**Millichip Sees Newport Home In Historic Gwalia Welsh Cup Win**

Young Adam Millichip played the hero's role with a match winning 43 not out, as Newport Cricket Club won a pulsating thriller against North Walians Northop Hall, in the final of the Gwalia Welsh Cup at Abergavenny.

In damp conditions Northop surprisingly batted first on winning the toss and openers Danny Nolan and A. Smith got off to a steady start. The Newport opening attack of swing bowler Andrew Harris and paceman Tom

Leeming kept runs at a premium, complimenting each other well. Harris bowling his allotted 9 overs for just 22 runs and Leeming bowling out for 32 runs. After 20 overs Northop had reached 60-0 wicket. The introduction of left arm spinners Max Scarr and Kyle Tudge immediately got the breakthrough as Scarr claimed the wicket of Nolan for 30. S.Butler joined Smith, who was having a charmed life squirting the ball over the Newport fielders on a number of occasions. Butler was out when the score had reached 100 off 29 overs, becoming Imran

Hassan's first victim. Northop's player coach, Attar Rehman the former Pakistan Test cricketer, who had been banned from the Test Match arena in 1990 for match fixing, was next to go clean bowled by Michael Clayden for just 5, and at 112-3 off 33 overs, Newport were well in the game. Smith was still there, riding his luck and was proving to be a thorn in the Newport side. However, in the flurry for late runs several wickets fell cheaply including Smith for 78 LBW to Hassan. All the Newport bowlers bowled well Hassan claiming 3-37,

Tudge 1-34, Scarr 1-24 and Clayden 1-22 as Northop's innings closed on 177-8.

Newport couldn't have wished for a better start in reply with Michael Clayden and young Tom Cleeve (25) playing the Northop opening attack of Attar Rehmen and A. Hodgkins with ease. Rehmen who had claimed 79 league wickets in the Liverpool Conference made little impact on the Newport openers who scored runs freely. The fifty run partnership was posted in just 12 overs, and when Newport had reached 70-0 off 17 overs the game seemed to be slipping away from Northop.

However, the game was about to be turned on its head as Newport lost 3 wickets in three balls all LBW! Left arm spinner D.Nolan claiming 2 and S.Butler one. At 70-3, it was now a different game, Clayden was still there batting magnificently, but every time Newport seemed to be overcoming the Northop challenge, they lost another wicket. A further three wickets fell in quick succession and all three were again LBW victims. The last wicket being the invaluable wicket of Clayden for an excellent 53. Newport had lost there first six batsman, all to LBW decisions and had fallen from 70-0 to 121-6 off 32 overs. When two further quick wickets fell, Newport had slumped to 122-8. With Tom Roberts picking up a nasty hand injury while fielding, and only available to bat in an emergency, it was effectively the last pair of batsmen at the wicket. Joe Thompson joined young Adam Millichip, who had survived the earlier carnage, and both refused to give up the fight. With 55 runs needed to win in 12 overs the writing seemed to be on the wall as the vocal North Walian spectators began to rejoice. But the young Newport team is made of sterner stuff, slowly at first the two batsmen began to rebuild the tattered innings, scampering singles and twos, getting ever closer to the Northop score. With 5 overs of the innings left, another 37 runs were needed and Northop were beginning to get a little nervous. With their key bowlers of Rehmen, Nolan and Butler bowled out, the less experienced bowlers were left to bowl out at the end of the innings. Picking up runs off nearly every ball the game was on a knife's edge. 21 runs were needed off 3 overs, which was then whittled down to 16 to win off two overs.

A four had hardly been hit in the whole innings, but the game was about to take a dramatic twist with just 7 balls remaining and still 10 runs needed, as young Millichip hit three magnificent fours to see Newport home by 2 wickets, with just three balls of the match remaining. It had been an incredible 59 run unbroken partnership which had had the crowd on the edge of their seats. Thompson played an invaluable part scoring a crucial 20 not out, and using his vast experience to talk Millichip through the vital last stages of the match, but it was Millichip who was the real hero scoring an undefeated 43 not out, in one of his first senior games.

Captain on the day Michael Clayden, collected the Cup dedicating the win to Graham Reynolds and Tim James, two of Newport's biggest supporters, who unfortunately died this year. It is the first time Newport have won the Welsh Cup in their history. There were several candidates for the Man of the Match Award, but it was rightly awarded to Adam Millichip for his heroic innings.

Newport Club coach Mike Knight reflecting on the win claimed, ' It was a very proud day in the history of Newport Cricket Club. With nearly all our players coming through our junior ranks, it really was a day to savour. Hopefully, this will be the stepping stone for further success in the near future, they're certainly good enough!'