

1st XI Cricket at Mytholmroyd CC

By Russell Eggar

Mytholmroyd Cricket Club prides itself on the way the whole club from the Under-15s to the 1st XI challenges for honours year in, year out, often with unrivalled success. Since the club's inception around 1895, it has won over 10 league titles, five Parish Cup finals and the Crossley Shield on two occasions.

Undoubtedly, the 1st XI is the key to the success and image of the club as one of the most competitive in the Halifax League today. The success is only set to continue as Mytholmroyd seek to attract new, more experienced and talented players into the fold. This is a task that has become far easier since the construction of the new clubhouse in 2000. After years of struggling to attract new players, the new building has ensured that Mytholmroyd has some of the best facilities in the league and has meant that the 1st XI is constantly blessed with experience and new talent.



Trying to emulate this lot!

Due to this, first-team cricket at Mytholmroyd has reached a good standard, which means that there has been growing pressure on the players to perform to their capabilities. The mix of youth and experience that is apparent in the first team means that the team has a good balance and the variety in different styles of batting and bowling puts the team in good stead for the future.

The entire club is based on a mix of old and young players but in recent years injuries and a decline in fitness of the older players has seen them give way to the wealth of young talent coming through the club's outstanding junior section. Within the first team there are a couple of players who have come through the ranks and are now an important part of the team, such as hard-hitting batsmen Tom Russell and a number of younger players like Tom Earle who are proving that they can cope with the pressures and standard of first-team cricket.

Recent seasons have seen the first team become strong contenders for the league title but after getting so close, they have yet to lift that elusive trophy. 2005 was

considered their best chance. Although they failed to win the league championship, they lifted the coveted Parish Cup for the first time in over 60 years, beating Copley in the final.

In 2006, the 1st team's efforts were slightly overshadowed by the superb achievements of the 2nd team who brought home the league and cup 'double' while the 1st team narrowly missed out on their equivalents. Coming in to 2007, the first teamers has a new captain in Kris Halstead who appears to be very competitive and eager to win every match he is a part of.

The 2007 team is full of team spirit, as the majority of the players have been playing together for a considerable amount of time. They have developed a lot of camaraderie with each other but Halstead is keen to stress that they need to gain more focus in order to recapture the league trophy and will be looking to experienced teammates to support his determination and drive with knowledge and understanding of the game.

The end of the 2006 season saw the 1st team's top scorers Simon Wheelwright and Danny Bailey leave the club in search of other opportunities but there have been new additions to the team in the form of Stuart Horseford and Shahid Rashid who can bolster the team in all areas. With a mix of old and new faces, these are changing times for the first team - times that can hopefully result in many trophies returning to the clubs cabinet.

The first team at Mytholmroyd are held in very high regard and it is clear that the standard of cricket they produce is among the highest in Calderdale. Ewood Holmes is a difficult place for any team to come and win. The hope for the future is that the 1st team can rewrite the history books and better the successful 1st teams of the early 1950s.