

Boro hit top spot after a Sunday success over Blackhall

NEW leaders emerged over the weekend as one of the most unpredictable starts to a season featured the third challenger in as many weeks.

After Hartlepool set the early pace, to be joined by Normanby Hall over the bank holiday weekend, Guisborough became the latest to take over the top spot.

And to add to an already intriguing fight for the title, Marton have also thrown their caps in the ring.

But they were both overtaken yesterday by Middlesbrough as, in a game brought forward from August, they powered to a six-wicket victory at Blackhall.

Some 18 overs were lost because of rain and, inserted after losing the toss, Blackhall only had 41 overs.

Darlington Building Society NYS Premier League, Premier Division

by Chris West

Warren Swan (74) and John Darby (46) shared an opening stand of 93, but with James Beaumont sending down 17 overs of high class off-spin to claim 5-54 the home team were restricted to 186-8. Boro's opening pair put the game out of reach with a first wicket stand of 164, Paul Johnston cracking 13 fours in a superb 91 and James Lowe 7 fours in 67. Although Blackhall claimed some consolation wickets near the end Boro raced to victory in the 35th over.

Guisborough's move into pole position on Saturday came with a ten wicket win

at Thornaby where Tariq Aziz (64 not out) and Martin Hood (40 not out) looked extraordinarily impressive as they chased 106 for victory following another disappointing batting performance by their newly-promoted opponents.

Chris Metcalfe (26) and Matt Dex (21 not out) rallied the Mandale Bottoms side after they lost their first three wickets for 26 runs, but the last seven fell for 41.

Marton plunged Billingham Synthonia into further isolation at the bottom with a five-wicket win which took them within three points of Guisborough in second place.

Chris Veazey (56) made sure the villagers stayed on top of their game despite 70 and two wickets for Craig Symington. John Glendenen

hit 30 after Billingham had been confined to 165-7 from their 50 overs.

Hartlepool had the better of the exchanges in the day's top game against Boro at Park Drive which finished as a draw. Pools hit 246-8 with a superb maiden century from Chris Fawcett. He finished with 122 from 153 balls. Janaka Gunaratne (59 from 82 balls) shared in a stand of 152 to get the home side off to a flyer. But James Beaumont, with a hat-trick among five wickets, led the Boro attack.

Left with just 40 overs because of rain, Boro still went for the runs with Paul Johnston (85) and James Lowe (68) sharing an opening stand of 154 from 30 of the overs. But they lost both in quick succession and finished on 211-5, 36 runs

behind. Three of the other games were drawn but Richmondshire celebrated against Northallerton with their first win of the season. Mattie Brown was again in superb form with an unbeaten 67 from 62 balls, and six wickets.

He shared a second wicket stand of 112 with James Clarkson (78 not out) who put on 90 in an opening partnership with Michael Layfield (49). Richmond were confined to 33 overs because of rain, but they made the 202 they needed with 11 balls to spare.

Bowlers had the upper hand at Feethams where Doug Mulholland (6-61) enjoyed star rating against Bishop Auckland.

Bishops totalled 159 and although Simon Guy hit 29

to lead the reply for Darlington they managed just 125-7.

Paul Wiseman was in great form for Normanby Hall with an unbeaten 93 from 98 balls, including nine fours and three sixes, at Marske.

Then he grabbed three wickets, but not before Steve Chapman (64 from 66 balls) and Neil Pratt (58 from 59 balls) had laid the foundation for a spirited reply. They got to within 15 runs of victory despite losing 18 overs due to rain.

Great Ayton hit the day's highest score, 253-2, with 81 for Chris Batchelor and 60 for David Grainge in an opening stand of 146.

Blackhall responded slowly with 158-5, with pro Warren Swan holding them together with 70.

DARLINGTON BUILDING SOCIETY NYS PREMIER LEAGUE, PREMIER DIVISION

Table with match results for Saturday, including Great Ayton v Blackhall, Thornaby v Guisborough, and Middlesbrough v Redcar. Includes scores, wickets, and player statistics.

DARLINGTON BUILDING SOCIETY NYS PREMIER LEAGUE, DIVISION ONE

Table with match results for Division One, including Middlesbrough v Redcar, Saltburn v Seaton Carew, and Guisborough v Barnard Castle. Includes scores, wickets, and player statistics.

FIXTURES Friends Provident Trophy - Group B Canterbury: Kent v Middlesex Xaunton: Somerset v Scotland Group C Bristol: Gloucestershire v Yorkshire (12.00) Hove: Sussex v Durham (12.00) Horner Cup Boldon v Peterlee Darlington Building Society NYS Junior League North Barnard Castle v Blackhall, Hartlepool v Richmondshire, Sedgfield v Norton, Stockton v Darlington, Wolviston v Seaton Carew South Maltby v Middlesbrough, Marske v Stokesley, Marton v Thornaby, Normanby Hall v Great Ayton, Saltburn v Guisborough, Yarm v Redcar DCB U15 Youth Championship Wellstream NTSL Tyneside Section North Greenside v Blyden, Swalwell v Shotley Bridge, Whickham v Ryton South Consett v Annfield Plain, Lanchester v Crookhall, Lintz v Burnopfield, Sacriston v Tantobie Warmseal Durham Senior Section North Chester le Street v Whitburn, Felling v Boldon, Gateshead Fell v Sunderland, Marsden v South Shields South Durham City v South Hetton, Eppleton v Burnmoor, Hetton Lyons v Seaham Harbour, Horden v Philadelphia 3D Sports Durham Coast Section North Silksworth v Bill Quay, Wearmouth v Ryhope Red, Seaham Park v Easington Green, Washington Raiders v Boldon Blue South Peterlee v Dawdon, Ryhope Gold v Boldon Yellow, Castle Eden v Easington Yellow Readers Durham County U15 League Crook Town v Evenwood, Langley Park v Mainsforth, Shildon Railway v Ushaw Moor, Tudhoe v Hylton, Esh Winning v Newton Aycliffe, Bishop Auckland v Brandon Cleveland Schools Association Bradford v Cleveland Schools Under 13s