

Mzaidume to ignite Holmesdale's attack

Epps backs South African paceman for big impact

By **Jamie Rose**

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HOLMESDALE will be hoping 2012 can reap more rewards than last year's campaign – when they were relegated from Kent Division Two for the first time in years.

In 2011 they finished with four wins, four draws, and 11 losses in the league.

But Dale and second-year captain Mark Epps are looking to regroup, buoyed by the benefits a season of experience gave their youngsters, who he insists will be much better prepared for the new campaign.

“We had a very young side last season – but it was still disappointing,” said Epps. “It wasn't like we were smashed in every game. We finished a number of games on the wrong side of close matches. But we would have learned a lot from it.

“Our university boys are showing more discipline and maturity every time I see them play. There's a vibe around the place and a good feeling amongst the team – more than any of my recent seasons.

“It's great to be more stable going into this campaign after the captain went back to Australia at the start of the last.”

Epps is hoping the Dale bowling attack has been sharpened during the off-season.

Partnership

Siphe Mzaidume, a new overseas player from South Africa training with Northamptonshire, has been working at indoor facilities alongside fellow Dale opening bowler Peter Grove. The African played for the well-known Border province academy in his homeland and, combined with Grove, Epps feels it's a partnership likely to strike fear into the oncoming batsmen.

“He is mean, fast, and hopefully



MOVING FORWARD: Mark Epps is looking for an improvement on last year

will shake a few of them up,” said the captain. “Apparently he can bowl at around 80mph.

“He's been working along with Grove indoors since February. They are both brutally quick – and the team is quite excited about it.”

Epps also hopes fortunes will be changed by new appointments in management. Dale have a new chairman, Tony Rose, and a new treasurer, Robert Bryant.

“This year things look a lot more promising and a lot more focused,” said Rose.

“Rather than the peripheral activities going on, hopefully we can look at the cricket – what we are all there for.

“It was a development year in 2012, but Mark did a great job bringing the youngsters on.”

“My objectives are always first

to win some cricket. The way we go about the game is most important. We need to keep building that team ethos and spirit. It's great now and it will continue onto the pitch.”

This season's opener is away to Addington on Saturday.

Angels act fast for a swift rise

Youth Football

RIVERHEAD Angels U12 have gained one of two automatic promotion slots in their first year in the Crowborough and District Junior League.

The club was founded three years ago to form what is now the under 14 team and mainly comprises ex-pupils of Amherst Primary School.

The under 12s were formed this season and came a close second in their division.

They have combined skilful attacking play with a strong defensive record, 88 goals being scored against 22 conceded, culminating in a strong end of season with a series of emphatic wins.

The highlights were an away victory against their closest rivals, Sedlescombe United, and a home victory against Uckfield Grasshoppers, which secured promotion via great goals from Josh Mistry and Tobias Chatfield and a spectacular effort from Alfie Scopos.

Chipstead Eagles U10 defeated **Hailsham Colts** 4-1 at the weekend. They secured the first goal with a fabulous long-range effort, but Eagles' passing game paid off as two quick-fire goals from O'Connell made it 2-1 before he completed his hat-trick and Endenburg rounded off the scoring.

In difficult conditions, Eagles opened the scoring and beat **Hailsham United** 2-0 with Chapman firing first from close range. United kept pressing, but Eagles' fluid football paid off when Tappy popped up to head home after the ball rebounded off the crossbar from Endenburg's effort.

United took an early lead in this hard-fought match, but **Falcons** pushed hard and were finally rewarded with a 1-1 draw against Hailsham when Atkins finished well.

Falcons beat their **Hailsham Colts** by four goals as the visitors could not break through Falcons' well-organised defence, with Howard always in command.

This laid the platform for Falcons to push forward where they were rewarded with goals from Atkins (2), Colwell and Hoyer.

Eagles' free-flowing football was a joy to see as the hardworking **Colts** struggled to contain their opponents, eventually losing out 2-0.

Constant Eagles pressure paid off when Wise finished after great inter-play. Further endeavour brought a second goal for Eagles via Endenburg.

The same result was played out by **Eagles** next as a well-organised **United** team made it difficult for them to play their passing game, but after excellent play O'Connell made it 1-0. United pushed hard, but Pountney and Hoare defended well for Eagles as Endenburg scored for 2-0.

And yet another 2-0 was fought for between United and Colts. Falcons' defence and midfield worked tirelessly as Hoyer finished well to make it 1-0. A rare Martin header made it 2-0 for Falcons, as they made it difficult for United to get their momentum going.

Both defences worked hard, but a lovely finish from Desbousse was enough for Eagles to win the final game against Hailsham Colts 1-0.

Triathletes get off their bikes to beat the weather

By **Glenn Garrett**

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THE weather nearly put paid to the Sevenoaks Triathlon, but in the end it proved to be another terrific race, won by Tunbridge Wells' Christopher Wolton.

In an event cut back to an aquathlon – due to the wind and rain the cycling leg was cancelled – Wolton produced a storming 8k run to beat Darren Ridout by a minute and a half.

Third-placed Richard Evans had led after the 400m swim, but Wolton's 29 minute 46 sec run proved the difference. Jill Cliff won the women's race by two minutes from Katie Crowe.

The main talking point was the horrendous weather. “I woke up at 2.30am and heard the wind and rain,” race director Martin Brown said. “I knew we were going to have to do something. I got to the leisure centre at



VETERAN: Jean Pierre Darque

4.30am and other people had driven in. They said the roads were flooded and there were branches coming down. With the wind gusting like it was, it wasn't even a 50-50 decision. It really was a no-brainer to cancel the bike leg. However much you tell them to slow down and take their time, when these guys have



ELATED: Jill Cliff, from Deal

got their racing head on, they are off. It would have been carnage at the bottom of Riverhill.”

Brown added: “It was still a superb event. When there were only about 10 competitors at 6am we were a bit worried, but ended up with 277.

“We were bit down on



CHAMPION: Chris Wolton

numbers, but nowhere near as bad as feared. It was a really good race at the front and the marshals were superb again. The feedback we have had from runners is that even out in Knole Park, when it was pouring with rain, the marshals were cheering and encouraging.

“They were all from

Sevenoaks Tri Club and they were tremendous.”

As an aside, husband and wife Jo and Paul Clift were back racing in the event and for the first time Jo beat her husband to the finish, leading him home by just over a minute. The conditions clearly suited her.

Organisers thanked sponsors Knight Frank Estate Agents, Opus Network Services, Sevenoaks Computers, Knocker & Foskett Solicitors and Bat & Ball Sports for their help.

Race charity, Ellinor Lions Hospice, raised in excess of £6,500.

Sevenoaks Triathlon results

Awards: Female: 1 Jill Cliff, 43min 32sec, 2 Katie Crowe, 45:22, 3 Victoria Kenny, 46:02; men: 1 Christopher Wolton, 37:51, 2 Darren Ridout, 39:25, 3 Richard Evans, 39:49; vet: M Ultra 70+, Bob Luck, 57:29, M Mega 60+ Paul Clift, 48:06, F super 50+, Jo Clift, 46:54, M super 50+, Nigel Davies, 45:38, F 40+, Maddy Lee Smith, 47:14, M 40+, Pete Robbins, 41:33; M junior U20: Thomas Crawford 49:25; fastest local female: Helen Townsend, 52:12; fastest local male: Andrew Mead, 43:12.