recklessness. The feat is not quite unique, for a year or two ago Alfred Smith, of Longton, bowled all through the innings (I believe

at Crewe) for no runs and five wickets. But only seven or eight overs were then required, I fancy. Fourteen overs for two singles and five wickets is almost more wonderful. Lee took three wickets for 12, so that he had another good day, and Lee were bundled out for 40.

Norton, at home, snatched the points from Bignall End after looking like a well beaten side. Mayer (5 for 30) and Higgins (4 for 31) bowled out the visitors for 86, of which 25 were extras, and L. McEllin and K. Platt were the only double figure scorers. But Douglas White was so deadly that Norton lost nine wickets for 66. J. Martin (22 not out) pulled the match out of the fire, and gave his side victory, amid great excitement, by one wicket. White bowled exceedingly well, and took eight wickets for 26 runs.

BURTON BREWERIES CUP FINAL

During the period of over 30 years in which the competition has been organised, the Burton-on-Trent Breweries Cricket Cup matches have been the means of raising over £1,000 for the Burton Infirmary, in addition to considerable sums for other charities. There was a large attendance on Messrs. Allsopp's ground on Saturday, when the final round for the present season was played between Messrs. Bass and Co.'s and Messrs. Ind Coope and Co.'s teams. Cricket of quite a good standard was witnessed, the principal features being the bowling of J. Ellis (four for 13), and the batting of E. C. Toon, who played well for his 74 for Ind Coope's, and T. Stephenson (35). Ind Coope's won for the first time, the scores being as follows:—

Ind Coope and Co.

H. Reynolds b A. Norton	14
A. Lee c Stephenson b A. Norton	15
D. Robinson run out	24
A. Payton b T. Dunnicliffe	23
G. Meakin b Dilnot	1
E. C. Toon st Morris b A. Norton	74
E. Child b E. H. King	10
R. Jacobs lbw b E. H. King	0
J. Ellis c Dunnicliffe b R. H. King	16
V. Sandland b Dilnot	7
F. Gould not out	3
Extras	4
Total	191

Bowling: E. W. Dilnot two for 81, T. Dunnicliffe one for 30, A. Norton three for 52, E. H. King two for 18, R. H. King one for 23.

Bass and Co.

T. Stephenson c A. Lee b F. Gould	35
L. Hulme lbw b E. C. Toon	27
E. W. Dilnot b J. Ellis	2
J. Thornley b J. Ellis	0
R. A. B. Kind c Payton b F. Gould	11
W. Thomas c R. Jacobs b J. Ellis	3
R. H. King run out	9
E. H. King b Ellis	2
J. Morris not out	10
A. Norton c and b R. Jacobs	10
T. Dunnicliffe c Lee b F. Gould	8
Extras	0
Total	117

Bowling: F. Gould three for 49, A. Payton none for 30, J. Ellis four for 13, G. Meakin none for six, E. C. Toon one for 11, R. Jacobs one for eight, J. Ellis sent down eight overs.

At the conclusion of the game, Mr. E. P. Wood, hon. secretary of the association, in introducing Lady Evershed, said that on behalf of all cricketers he wished publicly to congratulate Sir Herbert Evershed, their president, on the great honour conferred upon him by the King. Lady Evershed then handed the cup to Mr. E. C. Toon, captain of the winning side, who, she congratulated on his team's success.

Mr. Edgar Toon, in accepting the trophy, thanked Lady Evershed for her congratulations. He desired, on behalf of his team, to thank Messrs. Bass and Co. for the sporting manner in which they had played the game, and expressed a hope that the two teams would meet again next year, but with the same result. (Laughter).

Lichfield 1st XI. v. Wednesbury

One of the most exciting matches of the season was seen on the Lichfield cricket field on Saturday. Wednesbury batted first, and so well did Oram bowl that the first wickets fell for 46. Skidmore and Lemman then stopped the rot by taking the score to 76. Oram took five wickets for 27 runs, and Slater two for 33. Lichfield were left with 1hr. 55min. to knock off the total of 151. Cooke was bowled first ball, and Brown then partnered Howard. At 106 Brown, after batting very well, was given out lbw for a useful 32. Plant then came in, and Howard took the score to 118, when Plant, unfortunately, got run out. Howard, who scored a brilliant 94 not out, made the score level with five minutes to go. Wednesbury's fielding was very keen, and at one time they had four men on the boundary to stop Howard, but so well was his placing of the ball that it several times got passed them. It was Oram's benefit match, and there was a good muster of spectators on the field. Scores:—

Wednesbury: W. Davis b Oram 7, W. Hey lbw b Oram 0, G. Winyard c and b Oram 17, H. Hipkiss c Knight b Slater 3, C. Ryder b Oram 2, L. Holmes run out 1, G. Skidmore c Parker b Latham 62, J. Lees b Oram 8, T. Leaman b Mann 12, D. Mollan c and b Slater 15, F. Greenoff not out 13, extras 11; total 151.

Lichfield: Capt. Howard not out 94, R. Cooke b Mollan 0, J. Brown lbw b Ryder 32, W. Plant run out 1, W. Mann b Winyard 1, Major Latham lbw b Ryder 1, F. Rudgard not out 4, extras 22; total (for five wickets) 155. D. Parker, —, Knight, A. Slater, and F. Oram did not bat.

Blymhill v. Shifnal II.

Played at Shifnal on Saturday, the Blymhill eleven winning by 79 runs. Scores:—

Shifnal II.: F. Lawton b Hitchen 4, F. Downes b Hitchen 0, W. Wilson lbw b Price 0, P. Edge b Harper 12, D. Edge b Hitchen 7, H. Walker b Hughes 3, W. Pinton b Hughes 4, E. Nock c Craig b Hughes 7, L. Hollinshead lbw b Hitchen 12, O. Stevens b Medlicott 10, T. Nock not out 6, extras 4; total 69.

Blymhill: A. Hughes b Walker 69, N. Mayland c D. Edge b Wilson 1, H. Harper b Downes 7, W. Lawson c and b Walker 0, R. D. Smith c D. Edge b Wilson 27, R. Hitchen b Walker 0, F. Averill lbw b Wilson 13, W. H. Price b Lawton 7, S. Medlicott lbw b Wilson 10, S. Smith not out 4, A. R. Craig c Walker b Stevens 1, extras 9; total 148.

Stafford v. Holmes Chapel Victoria

Holmes Chapel Victoria.—A. Jackson 3, H. Jackson 23, F. Roberts 14, H. Henshaw 0, G. Pemberton 3, E. Entwistle 7, R. Sutton 3, R. Broughton 5, W. Stubbs not out 34, F. Bishop 11, T. Burton 9, extras 9; total 126.

Stafford.—F. Page 16, W. T. White 4, J. T. W. Neville 52, G. H. Greatorex 10, S. H. Critchley 0, C. A. Woodger 1, A. S. Webb not out 29, E. C. Kenworthy 4, J. N. Page not out 4, extras 3; total (for seven) 131. E. C. Kenworthy took four wickets for 42, A. S. Webb three for 50, and Critchley three for 25.

Stafford II. v. Brewood

Stafford II.—W. C. R. Ellsmoor 41, N. S. Price 7, D. H. Jackson 17, L. J. Birch 4, R. H. Warwick not out 55, H. L. Underwood 4, C. S. Jones not out 30; extras 6; total (for five, dec.) 164.

Brewood.—F. Longman not out 55, F. Bill 27, W. Norgrove 22, J. Hunt not out 3, extras 11; total (for two) 118.

Walsall v. Smethwick

Walsall entertained Smethwick on Saturday, and, going in first, scored 216 for eight wickets in two hours, thanks to Wilkinson's 57 and 64 by J. Whitehouse. Smethwick responded with 135 for four wickets, Webster (48) and Rooper (41) being the top scorers. The result was therefore a fairly even draw, and the batting was on the day's play much stronger than the bowling.

Walsall II, made a very poor show at Smethwick, whose second team dismissed the lot for 89, only three players getting double figures. The home team replied with 138 for nine wickets at the call of time, and thus won easily.

RECOVERY FROM POOR START

72 For Five: 234 For Eight Wickets.

HAZLETON'S FINE FORM.

In their concluding engagement of the season—against Buckinghamshire at High Wycombe—Staffordshire made an excellent start.

Despite some sound batting by A. J. S. James, the home county lost half their wickets for 72 runs, but then followed an excellent recovery.

Battcock hit out freely, and with Hazleton, added 41 runs for the sixth wicket, which fell at 113.

Hazleton then found a good partner in Baker, the pair advancing the total to 215, when both were out.

A SEVENTH WICKET STAND.

HIGH WYCOMBE, Monday.

Glorious weather prevailed in this prettily-situated Buckinghamshire town to-day when Staffordshire appeared in their return Minor Counties engagement with the home county.

Buckinghamshire are, I understand, well in the running for the championship.

When the teams met at Porthill earlier in the month, it will be recalled, the Buckinghamshire men, on a rain-affected pitch, were successful to the extent of gaining first innings points.

On this picturesque ground, last week, Buckinghamshire gained a very fine victory over Surrey II, and they were in optimistic mood this morning. The sun shone brilliantly, and the wicket looked good enough for a glut of runs, though appearances are often deceptive.

Staffordshire Changes.

There were four changes from the Staffordshire team which overcame Notts. II so decisively, H. W. Homer, P. O. Yates (Old Hill), J. Woodhouse, and A. D. Wilkie coming in vice A. W. Ikin, G. A. Fitton, R. Howell, and E. Mayer. Yates was making his first appearance in the county ranks this season, and Wilkie, the Wolverhampton amateur, his second.

The home county, skippered by W. R. Franklin, was strongly represented. Winning the toss, Buckinghamshire took the obvious course of batting first and opened with Franklin and R. H. Brooke, who faced the bowling of Barnes and Ellerker, the latter named bowling from the pavilion end.

A single to the Bucks skipper was the sole product of Barnes' initial over, which saw Brooke twice beaten by the pace of the ball off the pitch. Not at all comfortable against the former England bowler, Brooke, after registering a lucky nick for two, also survived an appeal for lb.w.

Franklin was careful in his methods, though he lashed out once at Barnes, hitting over the head of Woodhouse, posted at square leg. It was another two shot.

Ellerker commanded an excellent length, and once beat Brooke with a capital swinger, though the ball missed the stumps.

Early Successes.

It mattered little, as it happened, for, in his next over Brooke who has scored prolifically in recent matches, was well bowled with a delivery that appeared to swing ever so slightly from leg. As only seven runs were on the board, this was a gratifying success for the fielding side.

There proved to be still better things in store, for, with the total unchanged, Franklin was lb.w. to Barnes. Two good men for seven did not represent a rosy start for the side in the running for honours.

A. G. Skinner opened well by off driving Ellerker to the boundary—a perfectly timed shot between mid-off and cover—this being the most notable scoring stroke of the innings.

Barnes was spinning the ball very cleverly this morning, and frequently had the batsmen feeling on the leg side for deliveries that came right across. This is normally a quick scoring ground, but runs came at a very leisurely pace to-day, and the batsmen were probably abundantly justified in their action. The bowling was consistently accurate and the ground fielding crisp and sure.

Fifteen runs took nearly 40 minutes to compile, and at that to all, Ellerker was rested in favour of Lockett.

An Effective Change.

A resolute partnership by Skinner and James saw the rate of rungetting appreciably accelerated. Both batsmen waited for the right one to come along, and then played good forcing stroke. C. Skinner showed special aptitude for leg shots, and a couple of 4's from his bat were the products of a keen eye and good timing.

With this pair proving stubborn, Boon was given a turn with the ball, and the change proved effective. Skinner, in attempting one of his favourite shots, turned the ball to square leg where Yates held the catch, the third wicket falling at 37.

Afterwards, however, Boon came in for some punishment, and when 50 had been signalled in 75 minutes, Barnes resumed at his old end, Boon subsequently relieving Lockett at the other.

James found another useful partner in Pitchford—one of the two professionals in the home side—and this pair carried the total to 67 before Barnes broke completely through the defence of Pitchford. The ball, of perfect length, rattled the off stump ominously.

W. E. Hazleton, who is obviously a popular figure on this ground, and who registered 60 against the Surrey Colts last week, filled the vacancy.

Half the Side Out.

Things were still not going too well for Bucks, and when James skied a ball from Barnes he was neatly taken by Homer at mid-on. Half the side were now out for 72.

James had shown fine resolution in his innings of 34 and played a big part, along with Skinner, in preventing a home county collapse.

Lockett came on again for Poor in the middle 70's, and Hazleton cut him for a couple, while later he guided him past square leg for a like number. His partner was O. C. Battcock, who bats left hand.

A fluky hit over the head of Ellerker gave Battcock an early 4, but he narrowly escaped being bowled two deliveries later. Battcock was taking his life in his hands, and when he launched out again in this eventful over, the ball went high in the direction of Smith, fielding at long-on. But that usually safe pair of hands failed this time.

Continuing this merry mood, Battcock pulled a shortish one from Barnes over the heads on the leg side—easily the biggest hit of the innings—and off-drove the same bowler to the rails in an over which produced a round dozen.

Lunch was taken with the score at 98 for five Battcock having hit up 23 in rather less than a quarter of an hour, and the time taken for the runs was just two hours.

Century Hoisted.

The rate of progress could hardly be regarded as exhilarating. As I anticipated, the wicket was playing true. Battcock took another four off Barnes on resuming—a hard drive to the off—and sent up the century, with the same aggressive batsman smote the first delivery from Ellerker, who bowled at the other end, to the boundary. With the total at 113, however, the left-hander completely mistimed one of Ellerker's fast ones and was snapped at the wicket. His knock of 38 had occupied him half as many minutes, and included a six and five 4's. That was a bit of Bucks cricket at its best, though the batsman could laugh at his fates.

Barnes having sent down two overs immediately after lunch, Lockett was given another turn, and it was now the turn of Hazleton to force the pace, and he did so effectively, taking a four off Lockett and a similar number off Ellerker, the last by means of a full-blooded straight drive.

The "gate" to-day was one of the best I have seen in Staffordshire's away matches this season, and the home batsmen's sturdy and successful efforts to secure a useful total, were frequently applauded.

L. G. Baker was now associated with Hazleton. He seemed sorely tempted to hit out at Lockett's slows, but rarely found the pitch of the ball convenient. Once, indeed, he was fortunate when he cocked one up dangerously near to where point is normally posted, but there was no fieldman at hand.

A Stubborn Partnership.

This developed into a very stubborn partnership, and Baker emulated the example of his partner by collecting two 4's in one over from Ellerker. The position seemed to demand the return of Barnes, but that did not happen for some time. In fact, the next change was Boon for Lockett at 139, who nearly caused Baker to play on to his wicket. Two runs later Woodhouse took over from Ellerker at the pavilion end.

Woodhouse was unlucky for in his first over he should have had the wicket of Baker, Barnes missing an easy catch.

It was pathetic to see Baker dropped again, this time at the wicket by Cross, Boon being the bowler to suffer.

The 150 was signalled after the innings had lasted 2½ hours, and the pair were still together. Unfortunately, Barnes was unable to bowl, having, I understand, sprained a knee while fielding, and eventually he had to retire, Battcock coming out as substitute.

When 170 appeared on the board, the partnership had realised 57. Hazleton, with two brilliant drives for four off Ellerker, passed his half-century and sent up 200, after 3½ hours' batting. Hazleton was bowled at 215 and Baker left at the same total.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.—First Innings.

W B Franklin lbw b Barnes	4
R H J Brooke b Ellerker	2
A G Skinner c Yates b Boon	16
A J S James c Homer b Barnes	34
Pitchford b Barnes	7
W E Hazleton b Boon	56
L G Baker b Ellerker	46
A V Payne not out	3
R H Rutter not out	13
Extras	13

Total 234

BUCKS. FOIL THEM BY FOUR RUNS.

Barnes and Ellerker in an Eighth Wicket Stand.

PARTNERSHIP OF 74.

After a thrilling struggle for the first innings lead at High Wycombe to-day, Staffordshire finished four runs behind Buckinghamshire.

A brilliant catch at long-on, which dismissed Boon, who made a plucky attempt to hit off the runs required, brought the innings to a close.

W. H. Ellerker carried his bat for 52. He and Barnes batted splendidly to add 74 for the eighth wicket after Staffordshire had shown signs of collapse.

When Buckinghamshire began their second innings there appeared little chance of a definite finish.

RUNS AGAIN PLENTIFUL.

(By "ONLOOKER.")

HIGH WYCOMBE, Tuesday.

A determined stand by two of the younger school of Staffordshire batsmen, A. D. Wilkie and F. Woodhouse, which saw 81 added in a third wicket partnership last night, placed the visiting county at least in a position to challenge the first innings lead in their return match with Bucks.

Fielding Blunders.

The Bucks total of 280 was, of course, impressive, and much larger than at one time appeared probable, but faulty work in the field was the main contributing factor.

Similarly the home county were not blameless in that department, for young Wilkie had two "lives" last night, while in the 40s. and Woodhouse was also let off early in a otherwise admirable innings. Wilkie hit two sixes and revealed a nice variety of strokes off bowling that was only fair.

Credit must be given, too, to Yates and Homer, who put on 40 for the first wicket at the scoring rate of nearly two a minute. That pace was not maintained, of course, but it is sufficient tribute to the mood of the Staffordshire batsmen to say that 31 overs were bowled against them before a single maiden was recorded.

Early Misfortunes.

The sun blazed down again this morning when the overnight not outs, Wilkie (4) and Smith continued the Staffordshire innings against the bowling of Pitchford and Hazleton.

The young Wolverhampton amateur soon reached his half century this morning, and Smith appeared to be travelling comfortably when, with only 19 added to the overnight total, he only half-hit one from Edwards, who was soon brought on vice Pitchford, and was cleverly taken by Rutter at mid-off.

A worse misfortune to the visiting county came one minute later, however, when Wilkie reared forward to the Bucks left-hander and was stumped. It could only have been a matter of inches, but it sufficed, and Franklin whipped off the balls.

By a variety of strokes, the outgoing batsman had built up his best score for the county, and in this innings he hit a couple of 6's and three 4's.

With half the side out, Staffordshire were still 135 behind, and the prospects of a hard fight for the first innings points, which would land them in second or third place in the Minor Counties' chart.

Edwards fought the ball cleverly again this morning and varied his pace sufficiently to necessitate wary methods on the part of the batsmen.

Barnes Improving.

On joining Lockett, Heath played some useful strokes to the on, the best of them, a crisp hit off Edwards, realising three.

Subdued at first, Lockett got his first opportunity of off driving Edwards to the boundary, and Heath drove with great power to take a couple of 4's off Hazleton.

When 30 had been added Lockett badly mistimed his effort to drive an overpitched delivery from the amateur and was caught by Rutter, fielding deep at mid-off.

The fall of the sixth wicket at 175 made way for Barnes who happily did not require the services of a runner, but misfortune continued to dog Staffordshire, for when Heath batted one from Edwards—a certain four shot in nine cases out of ten—Rutter shot out an arm of amazing lineal dimensions and held the ball, a remarkably fine catch, and Rutter's third of the innings.

Four good Staffordshire wickets had gone this morning for 50 runs, and the deficit was 105.

When Ellerker joined forces with Barnes there was still much to be done, therefore, but he began confidently enough by square cutting Edwards for four and pulled the worst ball the left-hander had sent down this morning to the square leg boundary. Thus was the indignity of a follow-on obviated.

A Stubborn Stand.

The double century was reached without further loss, and Hazleton came on with a new ball vice Rutter.

Ellerker again got Edwards through the covers for four, and snicked the same bowler rather luckily for two in the sum; over, while Barnes got Hazleton very prettily to the fine leg boundary.

Certainly this was the most stubborn partnership of the morning, and Batcock was requisitioned at the pavilion end in place of Hazleton, whose two wickets had cost 79 at this stage, whilst Edwards kept his end going heroically. He had sent down 40 overs with very little respite.

Lunch was taken half-an-hour earlier than the usual time, at 1 o'clock, with Barnes and Ellerker still together. They had added 66 for the eighth wicket, and Staffordshire were only 39 short of the home county's total with three wickets in hand.

Struggle for the Lead.

When the game was resumed an air of excitement prevailed. Rutter and Edwards bowled, but the left-hander soon gave way to Payne at the pavilion end.

Barnes was badly missed at second slip off the last bowler, but the lapse was not serious as the former English player was taken at the wicket off Payne.

Though filling a defensive role for the most part Barnes 44 added several excellent forcing

shots in his knock of 28, and his partnership with Ellerker had realised 74.

Staffordshire were 31 behind when Cross arrived, and he immediately got Payne away to the leg. The innings had then lasted just four hours. Rutter bowled just after lunch, and with four slips tried to tempt the batsmen with his going-away swingers.

Every run seemed to take an enhanced value hereabouts. So long as Ellerker remained there was hope for Staffordshire. That batsman turned Payne to the leg boundary, and the margin of difference was reduced to 18.

Cross proved himself cool in a crisis for a time, but eventually cocked one up off Rutter and gave James a very simple catch at short leg.

Eighteen were still required when Boon came in and the task of the visiting county was still formidable.

Ellerker reached his half century a very fine innings in the circumstances and Boon hit a three off Rutter, following a three off Hazleton who had relieved Payne, one of the latter being the product of an over throw.

Boon Hits Out.

Edwards was brought on vice Hazleton, and Boon was tempted to hit out at his third delivery. He got plenty of power, but it travelled straight to Skinner who took the catch brilliantly at long on the Staffordshire total falling four short of Buckinghamshire's 280.

Ellerker carried his bat for 52, playing a great innings for his side. It was quite a thrilling conclusion to the innings, and the delight of the home supporters knew no bounds when the first innings points were made secure.

When Bucks began their second venture at 2.45 there remained 31 hours for play, and with the pitch still in good shape all the prospects were in favour of a drawn game.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.—First Innings.

W B Franklin lbw b Barnes	4
R H J Brooke b Ellerker	2
A G Skinner c Yates b Boon	16
A J S James c Homer b Barnes	34
Pitchford b Barnes	7
W E Hazleton b Boon	56
O G Batcock c Cross b Ellerker	38
L G Baker b Ellerker	46
A W Payne c Smith b Woodhouse	25
R H Rutter not out	31
Edwards c Boon b Woodhouse	0
Extras	17

Total 230

BUCKS.—Second Innings.

W B Franklin c Woodhouse b Ellerker	6
R H J Brooke c Wilkie b Heath	32
A G Skinner not out	38
Extras	3

Total (for 2 wks.) 79

STAFFORDSHIRE.—First Innings.

H W Homer c James b Edwards	15
P O Yates c Payne b Hazleton	27
F Woodhouse b Edwards	35
A W Wilkie st Franklin b Edwards	53
A Smith c Rutter b Edwards	13
Lockett c Rutter b Hazleton	12
J S Heath c Rutter b Edwards	16
Barnes c Franklin b Payne	22
W H Ellerker not out	52
E P Cross c Jones b Rutter	4
Boon c Skinner b Edwards	9
Extras	12

Total 276

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

Bucks.—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Barnes	17	7	37	3
Ellerker	22	7	72	3
Lockett	23	5	69	0
Boon	7	2	75	2
Woodhouse	6	2	10	2

Staffordshire.—First Innings.

Hazleton	28	5	84	2
Rutter	14	2	30	1
Edwards	40.3	12	93	6
Batcock	4	0	17	0
Pitchford	9	3	17	0
Payne	7	0	23	1

Staffordshire v. Buckinghamshire

TALE OF A MISSED CATCH

Barnes Injured and Bucks Score Freely

By "THE CRITIC"

The cricket ground at High Wycombe in South Bucks, is a delightful spot. And when the Staffordshire team appeared there for the first time on Monday for their closing match of the season, the sun shone generously, as we were assured it had done practically without variation for several weeks, during which we, in Staffordshire, had had very little sun, much cloud, and a plenitude of rain. For example, Saturday, which was such a "soaker" with us, was a perfect summer day at High Wycombe, where people talked of drought and the need for rain. Certainly the state of the ground confirmed the reports, for it was dry and hard. I examined the wicket rather carefully before the start, and thought I could detect a few "spots" where the surface might break with wear, but the day's play proved these fears to be groundless, for the pitch played as well at the finish as at the start. Bowlers who could spin the ball well could make it turn, but the only man who could get any "devil" out of it was Barnes. Both sides were well represented. Bucks made three changes from the team that visited Porthill on Bank Holiday, and Staffordshire had Homer, Woodhouse, and Wilkie instead of Ikin, Mayer, and R. Howl, as compared with their last match.

The story of the first day's play is an interesting one, if slightly doleful from a Staffordshire point of view. To my mind a missed catch had a very remarkable influence on the game, and I will try to explain at the outset why I think so. When Bucks took first innings, Barnes and Ellerker bowled well. Ellerker kept his length, and made the ball swing a lot, and Barnes was at his best. He turned the ball from the leg more than the width of the wicket, and brought it off the pitch with a "fizz" that was extraordinary on a fast, true wicket, and he spun it back from the off, and he made it swing as well. The result was that two such good bats as Franklin and Brooke could do nothing with him, and had several narrow escapes from being bowled. Three or four times in the first over or two the spin completely bent the bat, and only missed the wicket because the ball rose a little too high. That was how Barnes was bowling. With only seven scored, Ellerker made one go with his arm to bowl Brooke, and the Bucks captain was leg before to Barnes. James and Skinner survived for a time, though James was almost caught at third man, when he edged one from Barnes, who had a rest after bowling eleven overs for as many runs and one wicket. Boon got Skinner caught at square leg, and at 59 for three Barnes resumed, and bowled, if possible, better than ever. His first three overs yielded no runs, and secured two wickets. And then Battcock, a tall left-hander, with a penchant for hitting, came in, and immediately lifted Barnes to the on boundary, where Arthur Smith, one of the safest catches in the long field I know, dropped the ball. That was the slip that seemed to me to change the whole trend of the game. One does not stress it to call undue attention to the mistake of a young player, but because of the intrinsic interest of the incident. On the contrary it should be emphasised that Arthur Smith's fielding has stood out as one of the bright spots in the play of the county team this season, and he has made several out-field catches with as safe and clean a pair of hands as anyone could wish to see in the field. It was sheer bad luck that when his turn came to make the inevitable slip, which reminds us that men are not machines, it chanced to be fraught with unusual significance.

It happened when Barnes was bowling like one inspired, and it snapped the tension, as it were. If the catch had been

made, Barnes would have had four wickets for 11 in 15 overs, a left-handed slogger, always more liable to slog successfully for a time against Barnes than a right hander, would have gone, and six wickets would have been down for 72, with everything pointing to the probability of Barnes going through the remainder of the side. Instead, Battcock lashed out at Barnes, mowed him out of the field for six, and in three overs scored 26 runs off him, while his partner got none. Barnes was taken off again at that point, and the game went dead against Staffordshire. The great bowler would, no doubt, have come on again later to prevent the heavy scoring which took place, but he wrenched one of his knees, and was unable to trust it again in the match. He was in such danger of a serious breakdown that he retired from the field, a local cricketer fielding as substitute for the remainder of the innings.

But before he left the field, he missed catching Baker in the slips off Woodhouse when that player had scored 10, and with another run added to his score, Cross failed to take a low catch on the off side off Boon.

From the time of Battcock's lively knock and the elimination of Barnes from the Staffordshire attack, the home batsmen got definitely on top, and some good batting was seen. Lockett pegged away with no success, and Ellerker also bowled well, but Boon was so erratic that considerable toll was taken of him. It was a trimmer with which he eventually bowled Hazelton, who played the soundest innings on the Bucks side. There were two valuable stands, Hazelton and Baker adding 103 for the 7th wicket, and Payne and Rutter 64 for the 9th, and by these big lifts the total mounted up to proportions which seemed out of the question in the early part of the innings. Rutter made his runs by six fours, two threes, and one single, which gives some indication of the way in which the Staffordshire bowling was treated. Woodhouse had two short spells of bowling, and by securing the last two wickets in one over, got quite good figures.

The visiting county had an hour and three-quarters' batting before the close, and made a gallant response, for which they were chiefly indebted to two of this year's recruits, F. Woodhouse and A. D. Wilkie. H. W. Homer and P. O. Yates made a brisk start against Hazelton, medium-pace, and Rutter, the tall lad, who bowled fast from a big height. It was Yates's first appearance with the county this season, and he had five fours, all good shots in his 27. But he and Homer had gone with 45 on the board. Homer popped one up to short leg, and Yates was out to a mishit. Then Woodhouse and Wilkie settled down to play attractive cricket. Wilkie was rather freer in style, and he hit a no-ball from Edwards out of the ground at square leg for six, but Woodhouse cut crisply when opportunity offered, and also drove hard and low anything a little over-pitched. After Edwards had changed ends, Wilkie again hit him for six, a sweet on drive, but having passed the 40 mark he seemed to get a little impatient because accurate bowling enforced a slackening in the rate of scoring, and made several rash strokes, from which he might have been out. One was a direct catch near the on boundary, which Skinner unaccountably "put down." Wilkie steadied himself, but just when the pair looked like playing out time, an in-swing from Edwards, which kept rather low, bowled Woodhouse. At the close the score was 125 for three, with Wilkie 47, and the game in an interesting position.

Tense Struggle for First Innings Lead

When the game was resumed on Tuesday the same delightful conditions prevailed, and a fairly numerous company of spectators were worked up to a state of tense excitement, which reached boiling point when the last Staffordshire wicket fell, and Bucks had gained 1st innings points by the narrow margin of four runs. Except from the purely sporting aspect of always playing to win, Staffordshire had nothing material at stake, for a win, either outright or on

the first innings, would have been Surrey II, as runners-up to Oxfordshire in the final placings, with Staffordshire 3rd, so that they could not gain the right to challenge the leaders to play off for the championship. But their success would have deprived Bucks of this right. If Bucks could obtain 1st innings points, they would head Surrey II, by a decided margin, and be able to challenge Oxford, whom they have not met during the season, though they are such near neighbours. As the Staffordshire score approached nearer and nearer to the 25 which the home side had compiled, the spectators held their breath with nervous suspense while every ball was bowled, and when Skinner ran in from the open boundary to safely negotiate a neat catch from a hard hit by Boon, the tension snapped, and the crowd broke into a demonstration of delight, which would have done justice to an exciting football match.

Wilkie and Smith continued the Staffordshire innings at 11 o'clock, and Smith got a trio of choice boundary strokes, cutting Edwards twice behind point and turning one deliciously "round the corner." But he did not get over the ball sufficiently in trying an off drive, and Rutter held a hot catch at mid-off. In the meantime Wilkie had completed his fifty in his second county innings, having made 27, not out, on his only previous appearance at Wolverhampton. He has clearly proved himself a county batsman, for he is not only a free hitter, but can play good bowling, with a sound defence, so long as his patience will hold out. A good fielder also, one devoutly hopes that he will contrive to find the time for county cricket. His county needs him, and he would find the county programme would provide him with a season's good class cricket. He was very smartly stumped when he stepped in to drive Edwards, being beaten by the leg break. He was batting an hour and 25 minutes, and hit two sixes and three fours, giving no chance until after passing 40.

Lockett emulated Smith, for after one or two good strokes he drove Hazelton hard and straight into the hands of Butter at mid-off. Stanley Heath was batting confidently and well when he failed to keep the ball on the ground in pushing Edwards away on the outside, and the lengthy Rutter took a couple of enormous strides from mid-on, and with his long arm just reached a ball that no one else on the field could have touched, the sort of "accident" that has happened with extraordinary persistency to the Staffordshire Captain again and again when he has looked like settling down for a long stay. This made seven wickets down for 175, and 106 still to get for the lead. No wonder Bucks supporters were on good terms with themselves. But the home county had not got to the end of Staffordshire's batting strength, and Barnes and Ellerker, by steady and masterful cricket, gradually sent the spirits of the spectators down to freezing point. At one o'clock they had been together an hour and five minutes, and were playing the bowling so comfortably that the odds were heavily on their putting Staffordshire in front, or at least within easy reach of the lead by the normal lunch time. But—what! I regard as an entirely uncalled-for and unjustifiable arrangement, appeared to have been made to take lunch at one o'clock instead of the almost invariable practice, which is to take the interval on both days at 1.30. Barnes and Ellerker were so thoroughly set that another half-hour would, in all probability, have seen Staffordshire within a few runs of the Bucks total, with three wickets in hand. They were 40 behind when the adjournment was taken. It would not have been in the least surprising if these had been knocked off in half an hour, as the pair were then playing. They had put on nearly 70. But as so often happens, the interval was fatal. Having practically to make a fresh start against bowlers refreshed and rested, Barnes was soon caught at the wicket, with 32

runs still to get. Cross stayed while 14 of these were rubbed off, and then put a kicking ball straight up in the air in trying to keep it off his body. Rutter was bowling with more pace and a better length than he had previously done, and Edwards obviously profited by his rest, having bowled without relief all the morning. Ellerker was batting in great style, and with Boon in, reached his 50. Boon made a few hits of rather an agricultural character, and a further 13 were added, but Edwards was too clever for him, and a well-meant swipe only succeeded in giving Skinner a catch in the long field. Ellerker took out his bat after perhaps the best innings he has ever played for Staffordshire.

The second innings of Bucks was in the nature of an anti-climax, but the decision to draw stumps 24 hours before time—23 hours, including the possible extra time—was another irregularity which may or may not have been justified. Barnes would not trust his knee, and did not bowl. He was also something of a passenger in the field. Ellerker and Lockett bowled well, but Aaron, as in the first innings, bowled with no luck. Things just would not come off for him. Skinner played good cricket, as he did at Porthill on a difficult pitch, and when Stanley Heath himself had a turn with the ball, he raced to his 50, though his partner, Brooke, fell at cover when the Staffordshire Captain dropped one of his leg-breaks in the right place, which, unfortunately, he is not now able to do with anything like the command that he had over it years ago.

Scores and analysis:—

Bucks—1st Innings

W. B. Franklin lbw b Barnes	.....	4
R. H. J. Brooke b Ellerker	.....	2
A. G. Skinner c Yates b Boon	.....	18
A. J. S. James c Homer b Barnes	.....	34
Pitchford b Barnes	.....	7
W. E. Hazelton b Boon	.....	56
O. G. Batcock c Cross b Ellerker	.....	38
L. G. Baker b Ellerker	.....	46
A. N. Payne c Smith b Woodhouse	.....	29
R. H. Rutter not out	.....	31
Edwards c Boon b Woodhouse	.....	0
Extras	.....	17
Total	.....	280

2nd Innings

W. B. Franklin c Woodhouse b Ellerker	.....	6
R. H. J. Brooke c Wilkie b Heath	.....	32
A. G. Skinner not out	.....	55
A. J. S. James not out	.....	5
Extras	.....	5
Total	.....	103

Staffordshire

H. W. Homer c James b Edwards	.....	15
P. O. Yates c Payne b Hazelton	.....	27
F. Woodhouse b Edwards	.....	35
A. D. Wilkie st Franklin b Edwards	.....	53
A. Smith c Rutter b Edwards	.....	15
J. S. Heath c Rutter b Edwards	.....	16
Lockett c Rutter b Hazelton	.....	12
Barnes c Franklin b Payne	.....	23
W. H. Ellerker not out	.....	52
E. P. Cross c James b Rutter	.....	4
Boon c Skinner b Edwards	.....	9
Extras	.....	12
Total	.....	276

BOWLING

Bucks.—1st Inns.		2nd Inns.	
O. M. R. W.		O. M. R. W.	
Barnes	..... 17 7 37 3		
Ellerker	..... 22 7 72 3	6	3 8 1
Lockett	..... 23 5 69 0	12	4 23 0
Boon	..... 17 2 75 2	7	2 22 0
Woodhouse	..... 6 2 10 2	5	1 13 0
Heath	.....	5	0 32 1

Staffordshire

O. M. R. W.	
Hazelton	..... 23 5 84 2
Rutter	..... 14 2 30 1
Edwards	..... 40.3 12 93 6
Batcock	..... 4 0 17 0
Pitchford	..... 5 3 17 0
Payne	..... 7 0 21 1

SEASON OF VARIED FORTUNES.

Staffordshire's Campaign Under Review.

Weakness Revealed in Bowling.

(By "OUTFIELD.")

AS THE Minor Counties table actually put in an appearance one day this week, I am enabled to shed some light on the final reckoning as far as Staffordshire is concerned. It is a curious business working out these calculations when you are only permitted a sight of the league chart twice or thrice in a season, and I fancy that when the last game in the Staffordshire team's programme began at High Wycombe on Monday, nobody was quite clear as to what was likely to happen in the case of one or the other side winning outright, or gaining first innings points.

Now the facts are quite clear and they show that Staffordshire must be content with fifth place. Four runs can make such a lot of difference, for had the ball from Frank Edwards, which Joe Boon smote with such evident relish on Tuesday landed over the boundary instead of in the spacious hands of a fieldsmen, Staffordshire would have been assured, or nearly so—I am assuming that the gods would have vouchsafed the odd run—of third position. But it didn't happen quite like that.

Mixed Fortunes.

It was a game of mixed fortunes on a ground which had not welcomed a Staffordshire team before, and while the visiting county must be given credit for the manner in which they contested the issue of the first innings—the batting of A. D. Wilkie, W. H. Ellerker, F. Woodhouse, and Barnes was full of determination—the honours in tactics must be awarded the men of Bucks. There may have been no rule in W. B. Franklin's command or request, which ever it was, that lunch should be taken half-an-hour earlier than usual, but it was a move that served to jeopardise in a measure the chance of Staffordshire gaining first innings lead, for both Ellerker and Barnes were comfortably set when the procession to the luncheon tables was decreed.

What usually happens after lunch happened here, for the Buckinghamshire bowlers infused every possible ounce of energy into their attack, and with the batsmen temporarily unsettled, a memorable fighting partnership was soon ended.

Tactical Triumph.

The other tactical triumph was when Franklin, with only a six required to put the visiting county in the lead, brought back Edwards to toss them up for Boon to hit, and ranged four of his safest catchers just inside the boundary. As I expected, the eager young Porthill professional, who goes to "bumby next season, could not say, "Get thee behind me," and three points, instead of one, were left behind on the banks of the other Wye.

Evidently, Bucks, were content with their three points for they made no great effort to win outright, though the Staffordshire attack was shorn of the power of Barnes, and agreed to stumps being drawn when 2½ hours remained for play—2½ hours at a pinch. I never learned the true reason for that course, and I frankly say it was not in the best interests of the game. Certainly more than half of the Staffordshire players were not enamoured of the idea.

Season of Ups and Downs.

Altogether the season just closed has been one of fluctuating fortunes as far as the Staffordshire team have been concerned. After a disastrous beginning at Old Trafford, a couple of clear-cut victories over Lincolnshire pulled them round and all seemed to be going well until the weather robbed the side of certain victory in the first fixture with Cheshire at Porthill. That, it seemed to me, was the turning point for in the very next match, the return with Cheshire, the side came a surprising cropper. They made up some leeway by the capture of three points from Notts II. at Trent Bridge,

but lost it again when Bucks, on their first visit to the County, extracted a similar toll from Staffordshire at Porthill.

Splendid victories over Lancashire II. and Notts II. at Stoke were instrumental in improving the County position in the table but the highest hope they had on entering on their concluding fixture this week was securing third position, and that eventually demanded an outright victory which, of course, was not forthcoming.

Some Notable Knocks.

The highest innings hit up during the season was the 290 registered against Lincolnshire at Frodingham, and others of impressive proportions were the 276 against Bucks this week and the 275 for six against Lincolnshire in the return game at Tettenhall. No century was hit for Staffordshire during the season and the highest individual knock was Aaron Lockett's 88 against Notts II. at Stoke. The lowest score was 74 against Bucks at Porthill and another slump in batting form saw the side tumbled out for 80 by Cheshire at Boughton Hall.

Notts II. had the unenviable distinction of making the lowest total for a completed innings against the Staffordshire bowling, 59, at Stoke, and it will be recalled that Cheshire had eight wickets down for 54 in the rain-spoilt match at Porthill. The highest innings recorded against was the 280 by Bucks at High Wycombe, and Notts II. ran up 256 for five wickets in the second innings of the game at Trent Bridge.

Barnes has again been the dominant force in the bowling department and easily heads the averages, his best performances being 5 for 32 against Lancashire II., 7 for 28 against Notts II., 7 for 43 against Bucks, and for a complete match, 12 for 59 against Lincolnshire. At times he has performed with that old fire which has made him the most dreaded bowler on certain wickets for more than two decades. As far as I can see Barnes is not likely to bring his memorable career to a close for a season or two yet.

Apart from him, nobody in the side has bowled consistently well. Boon, who has had atrocious luck in several matches owing to dropped catches, has several good performances to his name, and Lockett, who has not always struck very responsive pitches, has bowled cleverly on occasions, notably in the second innings of the return match with Notts. Ellerker and Woodhouse have also performed useful service in the bowling department but none of the other bowlers tried have achieved success. At times, the deficiencies in attack Barnes excepted—have been sadly exposed.

Inconsistent Batting.

Nor has the batting been consistent. H. W. Homer, Lockett and Ellerker have been the three most consistent run-getters, with A. W. Ikin, G. A. Fitton, L. H. Crump, the captain, J. S. Heath, and E. P. Cross occasionally chipping in with useful knocks. F. Woodhouse, A. D. Wilkie and A. Smith came into the side when the season was fairly well advanced and each has shown promise of great things in the future. So long as they are available they should prove strong forces in Staffordshire cricket. Herbert Beagrieck only appeared in one match and hit up 72 against Lincolnshire besides getting wickets. As he has been in good form for his club this season, he might well have been called upon more frequently.

The fielding of the side has been variable. On the ground there has been little to cvil at, but the wicket-keeper's task might have been made a lot easier. In the matter of catches there was great room for improvement in more than one match. The fielding honours I shall award to Fitton, Ikin, Ellerker, Lockett, A. Smith, and Boon.

The wicket-keeping of Cross has, for the most part, been of a good rather than brilliant order.

Summary of Results.

Here is a summary of the season's results:—

W.	L.	Won		Lost		Pts.	P.C.
		on 1st	on 2nd	on 1st	on 2nd		
10	4	2	2	2	2	28	56.00

At Old Trafford, v. Lancashire II.—Lost by 8 wks.

At Frodingham, v. Lincolnshire.—Won by an innings and 24 runs.

At Tettenhall, v. Lincolnshire.—Won by an innings and 78 runs.

At Porthill, v. Cheshire—Match drawn.

Staffordshire took 1st innings points.

At Chester, v. Cheshire—Lost by 10 wks.

At Trent Bridge, v. Notts II.—Match drawn.

Staffordshire took 1st innings points.

At Porthill, v. Bucks—Match drawn. Bucks took 1st innings points.

At Stoke, v. Lancashire II.—Won by 8 wks.

At Stoke, v. Notts II.—Won by an innings and 35 runs.

At High Wycombe, v. Bucks—Match drawn.

Bucks took 1st innings points.

N.S. CRICKET REVIEW.

Nantwich Steal a March.

NEARLY SAFE.

Win While Rivals Draw.

THE LUCK of the season deserted the cricketers of the premier local league last Saturday, when shocking weather conditions caused the number of games which had definite results to be limited to seven, and no fewer than fifteen matches had to be abandoned without delivery of a single ball. In the principal competition Nantwich stole a march on Burslem and Great Chell by defeating Crewe Alexandra, and they can now hardly fail to get their third successive championship, their prospects being enhanced by the fact that the second and third clubs have yet to face each other.

No change as concerns the fight for supremacy occurred in the lower senior tourney, L.M. and S. Railway and Cheadle both having sufficient opportunity to force a win, leaving a position which suggests that the match between the pair next Saturday will produce a thrilling struggle.

Two matters affecting the weaklings were finally settled, the loss of points by Knipersley and Haslington determining that those clubs must occupy the lowest places.

Affairs in the major Junior Section remained "as you were," but amongst the minors Cheadle increased the margin which divided them from Caverswall, and at the same time put Burslem High Lane virtually out of the hunt.

Nantwich Coup.

The champions had cause to be thankful that they possess a quick drying ground, for this enabled their match with Crewe Alexandra to be played to a finish, after such a contingency had appeared highly improbable. Another point which helped to a result was that injuries caused the visiting team to be much below strength, particularly in respect of bowling. A start was made at 4.40, and the Alexandra soon set a pace which would inevitably have thwarted their hosts if it could have been maintained. H. Mayer was in especially good form, being strong in defence and occasionally very powerful in his hitting. He gave one chance, when 5, but otherwise made no mistake during a stay of 70 minutes which saw him make 51 runs. H. H. Owen (13) helped him in the most profitable stand of the innings, 47 for the third wicket. C. Coffin also did well with a quickly got 19, but the last four wickets collapsed in the course of 12 minutes for eight runs, nothing being scored after the seventh wicket had been captured. Most of the damage was done by W. T. Maybury, who bowled cleverly to take seven wickets for 50.

Nantwich were left with 80 minutes in which to get 113, and naturally opened with their fast scorers, but they had a shock when F. W. Slight was out to the first ball sent down. The position was retrieved by H. E. Bourne (18) and Alec Hinde (33), who forced the pace so effectively that 46 runs came in 19 minutes before Bourne was sent back. Hinde scored 24 from two overs, hitting which gave the later batsmen plenty of time. Another highly profitable stand was that of J. E. Smith (29, not out) and T. W. Stevenson (16), the pair collecting 36 for the fifth wicket, leaving only

nine to be got. Coffin and C. Banks shared the wickets which fell, Coffin having three for 20 and Banks three for 40.

Burslem Baulked.

At Stone play commenced at 5.30, and the home side occupied the pitch during the whole of the 2½ hours, compiling 92 for the loss of eight wickets. Anxious to grasp every possible chance of creeping nearer to Nantwich, Burslem had put Stone in, but it was early evident that the hoped-for collapse would not occur, the home batsmen being content to play steadily, without taking the slightest risk. The ease was really one of labour in vain, for although three wickets fell for 16 so much time had then been taken up that Burslem's chance of forcing a win had practically vanished. It took 45 minutes to score the first ten runs, and P. Middleton, who is usually a free and aggressive batsman, was at the wickets 70 minutes for 5. Later, E. C. Fernie (19) and B. Meakin (19) scored more freely, but the general rate of run-getting may be gathered from the fact that 58 overs were sent down for 79 runs from the bat. It is questionable whether the pitch was ever fit for play, and the decision to make a start rested with the captains.

Madeley's Fate.

Delay of nearly two hours occurred at Stoke, and when a beginning was made Madeley fared so disastrously that four wickets were down for 17, and the only semblance of recovery was when S. Heath (15), and E. Malkin put on 23 for the sixth wicket. The bowling of G. Lilwellin was much too effective for most of their colleagues, six wickets falling to it for 24 runs. Madeley's fate was practically settled by the Railway's first pair of batsmen, T. Ball (11) and J. C. Hulme (23), carrying the score to 41 before they were parted. E. Griffiths (two for 6) was the only visiting bowler to be troublesome.

Bowlers had matters all their own way at Haslington, where Cheadle had a rare light, losing eight wickets before they were able to surpass the home team's pitiful aggregate. Thanks to G. Bevan (10) and H. Tortington (13) the early part of Haslington's innings was fairly satisfactory, 40 being signalled with five wickets standing, but afterwards W. Brough's attack was so deadly that the whole five collapsed at 41. Brough, in all, clean bowled six players, and his full figures were eight for 17. Due to 13 from V. Pepper, Cheadle were in front from a comparative aspect when their second wicket fell, but from that stage they were losing until J. P. Keates and Brough got together as the ninth pair, Brough adding to his bowling laurels by scoring the runs wanted. The brunt of Haslington's attack was borne by J. Barker who had five for 25.

Betley Win Easily.

At Betley play commenced at 4.45 and finished at 7.40, with the home team comfortable winners. The outfield was in a wretched state, but the game was quite interesting, though most of the fun fell to the bowlers. Alsagers Bank were always in trouble, for their first two wickets went for nothing, and five were down for nine. F. W. Tor, Knison played pluckily for 17, and his resistance was the main cause of three bowling changes. S. Wagstaffe had three wickets for five and J. Brookshaw three for eight. Betley's second wicket dropped at five, but T. Dean stayed with C. Johnson whilst 29 were added, and Johnson settled the issue by carrying his personal contribution to 28 (not out). G. Wainwright captured the three wickets which fell for 16 runs.

Only one Ashcombe Park batsman attained double figures against Sandford, and, in view of the unprofitable careers of his colleagues, it is probable that G. Peacock's 15 was worth more than its face value. Peacock was ultimately bowled by A. Bourne, who had six wickets for 13. Sandford lost three men for 11, but H. Mollart (11 not out) and W. Downes (20) had the game won before the Park bowlers met with any further success. The seven wickets which were taken were shared by O. Brassington (four for 17) and V. Stubbs (three for three).

Junior Doings.

Burslem made a bold attempt to snatch a win at the expense of Stone, three of their batsmen scoring so rapidly that runs came at the rate of nearly seven per over. E. Cotton (38, not out) kept one end going all through, and the big hitting was done by J. Fenton (38) and H. Sharpe (45, not out), who each found the boundary seven times. Burslem's tactics looked like being successful when three of their opponents had returned for 8 runs, but B. J. Devaney (23, not out) and E. Slyn (17 not out) were immovable and a draw was inevitable long before time was called.

The feature of the match at Onneley, where L. M. and S. Railway were represented by eight players, was the all-round cricket of F. Whalen,

who made a capital 43 and took three wickets for 12 runs. Four other Onneley players attained doubles, the best of them being S. Royle (20 not out). The visitors made a good attempt to play out time, but with only seven wickets to fall their efforts just failed. The most effective Railway bowler was B. Pepper (four for 37).

Cheadle's hopes of honours were accentuated by a runaway victory at the expense of nine players of Burslem High Lane. Batting first, Cheadle hit up 109 in 90 minutes, after a bad start which saw two wickets go for 7. A good stand by J. A. Hurst (35) and J. Shaw pulled the game round and dual figures from three other batsmen brought a position which justified a declaration. The visitors' batting was a calamitous affair, after W. Mould (11) and R. Billings (13) had collected 24 as the first pair, the other seven wickets dropping for half-a-dozen runs. Bowling unchanged, A. Whitehurst had three for 10 and W. Brough three for 20, two men being run out.

Results and Tables.

Senior Division.—Section "A."

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Nantwich	23	14	2	4	52
Burslem	20	14	4	2	50
Great Chell	20	11	2	7	29
Porthall Park	20	10	6	4	24
Norton	20	8	6	6	22
Longton	20	6	8	6	18
Leek	20	7	10	3	17
Bignall End	20	6	11	3	15
Silverdale	20	5	10	6	15
Stone	20	6	11	3	15
Crewe Alexandra	20	5	11	4	14
Knipersley	20	2	15	3	9

Results: Nantwich 113 for six, Crewe Alexandra 112; Stone 92 for eight, Burslem did not bat. Abandoned: Norton v. Longton, Great Chell v. Leek, Silverdale v. Knipersley, Porthall Park v. Bignall End.

Section "B."

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
L.M. & S. Ry. (Stoke)	20	15	3	2	55
Cheadle	20	15	4	0	52
Audley	20	10	8	2	24
Caverswall	20	10	8	2	22
Madeley	20	11	9	0	22
Sandford	20	11	9	0	22
Ashcombe Park	20	9	11	0	18
Kidgrove	20	8	10	2	16
Betley	20	8	11	1	17
Alsagers Bank	20	7	13	0	14
Fenton	20	6	13	1	15
Haslington	20	5	16	1	7

Results: L.M. and S. Ry. (Stoke) 58 for two, Cheadle 54, Cheadle 13 for eight, Haslington 41, Betley 45 for three, Alsagers Bank 67, Sandford 51 for eight, Ashcombe Park 35, Abandoned: Fenton v. Kidgrove, Audley v. Caverswall.

Junior Division.—Section "A."

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Burslem	20	15	3	4	50
Porthall Park	20	12	5	6	28
Silverdale	20	12	7	1	25
Crewe Alexandra	20	9	7	4	22
Leek	20	10	8	2	22
Great Chell	20	9	8	3	21
Norton	20	9	9	2	20
Knipersley	20	8	9	3	19
Nantwich	20	7	11	2	16
Longton	20	6	12	2	14
Stone	20	4	12	4	12
Bignall End	20	5	14	1	11

Results: Burslem 150 for three, Great Chell 57 for three, Abandoned: Longton v. Norton, Crewe Alexandra v. Nantwich, Leek v. Great Chell, Knipersley v. Silverdale, Bignall End v. Porthall Park.

Section "B."

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Cheadle	20	14	4	2	50
Caverswall	20	13	5	2	28
Burslem High Lane	20	13	7	0	26
Scot Hay	20	12	7	1	25
Audley	20	9	9	2	20
L.M. & S. Ry. (Stoke)	20	9	9	2	20
Sandford	20	9	10	1	19
Onneley	20	8	10	2	18
Alsagers Bank	20	9	11	0	16
Betley	20	7	12	1	15
Kidgrove	20	5	14	1	11
	20	4	14	2	10

Results: Onneley 135, L.M. and S. Ry. (Stoke) 31; Cheadle 109 for seven (dec.), Burslem High Lane 30. Abandoned: Sandford v. Scot Hay, Kidgrove v. Fenton, Caverswall v. Audley, Alsagers Bank v. Betley.

BLYTHE BRIDGE AND UTTOXETER CRICKET LEAGUE.

All the matches in the First Division of the Blythe Bridge League last Saturday were abandoned without a ball being bowled. Team have reported Draycott to the League Committee for failing to put in an appearance according to rule, and they claim the points.

In the Second Division, Stallington fulfilled their fixture at Leigh and lost by 62 to 29 on a rain sodden wicket. Only nine of the visiting team put in an appearance.

The other match played was at Hollington. Team scored 96, S. Bentley scoring 36, and J. Bull 22. The home team were dismissed for 51, of which W. Walters scored 30.

TUNSTALL CRICKET LEAGUE.

Owing to the inclement weather last Saturday the programme was curtailed to one match. Bucknall securing an easy win at Berryhill. Eight of the home batsmen failed to open their account, the whole side being dismissed for 21 runs. Bucknall replied with 63 for seven wickets.

Leyceff have now definitely established themselves as champions for the second year in succession and are to be congratulated upon their success. They have displayed a fine team spirit, plus individual ability, suffering only one defeat, by the narrow margin of two runs against Fenton Amateurs. Woodland Pottery have run them close, but must be content with second place, while Taylor's Athletic have made the greatest improvement of all, having attained the third position, a distinct advance upon their position last season.

FENTON CRICKET LEAGUE.

No play was possible on Saturday in the Fenton League owing to the rain.

On Monday Halmereend visited Longton. Longton "A" declared at 84 for five, Harry Proctor (28 not out) and S. Degg (29) played well. Halmereend had scored 43 for four when bad light stopped play. S. Ratchife scored 30.

BLYTHE BRIDGE & UTTOXETER CRICKET LEAGUE.

Division I.

Team	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Kingsley	15	11	4	0	22
Beairster	13	10	3	0	20
Florence	10	10	0	0	20
Alton	9	9	0	1	19
Stallington	10	7	3	1	15
Blyth Color Works	10	7	3	1	15
Meir	10	6	4	1	14
Oakamoor	10	5	5	1	11
Draycott	10	4	6	1	8

No play in any of the matches last Saturday.

Division II.

Team	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Foxt	18	13	5	0	26
Crosswell	17	12	5	0	24
Dillon	18	11	7	1	23
Kingsley	18	11	7	1	23
Leigh	17	10	7	1	21
Fulford	19	8	10	1	17
Ashcombe Park	17	7	10	0	14
Stallington	18	6	11	1	13
Team	18	6	11	1	13
Meir	18	3	14	1	7

Result: Leigh 67, Stallington 29 for 5, Hollington 51, Team 96, Abandoned: Dillon v. Ashcombe Park, Meir v. Foxt; Fulford v. Kingsley.

TUNSTALL CRICKET LEAGUE.

Team	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Leyceff	17	15	2	1	31
Woodland Pottery	17	13	4	1	27
Taylor's Athletic	17	10	6	1	21
Fenton Amateurs	17	9	7	2	19
Bucknall	17	8	8	1	17
Butt Lane	17	7	9	1	15
Staffs. Chemical Co.	17	7	9	1	15
Berry Hill Athletic	17	5	12	0	10
Harrishead	17	4	12	1	9
Knyperley "A"	17	5	12	1	7

Result: Berry Hill Ath. 21, Bucknall 63 for 7, Abandoned: Taylor's Ath. v. Leyceff, Fenton Amateurs v. Woodland Pottery, Harrishead v. Staffs. Chemical Co., Knyperley "A" v. Butt Lane.

FENTON CRICKET LEAGUE.

Team	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Leyceff	17	14	3	2	29
Halmereend	17	12	5	2	26
Wolstanton Marsh	17	10	7	4	23
Florence Colliery	17	9	7	1	19
Trent Vale	16	7	9	3	17
Rough Close	17	7	9	1	15
Silverdale "A"	17	4	12	5	11
Fenton "A"	17	3	14	5	9
Longton	16	3	10	3	9
Bucknall	17	3	14	0	6

Result: Longton "A" 84 for 5, Halmereend 43 for 4.

CRICKET FIXTURES FOR NEXT WEEK.

Festival Matches to Conclude Season.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4th. FIRST-CLASS MATCHES.

Kent v. M.C.C.
Mr. C. I. Thornton's XI. v. South Africa.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7th. FIRST-CLASS MATCHES.

Lord Hawke's XI. v. M.C.C. Australian Team.
An England XI. v. South Africa.

NORTH STAFFS & DISTRICT LEAGUE. Senior Division.—Section "A."

Bignall End v. Longton; Messrs. Jones and Boulton Porthill Park v. Crewe Alexandra; Messrs. Plant and Skelham.
Norton v. Leek; Messrs. Latham and Coddiffe.
Nantwich v. Knyperley; Messrs. Timms and Byrne.
Great Chell v. Burslem; Messrs. Holmes and Stevenson.
Silverdale v. Stone; Messrs. Birtles and Ward.

Section "B."

Alagers Bank v. Maudley; Messrs. Nixon and C. S. Billington.
Betley v. Sandysford; Messrs. Green and P. C. Billington.
L.M.S. Ry. (Stoke) v. Cheddle; Messrs. Johnston and Bradley.
Ashcombe Park v. Kalsgrove; Messrs. Holderfort and Rowlands.
Hastings v. Caverswall; Messrs. W. J. Buckley and Gregory.
Fenton v. Audley; Messrs. Keeling and Manifold.

Junior Division.—Section "A."

Longton v. Bignall End; Messrs. Wright and Brown.
Crewe Alexandra v. Porthill Park; Messrs. Butters and Pennell.
Leek v. Norton; Messrs. Shenton and Naylor.
Knyperley v. Nantwich; Messrs. Clowes and Rigby.
Burslem v. Great Chell; Messrs. Bennett and Slinger.

Section "B."

Onnely v. Alagers Bank.
Sandysford v. Betley.
Cheddle v. L.M.S. Ry. (Stoke).
Kalsgrove v. Sand. Ry.
Caverswall v. Burslem High Lane.
Audley v. Fenton.

FENTON AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

Leyceff v. Wolstanton Marsh.
Trent Vale v. Rough Close.

BLYTHE BRIDGE & UTTOXETER LEAGUE. Division I.

Team v. Kingsley.
Oakamoor v. Alton.
Meir v. Florence.
Blyth Colour Works v. Draycott.
Stallington v. Rochester.

Division II.

Hollington v. Ashcombe Park.
Crosswell v. Team.
Fulford v. Meir.
Kingsley v. Stallington.
Leigh v. Foxt.

FRIENDLY MATCHES.

Congleton v. Holmes Cheddle.
Holmes Chapel U. v. Congleton H.
Cannock v. Trentham.
Upton (Central) v. Brookhirst.
Easton Park v. Bromborough Pool.
Macclesfield v. Cheddle.
Uttoxeter v. Church Gresley.
Wednesbury v. Stafford.
English Electric v. Bridgnorth.

COUNTY CRICKET REVIEW

STAFFORDSHIRE'S MODERATE SEASON

Batting and Bowling Averages

The players who have represented Staffordshire during the season just closed have lacked something in consistency. One or two quite indifferent displays, coupled with a want of "snap" and reliability in the field on some occasions, have resulted in the loss of 22 of a possible 50 points, so that the year's percentage in the Minor Counties Championship competition is as low as 56, compared with 66.66 last year and 90 in 1927. Last year's drop from the high percentage of the previous year was due to the anomalous rule regarding first innings points, for, whilst only five points were lost by defeat either outright or on the first innings ten points were dropped through inability to finish matches in which Staffordshire had established their superiority by a first innings lead. Every one of these pulled their percentage down until their championship chances were extinguished. That was in 1928. There is no such explanation of the loss of points, and consequently of percentage, in 1929. The explanation is simply in-and-out form. The season does not, therefore, furnish a peg on which to hang one's annual grumble at the method of scoring by points and percentages which still obtains in the minor counties tourney. And yet the mere fact that Staffordshire have not been unduly penalized by the system this season does not make it any the less absurd and unfair, and this county is sure to be a sufferer from its inequity again if it persists. Having given a good deal of thought to the matter I have something to say about it, but this is, perhaps, hardly the place for it, and I shall hope to return to the subject later.

As usual, ten competition matches have been played by Staffordshire, with Buckinghamshire taking the place of Leicestershire in the fixture list. No friendly games have been played, as compared with two—viz., against the West Indies and North Wales—last year, so that actually two fewer matches have comprised the season's programme. But this was largely counteracted, so far as followers of the game in North Staffordshire were concerned, by the visit of the South Africans, who met a minor counties eleven at Stoke on June 12, 13 and 14. Barnes and Lockett were the only Staffordshire players included in the minor counties team. The match furnished some highly-interesting cricket, and but for considerable interference by rain the tourists might have been beaten. After the counties had compiled 201, the South Africans were dismissed for 130 as the result of an amazing piece of bowling by Barnes, who delivered 32 overs without relief, and captured eight wickets for 41 runs. The counties declared at 183 for six, leaving the visitors 240 to get, but at 40 for one wicket the game came to an end. The Africans went on to Birmingham to begin the first Test match the next day, and in a drawn game headed England on the first innings. A little later Barnes bowled with marked success against them again for Wales, so that the tourists found the Staffordshire veteran more difficult to play than England's present Test bowlers.

The ten competition matches played by Staffordshire had the following results:— Won 4, won on first innings 2, lost 2, lost on first innings 2. This gave them 28 points out of 50 and a percentage of 56. Their final position in the table is 5th compared with 4th last year. Oxfordshire is the only county to gain a high percentage, and if Staffordshire had even equalled last year's figures they would have finished second, which would have given them the right to challenge the leaders to play off for the championship. Here are the percentages obtained in each year since the war:—1920, 80; 1921, 77.50; 1922, 40; 1923, 72.50; 1924, 57.77; 1925, 55.55; 1926, 66.66; 1927, 90; 1928, 66.66; 1929, 56. The championship was won in 1920, 1921 and 1927.

The following summary give brief details of the ten matches played:— May 29 and 30.—At Manchester, v. Lancashire II. Staffordshire, 148 (Lockett 57) and 117 (Holroyd five for 17); Lancashire, 189 and 79 for two (Paynter 50 not out). Lost by eight wickets.

June 5 and 6.—At Frodingham, v. Lincolnshire. Staffordshire, 290 (Sedgwick 72, E. P. Cross 40 not out, L. H. Crump 44); Lincolnshire, 108 (Boon seven for 31) and 158 (the Rev. H. Mack 48). Won by an innings and 24 runs.

June 24 and 25.—At Wolverhampton, v. Lincolnshire. Staffordshire, 270 for six, declared (L. H. Crump 63, H. W. Homer 92); Lincolnshire, 97 (Barnes seven for 41) and 95 (Barnes five for 18, Boon four for 24). Won by an innings and 78 runs.

July 8 and 9.—At Porthill, v. Cheshire. Staffordshire, 141 (R. M. Dutton five for 22) and 83 (Dennis six for 38, Wilson three for 41); Cheshire, 101 (Barnes six for 40) and 54 for eight (Lockett six for 22). Won on first innings. Rain stopped play.

July 17 and 18.—At Chester, v. Cheshire. Staffordshire, 80 (Dennis five for 27) and 154; Cheshire, 224 (L. N. Jones 54, H. W. Hodgson 47) and 11 for no wicket. Lost by ten wickets.

July 24 and 25.—At Nottingham, v. Notts. II. Staffordshire, 234 (H. W. Homer 52, F. Woodhouse 45) and 94 for three (Lockett 68); Notts, 142 (Barnes five for 57) and 256 for five, declared (Knowles 79, Harris 51, Copley 45 not out). Won on first innings.

Aug. 5 and 6.—At Porthill, v. Bucks. Staffordshire, 74 (Edwards six for 23); Bucks., 105 (A. G. Skinner 41, Barnes seven for 43). Lost on first innings.

Aug. 7 and 8.—At Stoke, v. Lancashire II. Staffordshire, 190 (H. W. Homer 49, F. Woodhouse 44) and 26 for two; Lancashire, 150 (Barnes seven for 55) and 65 (Barnes nine for 32). Won by eight wickets.

Aug. 12 and 13.—At Stoke, v. Notts. II. Staffordshire, 270 (Lockett 88); Notts., 59 (Barnes 7 for 28) and 178 (Shipston 49, Lockett six for 45). Won by an innings and 55 runs.

Aug. 25 and 26.—At High Wycombe, v. Bucks. Staffordshire, 276 (A. D. Wilkie 53, W. H. Blocker 52 not out); Bucks., 280 (W. E. Hazleton 50, L. G. Baker 46) and 103 for two (A. G. Skinner 55 not out). Lost on first innings.

FEATURES OF THE MATCHES.

The season opened badly at Old Trafford, where Staffordshire were without the services of Barnes—a circumstance which quite probably made the difference between defeat and victory. I say so advisedly, because, considering the state of the wicket, I don't think the home side could have taken a lead of 41 on the first innings, and thus obtained a winning grip on the game, if they had had to face Barnes. It was not a bad wicket, but it was one on which Barnes would have turned the ball with more "life" than any bowler who was playing on either side. Lockett played a dashing innings of 57, and H. W. Homer had taken firm root and scored 31 when he was run out. The captain also batted well for 19, and the total reached 148, 52 being added for the last two wickets, mainly as the outcome of Lockett's clean hitting. Lancashire lost seven wickets for 113, but a stand by Farrimond and Preston added 55, and put them well in front. That was when Barnes was missed, for I cannot imagine Preston hitting 46 against the leg-break king. Boon and Lockett both bowled well, but could not check the fast bowler's merry game. Farrimond, an unorthodox bat, has a habit of getting runs against Staffordshire. When Staffordshire batted again, the left-handed midget, Holroyd, played havoc with the later batsmen, after Lockett (30), G. A. Fittou (29), and Homer (24) had rattled up 98 for the first four wickets. A total of 117 left Lancashire with only 77 to get, and Paynter, the left-hander, hit a brilliant 50. He wanted four for his half-century when only two were required to win, but he smacked Lee to the boundary and got them. Thus five points were dropped in the first match.

Ten Lincolnshire were met at Frodingham without both Barnes and Lockett, Sedgwick being included for the only time during the season, though he had a good match, and demonstrated his all-round usefulness. Boon did probably his best bit of bowling of the season in the Lincolnshire first innings, for he maintained the

mendous pace with accuracy, taking seven wickets for 31. He broke the Rev. H. Mack's off stump in two in the middle, and the rev. gentleman had the two halves duly inscribed for presentation as a souvenir. Lincolnshire having been dismissed for 108, Staffordshire started none too well, in spite of sound batting by L. H. Crump, but the later batsmen piled up runs, especially Sedgwick, who hit 72, and E. P. Cross, who missed his 50 by one run through Boon being run out in trying to steal it. The total of 290 was the highest of the season, and Staffordshire gained the first of two single innings victories over the ten county. The Rev. H. Mack made 31 and 48, and had the best analysis with three for 61. Sedgwick took five wickets in the match for 12 runs besides his big score.

In the return match, at Wolverhampton, Barnes came into the team for the first time, and made his presence felt by taking 12 wickets for 59. Staffordshire had first innings, and Homer and Crump remained together till after lunch, putting up the best first-wicket partnership of the season—viz., 95, of which Homer made 62. Crump was tedious, and was fifth out at 106, having batted three hours and ten minutes for his 63. Lockett, J. S. Heath, A. D. Wilkie, and A. W. Ikin—all took toll of the rather weak Lincolnshire bowling, and the closure was applied at 270 for six. It was Wilkie's first experience of county cricket, and he created an extremely favourable impression, which was more than borne out at High Wycombe in the final match. Lincolnshire had a bad attack of "Barnesitis," and with Boon also bowling well in the second innings to take four wickets for 24 they failed to reach three figures in either innings.

Then the weather played a scurvy trick on the home county at Porthill. At lunch time on the second day Cheshire were in such a plight that an over or two must have given Staffordshire an easy victory. But rain came on during the interval and prevented any further play. The wicket was affected by rain and scoring ruled low. The features of Staffordshire's first innings were a clever 38 not out by Arthur Ikin, following his 32 not out at Wolverhampton, and a promising debut by Arthur Smith, of Great Chell. Staffordshire had a lead of 43, and with the wicket getting more difficult were out for 83 at the second attempt, leaving Cheshire 127 to get. Small as it sounds, this was a hopeless task, and eight wickets were lost for 54, Lockett being the chief engine of destruction, and bowling finely to take six for 22. Barnes had bowled throughout, and had only one wicket, but looked like getting wickets every over, and it would not have required many deliveries from these two to have completed the victory of the home county, but the rain was continuous after lunch, and Staffordshire were robbed of the full points.

The return match at Boughton Hall revealed the Staffordshire team in a thoroughly bad light. It was a disappointing display however one looks at it. Batting first the side was bundled out for 80, and the only excuse for a tame exhibition was that the ball was kicking a good deal, and making Dennis's fast bowling difficult. Arthur Smith, in his second county match, showed that the bowling could be played by staying 55 minutes and scoring 32, not out. The score of 80 was passed by Cheshire with only two wickets down, and they took a lead of 111, but this was because the Staffordshire team followed up their poor batting with a display of fielding that would have disgraced a village side. Barnes bowled 31 overs for 87 runs and 6 wickets, and he and Lockett bowled well enough to have got the home side out for 100 if they had been supported by smart and accurate fielding. Staffordshire did rather better at the second attempt, but the wicket was wearing then, and the most they could do was to send Cheshire in again to get 11 runs, and suffered defeat by 10 wickets. Although they had the worst of the wicket, the team gave the weakest all-round display I remember to have seen from a Staffordshire XI. for some years.

The first meeting with Notts. II. was at Trent Bridge, and found the Staffordshire team back to its proper form, except that missed catches off Boon's bowling on the second day enabled Notts. to avoid defeat outright. Excellent bowling by Barnes, Lockett, and Boon brought about the dismissal of the home team on a hard, true wicket, for 142. Barnes bowled throughout the innings, delivering 31 overs for 57 runs and 5 wickets, and the feat of endurance was an extraordinary one on a ground as hard as flint. Improved batting was shown, Homer (52), L. Woodhouse (45), Ellerker, Fitton, and Lockett all doing well in an innings of 234. It was the first appearance of Woodhouse, of Old Hill, in county cricket, and he made a brilliant debut. Going in a few minutes before the close on the first day, he nonchalantly cut the first two balls he received to the boundary! When Notts. went in again Barnes started with 3 wickets for 15, but his gruelling of the previous day told on him, and he could not keep it up. Boon, however, bowling at a great pace, and with more accuracy than he has sometimes done, would have gone through the side if he had been well supported. Five catches in the slips and two behind the wicket (Cross was handicapped by an injured finger), were missed, and the young Notts. professionals took such advantage of their good fortune, that the captain was able to declare at 250 for 5 wickets, and send Staffordshire in with 165 to get in an hour and 20 minutes. Lockett delighted the Notts. spectators with a gorgeous display of hitting, scoring 68 in less than an hour, but stumps were drawn at 01 for 3.

Buckinghamshire appeared at Porthill on August Bank Holiday, and took first innings points from Staffordshire in a rain-ruined match, in which Barnes again bowled over 30 overs in an innings and took 7 wickets for 43, and in which Staffordshire collapsed on a tricky pitch against Edwards and Pitchford. H. E. Bourne (28), maintained a dour defence in difficult conditions for an hour and 50 minutes. The 74 of Staffordshire was their lowest total of the season.

Then followed two matches at Stoke in which the team played masterful cricket to beat Lancashire II. by 8 wickets and Notts. II. by an innings. The outstanding feature of the Lancashire match was the bowling of Barnes, who took 16 wickets for 87 runs, bowling 52 overs in the match. Frank Woodhouse confirmed his form at Nottingham with an excellent 44, and had a partnership of 87 with Homer.

Lockett again gave the Notts. bowlers and fielders a taste of his batting prowess, hitting the highest score of the season for Staffordshire by making 88 in 2½ hours. There was other good batting, Arthur Smith and Ikin both getting into the thirties late in the innings. After 270 from Staffordshire, Notts. were trundled out for 59. They simply could not play Barnes, who continued his wonderful form by taking 7 for 28. Though they did better when they followed on, Lockett got 6 wickets for 45 by clever and steady bowling, delivering 27 overs.

In the closing match at High Wycombe Staffordshire again lost on the first innings to Buckinghamshire, but only by 4 runs after an exciting struggle, and it was once again faulty fielding, coupled with a knee injury which crippled Barnes, that robbed Staffordshire at least of first innings points. Buckinghamshire would have obtained no such total as 280 if the chances in the field had been accepted. In the spirited response of the visiting county Wilkie and Ellerker both passed the half-century, and both

played beautiful cricket, whilst Woodhouse, with 35, also lived up to the high standard he has set.

BATTING AND BOWLING AVERAGES

The following are the season's averages -

BATTING					
Not T'ot H'st					
	Inns.	outs	sc'e.	[Avg'e.	
H. W. Homer	8	0	271	62	33.87
F. Woodhouse	4	0	120	45	31.50
Lockett	14	0	368	88	26.28
W. H. Ellerker	10	3	180	52*	25.71
L. H. Crump	5	0	125	63	25.00
A. W. Ikin	14	3	226	35*	20.54
A. Smith	8	2	121	33	20.16
E. P. Cross	9	4	98	49*	19.60
H. E. Bourne	4	1	43	28	14.33
G. A. Fitton	13	0	156	36	12.00
J. S. Heath	12	0	137	23	11.41
R. Hollowood	4	0	41	25	10.25
Barnes	10	0	81	28	8.10
Boon	12	3	50	16*	5.55
E. Perry	4	0	22	12	5.50
G. B. Green	3	0	0	4	3.00

Also batted:- A. D. Wilkie, 27*, 53; E. Mayer, 21, 6; A. A. Bickerton, 9, 5; W. Lee, 5, 0; R. S. A. Hardy, 4, 0; Sedgwick, 72; P. O. Yates, 27; L. McEckan, 13; R. Howl, 13.

BOWLING						
	Ov's.	M'ns.	Runs	W.	Avg'e.	
Barnes	291	4	83	565	68	8.30
Sedgwick	19	5	7	42	5	8.40
F. Woodhouse	17	4	40	3	13.33	
Lockett	256	3	78	500	29	17.24
E. Mayer	28	7	53	3	17.00	
Boon	221	2	47	612	28	21.85
W. H. Ellerker	92	29	231	9	25.66	
R. Hollowood	49	13	126	4	31.50	

Also bowled:- W. Lee, 15.2-1-55-2; E. Perry, 4-0-19-1; J. S. Heath, 5-0-32-1.

TO BE CONTINUED

MINOR COUNTIES TABLE

FINAL POSITIONS									
	Won	Lost	on		No		P. W. Ist I. L. Ist. I. Ret. Pct		
Oxfordshire	8	7	1	0	0	0	05.00		
Buckingham	10	4	4	1	1	0	64.00		
Surrey II.	14	6	5	2	1	0	65.71		
Lanes. II.	12	6	1	3	2	0	58.33		
Staffs.	10	4	2	2	2	0	54.00		
Yorks. II.	10	3	3	2	1	1	55.55		
Dorset	10	3	2	0	5	0	52.00		
Hertford	14	3	6	2	3	0	51.42		
Kent II.	10	1	5	2	1	1	46.00		
Cheshire	8	2	2	2	2	0	45.00		
Durham	8	3	0	3	2	0	42.50		
Northumberl'd	8	2	3	1	0	0	42.50		
Berks'ire	10	1	5	3	1	0	42.00		
Devon	10	0	4	1	3	2	37.50		
Norfolk	10	2	2	5	1	0	34.00		
Lincolnshire	10	1	3	4	1	1	33.33		
Wiltshire	8	1	1	1	5	0	32.50		
Bedfordshire	8	1	2	4	0	0	30.00		
Notts. II.	8	0	2	2	2	2	26.66		
Leicester II.	8	1	0	2	4	1	25.71		
Cornwall	10	0	1	2	5	2	26.00		
Monmouth	8	1	0	4	2	1	20.00		
Cambridge	8	0	0	4	3	1	5.57		

STAFFORDSHIRE PROFESSIONALS IN LANCASHIRE

The two Staffordshire professionals engaged in the Central Lancashire League, Barnes and Lockett, have had a remarkably successful season. I notice from a table in which the sports edition of the Oldham "Evening Chronicle" gives the batting and bowling averages of all the professionals in the League named, that the two Staffordshire men occupy commanding positions in both the batting and bowling lists. In bowling they stand first and second of the dozen professionals, and in batting first and equal second. And I rather think the batting figures of Lockett are not quite accurate, and that instead of being bracketed equal with Slater, the Heywood professional, he should be easily second, if not at the top of the list. He is credited with only one not out innings, but my impression is that he has carried out his bat twice or three times. But taking the figures as they are given, the performance of our two cricks are creditable to the county, and pleasing to all interested in Staffordshire cricket. Barnes heads both tables, as he has made a habit of doing for many years wherever he has played, and his bowling figures would be phenomenal for everyone but himself. In his case they are only so by reason of the number of years he has maintained similar wonderful records without a lapse in the best class of club cricket. Here are the figures of the two men:-

BATTING					
	Inns.	outs.	Runs	sc'e.	Avg'e.
Barnes	13	4	265	56	22.08
Lockett	23	1	452	74	20.01

BOWLING						
	Ov's.	M'ns.	Runs	W.	Avg'e.	
Barnes	32½	5	42	679	102	6.65
Lockett	35½	3	112	700	84	9.04

This is Lockett's first season in Lancashire club cricket. He rendered successful service to Old Hill for several seasons, including last year, but a new rule passed by the Birmingham League, which required professionals to reside during the summer within a given radius of the grounds of the clubs engaging them, barred him, as he was not prepared to leave his work as a colliery fireman in the Audley district. He manages to combine his cricket with the performance of these duties, from which it may be assumed that the summer season is a somewhat strenuous one for him.

THE CRITIC.

COUNTY CRICKET REVIEW

Second Article: A Survey of Form

During the past season Staffordshire batted 15 times and scored 2,450 runs for the loss of 151 wickets, giving an average per wicket of 16.22, compared with 20.08 last year; and their opponents batted 19 times (including a very brief innings of Cheshire at Broughton Hall) and lost 157 wickets for 2,452 runs, an average per wicket of 15.61, compared with 15.85 last year. That means that Staffordshire scored 187 runs on the average per completed innings, compared with 200 last year, and 158 per completed innings were scored against them, compared with 159 a year ago. So that, on the average, Staffordshire led their opponents by 31 runs per innings, as against 42 in 1928. It is, of course, satisfactory that the margin is on the right side, as it has been every year since 1905, with the single exception of 1925, when Staffordshire averaged 134 and their opponents 187. But the superiority of Staffordshire has often been more pronounced, as, for example, in 1927, when it was represented by 89 runs per innings; in 1920 by 70 runs, 1914 by 91, 1912 by 126 (Staffordshire on the average more than doubled their opponents' score, 1911 by 104, 1908 by 81, and 1906 by 115. Perhaps I may anticipate some later comment by the interpolation that the margin this year would have been considerably greater if the fielding of the team had been up to the standard of some of the years quoted. And it might also be added that Staffordshire would have been directly interested in the championship issue.

Of the 151 wickets lost by the county, 47 were bowled, 62 caught, 14 l.b.w., 4 stumped, 1 hit wicket, and 3 run out, whilst of the 157 wickets they have captured 65 were bowled, 71 caught, 12 l.b.w., 4 stumped, and 4 run out. A comparison with last year reveals a curious likeness. Then the 138 wickets of Staffordshire were lost thus:—43 bowled, 67 caught, 17 l.b.w., 7 stumped, and 4 run out; and the 178 of their opponents thus:—69 bowled, 73 caught, 32 l.b.w., and 4 run out. This is how the four principal bowlers obtained their wickets:—Barnes, 22 bowled, 34 caught, 9 l.b.w., and 3 stumped; Lockett, 16 bowled, 9 caught, 3 l.b.w., and 1 stumped; Boon, 16 bowled and 12 caught; and Ellerker, 4 bowled, 4 caught, and 1 l.b.w. If it were possible to give the number of times batsmen were beaten by balls that missed the wicket (I mean, beaten in trying to defend the wicket against dangerous balls), there would be an almost incredibly large figure to the credit of Barnes. Lockett bowled 25 no-balls, Barnes 6, Boon 4, and Sedgwick 1, and Boon bowled 4 wides, and Ellerker and Woodhouse 1 each. Boon made the largest number of catches, 11; Cross caught 9 and stumped 3, Ikin caught 8, Lockett 7, and Ellerker and Pitton 5 each. But perhaps a more interesting table would be of catches missed, if it could be accurately and fairly compiled. The extras conceded by Staffordshire numbered 177, of which 99 were byes; and the extras scored by Staffordshire were 150, including 94 byes. During the season 25 players were called upon, compared with 27 last year and 24 in 1927.

Batting: Promising Recruits

With regard to the batting as a whole, one cannot rank it higher than fair. On a few occasions, it has been downright bad. Much of it was so in the opening match at Old Trafford, when only Lockett and Homer lived up to their reputation and it was more so at Broughton Hall, when the side tumbled out for 80, and it was left to a raw recruit in Arthur Smith to show up the general weakness by scoring 32 not out of the meagre total. The only excuse was that the ball was liable to rear somewhat during the first hour or two. In these two matches the batting was poor, and another instance of lack both of skill and grit was furnished against Bucks, at Port Hill, when Bert Bourne was the only man in the team who showed any ability to play good bowling on a difficult wicket. These

were occasions when the batting of the side left something to be desired, but if they could be blotted out the general level would be fairly good. It was adversely affected by the fact that such batsmen as J. S. Heath, G. A. Fitton, and Barnes failed to do themselves justice, and the most pleasing feature was the advent of three young players of more than ordinary promise in A. D. Wilkie, Arthur Smith, and F. Woodhouse.

But of the older players first. The Captain, J. S. Heath, has again had a disappointing season. He has shaped like the capable bat that he is, but, though scoring freely almost every week for his club, he has never been able to get properly going in county matches, and has often been unfortunate in the manner of his dismissal. Arthur Fitton has been in like case. Last season he scored 332 runs, with 112 as his highest score, and an average of 25.53. This time he has made less than half as many runs, has failed to reach double figures eight times, has never got above 35, and averages only 12. His defence, which last year was remarkably tenacious, was often unreliable. And then Barnes has had a weird time with the bat. His first six scores were 2, 9, 0, 3, 3, 7, and 14 was his highest score until the last match. These figures are a grotesque misrepresentation of Barnes's ability as a batsman. He may not be as dependable now as when he used to score a hundred in an innings not infrequently, as well as take 100 wickets in the season, but he is still worth two or three times his average this season of 8 runs per innings. The comparative failure of this trio, all of whom might be expected to get plenty of runs, has made a big difference to the batting strength of the team.

On the other hand, H. W. Homer and Lockett have well maintained their scoring powers; A. W. Ikin, though hardly as successful as in the last two seasons, has been more than useful, and W. H. Ellerker has found just that steadiness which was wanted to make him one of the best, as he is amongst the most attractive bats available for the County. I expressed the view a year ago that the best had not been seen of the Smithwick man, and he has this year justified the opinion. And in view of the way in which he finished the season, I am still inclined to the same view.

The young Burslem batsman, I. H. Crump, played two good innings against Lincoln, but was sadly devoid of enterprise, and has hardly developed in stroke play as one had hoped, at least not yet. Homer has unfortunately missed four matches. His consistency is enshrined in the fact that he has now headed the batting averages without a break for six years, and he has never failed to get a double-figure score this season, not for the first time.

Lockett is a remarkable bat. He can crack balls to the leg boundary that most batsmen are content to play, and he does it by such quick, crisp hitting and beautiful timing that he makes balls look of bad length when they are not. He more often than not gets out through failing to keep his forward strokes on the ground. When he watches the ball from the pitch, either for cutting or hitting to leg, his strokes are brilliant, and he has again played many delightful innings. Some indication of his severity is afforded by the fact that of his 368 runs for the county this year, the enormous proportion of 290 have been scored by means of boundary strokes, of which he has hit 60.

It is a pleasant task to write of the three outstanding recruits to the county's batting strength. There was a fourth new-comer in R. Howl, younger brother of Clifford Howl, of Wolverhampton, who was a heavy scorer for the county a few years ago. His only innings, at Stoke, against Notts, II., was however, a little laboured, and it were wise to reserve comment for further evidence.

A. D. Wilkie is, in my judgment, about the best-equipped young batsman that Staffordshire have

been fortunate enough to "find" for quite a long time. One must

Of the other bowlers Lockett has not been quite so effective as last year. Whilst he has not bowled with the best of luck, it has seemed to me that his off-spinner has not had quite the "fizz" that it formerly had. He has, perhaps, been trying for more spin, and sacrificing something in pace, the result being that he has often tied batsmen up without getting them out. But it may well be that things have not just come off for him, and his success in club cricket seems to suggest such an explanation of the fact that he has taken 24 fewer wickets for the county this year than last, and has a rather higher average, although a bad match at High Wycombe fully accounts for that. As a matter of fact, the last match added over three runs per wicket to his season's



W. H. Ellerker

average. Prior to that match his 29 wickets had been obtained at an average cost of 14.08, which was more than two runs a wicket below his last year's average. Boon has taken more more wickets than last year, at practically the same average cost, but his record ought to have been much better, for he had the worst of luck on several occasions, notably at Nottingham, where six or seven catches were missed off him in the second innings, and his figures were none for 59. At times his control of length and direction has not been good, but at others he has combined tremendous pace with good length. He naturally bowls for slip catches, and unless these can be held, his effectiveness is, of course, very seriously reduced. Prior to the occasion referred to at Nottingham, he had taken 22 wickets with an average of 15, but his figures suffered in the later matches, and poor slip fielding had a good deal to do with it. The young fast bowler is engaged by Burnley in the Lancashire League for next season, so that Staffordshire will then have three bowlers operating each Saturday in the Pulmate.

Most of the bowling has been done by the three professionals, but Ellerker took a considerable share in the last three matches, and bowled with more merit than his figures would suggest. He has practically the same average as last year, when he took five more wickets, but I think he has improved his bowling, as well as his batting. Woodhouse bowled well enough to suggest that he will be a useful change, but Roy Hollowood, who played in four matches, hardly fulfilled expectations based on his club performances. His trial was probably not very satisfactory to him, however, as he got little chance when he was most likely to be suited by the state of the wicket. It is, perhaps, a little surprising that Doug Hut White, of Hignall End, has not been seen in the team this year at all, as he gave fair promise when tried last season, but the committee may well have been reluctant to lengthen the batting "tail."

Slackness in the Field

A review of the season would be incomplete that did not include frank criticism of the fielding. Like the general form of the team this has been streaky. Indeed, in my estimation, had the fielding been consistently keen and reliable, Staffordshire would certainly have been playing a challenge match with Oxfordshire to decide the championship. Runs have been given away in almost every innings by the lack of dash and alacrity in "scouting." There have always been some members of the team who set their colleagues a good example in this respect, and none more so than Fitton, who uses the last inch of his speed in recovering the ball and whipping it in, and so saves an appreciable number of runs. It may be said that not every player has Fitton's speed, but my reply would be that if every player made use of such speed as he has, a good many runs would be saved. That is one criticism. Another, and perhaps more serious, is that sadly too many catches have been missed. My own theory is that few mistakes would be made (a certain proportion



E. P. Cross

must, of course, be allowed for, as fielders are only human) if fielders were on the alert, and expected a catch from every ball, instead of being surprised when it comes. That attitude is absolutely essential for slip fielding, and all close-in positions. As to the effect upon the season's results of fielding errors, take three matches in which the effects were disastrous. At Chester, after Staffordshire had been dismissed for 80, the lead of Cheshire might have been kept down to a few runs if the chances in the field had been accepted, instead of which a lean of 144 left Staffordshire no chance of recovery. At Nottingham a lead of 92 was established on the first innings, and nothing but failure to take catches in the Notts second innings enabled them to avoid defeat outright. And finally, fielding errors enabled Bucks to run up a big score at High Wycombe, and Staffordshire took one point, where they would certainly have had three, and possibly five, if the chances had been taken. In these three matches bad fielding lost at least four points, and possibly nine, or even 11. Six additional points would have placed Staffordshire in the position of runners-up. I hope the fielding will be keyed up to concert pitch next season. Some excellent fielding has been seen, and Lockett and Ellerker deserve special mention, whilst all the three newcomers showed themselves clean and quick in the field. E. P. Cross has again

kept a really excellent wicket, and on two occasions in his absence George Green, of Silverdale, did well in the position. Cross was quick in covering awkward leg-balls, and he displayed pluck in keeping wicket in several matches with an injured finger, the result of an accident off the field.

With all my criticisms, I have nothing but praise for the efficiency and urbanity of the club's officials, Mr. G. A. F. Bagguley and Mr. L. W. Hancock, hon. secretary and hon. assistant secretary, respectively, and Major John Kent and Mr. A. Crompton Hawkins, hon. treasurer and hon. assistant treasurer.

Do not forget that his two innings were played on fast wickets, and that he was not tested on any of the rain-damaged wickets, which other members of the team have had to contend with on occasion. But at High Wycombe the left-hander, Edwards, was getting a good deal of work on the ball, and Wilkie hit a splendid half-century, with only a brief interlude of recklessness after passing 40 to mar it. Otherwise he showed good judgment in his hitting, put plenty of power into his forcing strokes, scored well all round the wicket, and was hardly ever beaten by the ball. With pleasing freedom of style, his play induced a comfortable expectation, rather than anxiety, which is one test of good batting.

Arthur Smith was the next young batsman to be tried, and he also impressed very favourably from the first. Over two years ago I wrote of this Chell player as probably destined for county honours. He got his chance this year against Cheshire at Portbill early in July, and of the remaining seven matches he missed only one, at Trent Bridge. In missing that he was denied the chance of batting in one of the best wickets of the season. He has had to bat several times on really difficult wickets, and though he has made no big scores he has generally made a useful contribution, and has got his runs by such fluent strokes that one can imagine bowlers being extremely glad to see the back of him. He has strong and supple wrists, and can smash balls in front of point which most players would treat much more respectfully, and he cuts beautifully. Whilst his off-side play is his greatest asset, he can glide a ball in the Homer style, and he can drive with power and safety, but his forward play needs a curb as I have seen him bring a promising innings to an end by picking the wrong one to drive. Considering the wickets he has played on, an average of 20 is an excellent beginning to what I hope and believe will be a successful career in county cricket.

Frank Woodhouse came into the team at Nottingham, and played against Lancashire II, at Stoke and Bucks at High Wycombe. He scored 45 in his first match, 44 and 2 in his second, and 35 in the last. His one failure was due to a careless stroke when he went in first with only 26 to get to win, a situation in which it was perhaps a little difficult to take things seriously. I have more than once mentioned his unique entry into county cricket, how, facing Harris, who had just bowled Barnes, he cut the two first balls sent up to him to the boundary, one past point and the other late, by the most facile and confident strokes. I shall not readily forget his hustling debut, and the recollection of his nonchalance will never fail to provoke a smile. It certainly showed that if he possessed the useful skill he was not lacking in temperament. And his subsequent batting revealed the possession of a sound defence and the ability to get runs at a good pace, with a penchant for cutting of which he gave such instant demonstration. He is essentially a sound batsman, keeping the ball well down by good timing and watching the ball wonderfully well for his back strokes, which are often played late and with great quickness of motion. He might conceivably prove to be the most

dependable of this trio of young batsmen, though hardly so brilliant as the other two. Together, if they can devote the necessary time to county cricket (and the Staffordshire programme, with its two-day matches, is not very exacting in that respect), they should furnish a timely and invaluable replenishment of the batting resources of the county.

It has been a misfortune that such players as A. A. Bickerton and W. Lee have never appeared in the side since the opening match, and that P. O. Yates was absent until the last. And there are others, of course, who have not been able to play at all. I think the omission of Sedgwick, except for one match (in which he did well, but has been a mistake. He is still a good bowler, is batting almost better than ever he did, and is a real asset to Barnes in the field, for the great bowler has found no one quite able to take his old colleague's place close in at point, where, last year, I believe, he took 13 or 14 catches. One realises that the committee are compelled to study economy, but a winning side always attracts more gate money, and so useful an all-round player as Sedgwick might have had a considerable influence on results. The committee, of course, use their best judgment, but I think this was mistaken policy.

Barnes's Great Feats

When one comes to the bowling it is necessary once more to pay the highest possible tribute to Sydney Barnes. He has well maintained his extraordinary record of achievement for Staffordshire, and if the fielding of the team had been as good as it ought to be, his average would have been at least as low as last year, when his 55 wickets cost 7.34 runs each. As it is he has taken 63 wickets at a run apiece higher cost. His full record for Staffordshire now stands thus: 4,537 overs, 1,372 maidens, 9,844 runs, 1,254 wickets, average 7.85. And that record has been obtained by bowling under all sorts of conditions, with something more than an average of bad luck, during a period of 26 years, though he has bowled for the county in only 17 seasons. Nothing has been more remarkable this year than his physical stamina. He has bowled for hour after hour without perceptibly tiring; over three hours on more than one occasion, and was bowling with the same accuracy, vim, and skill at the end as when he began. On one occasion, at Trent Bridge, he suffered considerably the next day from the effects of one of these prolonged spells on a ground like Adamant, and bowled again in the second innings with feet and legs aching from the previous day's grueling. These were only too natural after-effects, but so long as he did not rest, and so give the muscles a chance to stiffen, he seemed as though he could go on for ever without loss of form. He did what many men 20 years his junior could not have done without fatigue and consequent looseness. His analysis suffered severely at Boughton Hall, where he had 6 for 87 in 34 overs, and if the chances in the field had been accepted it is safe to say that not half the runs would have been scored from him. At Trent Bridge 70 runs were scored from him on the second day for 3 wickets in circumstances which I have mentioned, and he bowled 62 overs in the match. Then came a period of extraordinary success in August, when there was rain about and wickets suited him. In four consecutive innings against Bucks, Lancashire II, and Notts II, he took 30 wickets for 159 runs, or an average of 5 runs per wicket. In the final match, at High Wycombe, on a fast wicket, missed catches again marred his figures, and he had to retire with a strained knee. These few details and comments show that Barnes has again bowled in perfectly wonderful form.

The Critic