

Amazing Abbott carves a place in Blast history

By RICHARD SPILLER

SENSATIONAL Sean Abbott equalled Vitality Blast history as he smashed a remarkable century for Surrey against Kent.

The Australian all-rounder crashed 11 sixes in making an unbeaten 110 at the Kia Oval on Friday night, his ton coming in just 34 balls to match that of fellow countryman Andrew Symonds in 2004.

Abbott's efforts ensured victory by 41 runs for the hosts, their second victory in as many nights to launch Surrey's T20 campaign successfully.

They were in trouble when he entered at 64-4 in the ninth over, Jamie Smith's departure at 94-5 making the situation gloomier.

But Abbott, who has already played two important innings for Surrey in the LV County Championship this season, found the ideal partner in Jordan Clark (29no) as they hammered Surrey into a strong position.

Notice that it would be Abbott's night came when he hit three sixes back over left-arm spinner George Linde's head, landing in the pavilion, reaching his half-century – for only the second time in white ball matches – in 23 balls. But his severest attack came against seamer Kane Richardson, a fellow international from Down Under, who bowled the 17th over and saw it taken for 30 runs in a sequence of 6-4-6-4-4-6.

By the time Abbott was finished, Surrey had reached 223-5 and although Kent's response was launched by Tawanda Muyeye (59) and Daniel Bell-Drummond with a stand of 108 in



Sean Abbott hitting one of his 11 sixes against Kent

Picture: Mark Sandom

9.5 overs, they could not last the pace. Two wickets apiece for Sunil Narine, Tom Lawes and Will Jacks left the visitors well short at 182-7.

Paying tribute to Abbott's knock, acting captain Sam Curran reckoned:

"I think it was one of those nights where he's just an unbelievable striker of the ball and that's what happens in T20 cricket. In the position we were in, someone had to step up and to get 100 off 30-odd balls is just too special."

It made a night which the 17,000 crowd are unlikely to forget in a hurry. Surrey had got up and running at Lord's the previous evening, comfortably beating Middlesex by 73 runs.

Bitter-sweet title victory for Hayes

"IT'S definitely been the hardest year for me and I feel relieved it's over for lots of reasons," said Emma Hayes after Chelsea Women's 3-0 title-deciding win at Reading in the Women's Super League on Saturday, writes Jane Grove.

It was a bitter-sweet victory for the Chelsea manager. "I feel sad. Winning the league and relegating a friend [Reading manager Kelly Chambers] doesn't feel good in my soul."

Hayes, who has steered her side to a fourth consecutive WSL trophy,

By JANE GROVE

praised the squad for their character and admitted that winger Guro Reiten was her player of the season.

"She's unreal; she's exceptional; she's really grown up and become a leader in this team. She has an unbelievable mind – very wise as a young person – funny, witty, but most importantly she's got an eye for a pass that is second to none. She needs to be recognised as one of the best players in the world – because

she is."

Chelsea were in the driving seat for the last game of the season at the Madejski stadium. Man United's only hope of winning was if the Blues faltered – but that wasn't going to happen in front of a wall of Chelsea supporters who had answered Hayes' pleas and turned up in their thousands to make the atmosphere feel like a Kingsmeadow home game.

Reiten came up trumps on 18 minutes with a perfect cross to Sam Kerr, who headed home for the open-

er. Three minutes before half time Reiten herself scored, taking advantage of the Royals' scrappy play to nutmeg goalie Grace Moloney.

The dominance continued in the second half, with Kerr putting the icing on the cake in the 88th minute, converting after her initial shot had hit the post from a Jelena Cankovic assist.

The WSL title was a done deal for the stadium announcer, who didn't even wait for the final whistle before he announced that Chelsea were champions.

Community gymnastics club earn recognition

LONDON-BASED club Benchmark Gymnastics has been recognised for its outstanding work in the local community helping to boost confidence and bring people together through gymnastics.

The club has had its story shared as part of a "Find Your Amazing" campaign created by British Gymnastics to celebrate people's unique differences, skills and abilities in the sport and the many benefits gymnastics offers.

British Gymnastics has released a series of films, featuring inspirational clubs, coaches and gymnasts. This marks the second phase of the campaign, which continues to celebrate the amazing stories of the sport, focusing on disability access and inclusion, mental health and wellbeing, diversity and gymnastics for social good. The aim is to encourage more parents and young people to consider gymnastics, highlighting its role as a key foundation sport and inspiring even more people to try it for the first time.

With sites in Streatham, Shepherd's Bush and Tooting, Benchmark Gymnastics has formed a remarkable community that continues to grow and develop.

Since opening in 2009, Benchmark has provided so many opportunities for its staff and members. From pursuing someone's dream of becoming a lead coach to supporting a young gymnast with a tricky skill, no dream is too big, or too small, with Benchmark's main aim always to support and to nurture everyone to be the best version of themselves.

Owner, director and former Masterclass British champion in sports acrobatics, Alisha Walters, explained: "We call ourselves 'The Benchmark Family' and we started for two main reasons. The first was to facilitate the needs of our staff, so we have evolved and morphed depending on what our staff might require. The second was to use Benchmark as a holistic vehicle to empower young children to develop life skills. To build confidence, leadership and find their voice. For us, it's about seeing the growth in the children.

"We are powered by life perspective. If we can meet the needs of our people, then they will have a much higher level of enjoyment and happiness in them that they will spread to someone else, and so on. We get so many amazing stories out of our club."

To "Find Your Amazing" and see what's on offer near you, visit www.british-gymnastics.org/discover or to hear more incredible stories, visit www.british-gymnastics.org/find-your-amazing

Women's trials at Casuals

By DOMINIC BLISS

CORINTHIAN-CASUALS have launched a new women's first team to begin competing in the 2023/24 season – and they are looking for players now.

The Tolworth-based team is inviting players aged 16 and over to trial for this brand-new team with big ambitions, beginning in the Surrey Division One, the seventh tier of the women's football pyramid.

Trials will be held at King George's Field, Tolworth, on the pitches next to the club's home ground, from 6-8pm on Tuesday, June 6. Players are asked to bring boots, shinpads, fluids and bags of enthusiasm.

Committee members for the women's section of this famous old club were present at the recent Seething Community Sports Day to raise awareness of the new team, and the club will announce a new women's manager in the coming weeks.

If you wish to register to attend trials, email Paul Mitchell, general manager of Corinthian-Casuals Women, at mitch@ccfcfd.co.uk or check the team's social media pages for links to an application form.

Reps pipped on pens in under-10s final



Wallington Reps line-up

WALLINGTON Little League Reps team took part in the national U10s tournament on May 20.

It was Wallington Little League's first entry into a tournament since the takeover and the players did not disappoint.

The Reps team played the maximum number of games possible (seven) and did not concede a single goal during normal time.

By Patrick Hutchison

Captained by Jude Hibbert, the team were resilient and defensively organised, knowing if they took the lead, they couldn't allow the opposition too many chances. However, when the opposing team was able to breach the defence, Reps goalkeeper

Aarush was on hand to pick up the pieces, even saving a penalty.

With such a solid defensive base, it allowed the front three to do what they do – create chances and score goals. With so many great finishes, it is impossible to decide the best but the most memorable was the first of the day – a bullet header by Callum Hams from a

perfectly placed Corner from George Duke.

Wallington Reps were unfortunately defeated in the plate final on a penalty shootout.

Wallington Little League are extremely proud to have been represented by this group of young players and on another day, they could have been walking away as champions.