



WESTMORLAND
CRICKET LEAGUE



MHA NORTHERN PYRAMID

ISSUE 1 : FEB 25



NEW BRAND NEW

There is increasing warmth in the sun; it is showing it's face earlier in the morning and bidding farewell later in the evening. Beneath our feet, grass is growing once more. Spring is champing at the bit. The sound of leather on willow is echoing around sports halls and other indoor venues.

When all of these things are happening, it can only mean one thing.... the new season is in our thoughts and there is so much shiny and brand new to look forward to. Everything has a dynamic feel and an energetic buzz about it...

NEW DEAL

We are delighted to have struck a sponsorship deal with mha - the national accountancy firm, with offices in Preston and throughout the North-West. mha offer fantastic opportunities for ambitious young people to unleash their potential and build careers in accountancy, finance, marketing, HR and

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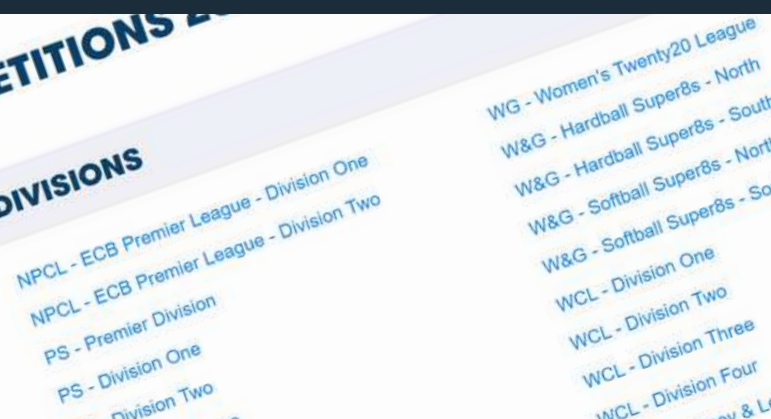
NEW FACES – NEW FRIENDS

Firstly, let us extend the hand of cricketing friendship to the new faces. Carlisle CC have dominated the Cumbria league in recent years. In 2025 they begin a new chapter in their club history by coming into the NPCL. We expect them to be very competitive in NPCL division 2. Burneside CC have enjoyed success in the Westmorland League and appear to be on a steady upward trajectory, getting that bit stronger year by year. This year they will be playing in the Palace Shield Premier division which will provide a good measure of their improvement. Burscough CC have come into Palace Shield division 1. All three are strong clubs with a great deal to offer our local cricket. We wish them well and look forward to meeting up with them all over the summer.



NEW SEASON – NEW DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE.

On paper at least, the new look divisional structure appears to be very strong. It seems likely that there will be something at stake and a sense of jeopardy in almost every game. Our aim has been to create a genuine hierarchy in which eventually, all teams will be playing close-fought competitive cricket at the level that is right for them. Surely, this is how everyone would want it to be.



NEW SEASON - NEW BALL.

Unfortunately, the upgraded Reader's ball we adopted in 2024 proved no better than its predecessor – just more expensive. With refreshing and commendable honesty Readers acknowledged that at the present time, they were unable to sell us a ball suitable for premier league cricket. Consequently, we were able to switch to the Dukes International A for NPCL Premier division 1 and 2 league fixtures without impacting the financial deal we have long enjoyed with Readers.

Please make arrangements to collect your club's cricket ball orders from Fulwood & Broughton CC (J32 of the M6) on Thursday 10th April 4pm – 7pm. Team cards will be distributed at the same time. Those clubs in a position to reclaim VAT should have requested a VAT invoice at the time of submitting the ball order. If this has not been done, please contact the Treasurer as soon as possible. Any cricket ball orders not collected from F&B will be stored temporarily at the business office of Walling's Accountants at Billsborrow (Hallidays Farm, Unit 2a).



FROGBOX.LIVE

NEW LIVE-STREAM.

For the early adopters, a great deal has been negotiated with Frogbox meaning more games are going to be live-scored and live-streamed than ever before. This has a 21st century feel. What it will do is make it smartphone-easy for the loyal and faithful to follow the fortunes of their team when they can't get to the game - perhaps whilst topping up their tan on a sun-drenched beach; or lounging by a palm-fringed pool. Maybe even catching up with the YouTube highlights over a sundowner or two.



NEW LEAGUE FOR THE WOMEN AND GIRLS.

In 2025 the Northern Pyramid will be running various leagues for the Women and Girls in our area. In the past clubs have had to travel across county to find fixtures but now we can offer local games. They will be playing Super 8s, T20 and 30-over formats. We are also running Under 11 and Under 13 Softball.

Slightly shameful that it has taken us so long to get round to it but things are being put right – cricket is a game for all.

NEW WIN SOME – LOSE SOME.

This season, all divisions will be playing much the same win/lose cricket. This will bring consistency throughout the pyramid. Principally though, it will permit the full and proper use of Duckworth/Lewis for rain-affected league fixtures (of which there are many), in NPCL 1 and 2. When rain interferes, it makes sense to rely on the tried and trusted D/L calculator. Players accept it, no quibble. Via a downloaded App everyone will know the exact state of the game ball-by-ball and captains can make more informed decisions rather than trying to second-guess a weather-App. As sophisticated as it is, D/L makes no accommodation for winning-draws and losing-draws. League cricket should look and feel different to cup cricket. For players and captains, league cricket should pose different problems which require different solutions. Plus, many will recall the nail-biting, last-game-last-ball climax to the 2023 season. A totally absorbing drama that only came about because of the availability a drawn outcome. Consequently, sacrificing the draw result has not been undertaken lightly.

To a significant degree, the bonus point structure ensures a key difference between league and cup cricket. To gain the maximum points available it will still be necessary to bowl the opposition out in the 2nd innings. And as for the drama – shouldn't worry too much about that - cricket has a way of producing that in abundance.

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DATES FOR DIGITAL CALENDARS

Awarding cup finals to the clubs who consistently achieve high standards in ground audits seems both fair and appropriate.

On Sunday 3rd August, the Crabtree Cup final will be hosted by Penwortham CC. The following Sunday, reigning NPCL champions, Fleetwood CC will be hosting the Loxham Cup Final at Broadwater on 10th August. The prestigious Meyler Cup final will this year be held at Woodhill Lane, Morecambe on Sunday 17th August. In the premier league divisions, Netherfield CC, St Annes CC and Blackpool CC consistently occupy top positions in the end-of-season ground and pitch rankings. All will be rewarded with prestigious finals in 2025.

The NPCL League Cup Final will be staged at Highbury Road, St Annes CC on Sunday 7th September. This is a special year for the town, marking 150 years since a group of Lancashire mill owners pooled their resources to create the St Annes we know today. It is possible that the cup final could become another expression of civic pride amongst wider local celebrations.

T20 Finals Days are always buzzing, high-octane occasions with players and supporters of 4 teams converging. On Sunday 13th July, Netherfield CC will be hosting the NPCL T20 finals day. The winners of this go through to the national competition but this year there is the added incentive – the winners of the NPCL T20 will not only qualify for the ECB National T20 Blast but have the privilege of hosting the ECB Area Final.

Later in the month on the 27th July, Garstang CC will be hosting the Palace Shield T20 finals day at the new look Riverside Sports Ground where development never seems to stop. On the 9th July, Settle will host the MCC vs a Northern Pyramid U21 Side.

Blackpool CC will once again be hosting the Lancashire Cup Final. We wish good luck to all of our teams starting out in that competition: Fleetwood, Longridge, Netherfield, Blackpool, Thornton-Cleveleys, Penrith and Great Eccleston. The runes say one of these teams will make the final at Stanley Park on Sunday 31st August but which one? The crystal ball gets a bit hazy at this point because it could be any one of them. In recent years Longridge CC (winners in 2022, runner-up in 2023) have been pathfinders and an inspiration to us all. Going back further in time, Blackpool are multiple winners and Netherfield have been to the final. But this is not the time for looking back at past glories it is the time for new heroes to emerge and for new memories to be made.

Just a reminder to all of the Lancashire Cup participants, that it is imperative your club is Safehands compliant by the start of the season.

AND FINALLY...

Ramadan Mubarak.

To all of our friends who will be observing the disciplines and making time for spiritual contemplation during this holy month we wish you, Ramadan Mubarak.



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