

## The Great Match

### Mytholmroyd v Triangle (2006)

By Russell Eggar

Season 2006 brought a lot of joy and success to Mytholmroyd Cricket Club. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI it was widely believed that the whole season could come down to just one or two important games that, if won, could see the team finish with the league trophy tucked neatly under the arm of the skipper Jon Russell.

One such game, and possibly the most important game of the season, came against fellow title challengers Triangle at Ewood Holmes on 12 August 2006. With the two teams level on points, and with just a few games until the end of the season, the impetus was on Royd to pick up maximum points in order to gain some leeway over their rivals at the top of the league. Opening bat Martyn Astin described it as “the crunch game of the season”. He says: “The feeling was that whoever won that game would hold on until the end of the season”.

The occasion was full of tension, even before a ball was bowled. Prior to the match, Triangle had decided to drop two of their 1<sup>st</sup> XI batsmen so they could play in their 2<sup>nd</sup> XI against Mytholmroyd in a bid for the title. Although a little disgruntled by the opposition’s antics, it only added to the team’s determination to perform.

It was a typical late summer’s day and the wicket looked flat, albeit a little worn. Royd realised that it was going to be a bit of a struggle to score a lot of runs on such a track against an experienced and strong bowling attack; and being asked to bat first after Triangle won the toss meant the challenge would begin straight away. Royd’s aim was to put up a decent score that Triangle would have to chase.



Dan Earle

All did not go to plan. Captain Jon Russell states: “We bumbled along to just 23 for 3”. With both opening batsmen dismissed early on, the skipper knew what the team had to do. “We had to graft really hard to get anything out of the game”. The early dismissal of Tom Earle brought together the ‘family partnership’ of Tom and Jon Russell who looked to revitalise an otherwise nervous and shaky start to the innings. They did just that! With a stand of 72, Mytholmroyd were back on track and looking to bat out all the remaining overs. They did so with a superb effort from the lower-order batsmen, most

notably Dan Earle, who stepped up to smash the Triangle bowlers all over the park with a superb 37 that included four 4s and two 6s.

After the 45 overs, the team had totalled a respectable 164-8. "It wasn't a bad score for a relatively inexperienced side on a flat track," claims Martyn Astin. However, the home side still had a lot to do to after lunch to bowl out an impressive Triangle batting line-up that had been scoring freely throughout the season.

Triangle made a slow but positive start with the bat, being reluctant to lose a wicket during the early stages. Having scored 60 without the loss of a wicket after 20 overs both teams felt that this was the moment where the game would start to resolve itself. The result was still hanging in the balance but Royd had taken the first steps to pile on the pressure by increasing the run rate from three runs to four. Triangle began to crumble with the Mytholmroyd bowlers in the ascendant; and this, along with the skipper's decision to bring Jon Bamford on to bowl, contributed to the demise of the Triangle batsmen. "It was important to bring 'Bamf' on at just the right time," explains Russell Snr. The captain knew that Bamford's accurate slow-medium bowling would trouble the already-worried opposition. This, along with the consistency of Dan Earle's bowling, meant Triangle collapsed to 94 all out.

Jon Bamford takes a lot of credit for his contribution with outstanding figures of 7-18 and Dan Earle also contributing with 2-35, but this was a game where the whole team performed to outwit a very good opposition side. Jon Russell commented: "It was simply our day." With an excellent team performance, Mytholmroyd sealed a well earned victory and took maximum points to boot. It was a display that capped off a fantastic season and put them on the way to lifting the league trophy and confirming their status as one of the most successful clubs in the Calder Valley.