



Great Witchingham's James Spelman strokes the ball away during a 200 run partnership for the first wicket with Sam Arthurton. Picture: TM FERLEY

Gatting leads from the front as Swardeston keep pressure on leaders

Joe Gatting led from the front as Swardeston stayed firmly in the hunt for the Gibbs Denley East Anglian Premier League title.

Captaining the side in the absence of Mark Thomas, the former Sussex and Hampshire allrounder blasted 123 in just 83 balls to help the visitors to a comprehensive 171-run victory at Frinton-on-Sea.

With leaders Sudbury also winning, the defending champions remained in touching distance, 21 points adrift ahead of next week's home match with Mildenhall – and a potential title decider at Friars Street on Saturday, September 16.

After winning the toss in Essex, Gatting decided to have a bat and it proved to be the right decision as Swardeston scored at more than seven an over to post an imposing total of 352-4.

Jordan Taylor and Jason Reynolds set the tone by putting on 125 for the first wicket in double quick time before the latter was dismissed for 67 and Callum

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Taylor went cheaply. But Gatting then came in to join Jordan Taylor (103) and the pair added another 179 to leave their hosts with a real mountain to climb.

To be fair to Frinton they set about their daunting run chase in positive fashion, staying close to the required run rate thanks largely to 56 in just 22 balls from Merv Westfield. But wickets fell at regular intervals and they were bowled out for 181 in just 30 overs, with Gatting taking 4-60.

Sudbury kept their noses in front by claiming a 152-run at Mildenhall after making 305-3 in their 50 overs. Their penultimate game is against relegation threatened Horsford at Manor Park.

Great Witchingham remain third following a nine-wicket win over Norwich at Walcis Park. After being asked to bat first the visitors performed well to reach 260-7, a total built on an excellent second wicket stand of 130 between Oli Higenbottom (66) and Will O'Donnell (84).

But on a good batting track openers James Spelman and Sam Arthurton continued where they left off the previous week when they put on 200 for the first wicket in good time to take the game away from Norwich.

When Arthurton fell three runs short of what would have been a third league century of the season, Witchingham needed just 61 for victory.

Aaron Riseborough then came to the crease and soon got into his stride with a quick-fire 37 off 30 balls including eight fours. Spelman stood firm at the other end and finished unbeaten on a well crafted 87 as Witches coasted home with nine overs to spare.