

Match Report - Shelf v Queensbury, April 2007

By David Febrero

Shelf produced a spirited performance to see off Division 2 title hopefuls Queensbury by six runs at the weekend. The friendly fixture allowed the players the opportunity to weigh up the potential Halifax League competition ahead of their debut in the league on Saturday. Shelf, who will begin next season in Halifax's 3rd division, appeared to use the game, essentially, as batting practice.



Captain Andy Dimbleby (above) won the toss and elected to bat, taking advantage of a wicket with a surprising lack of pace. The partnership of Dimbleby and Billy Sugden, which has been so consistent over the past decade, produced a fine start, with three fours from the opening two overs. However, the stand was ended soon afterwards when Sugden defended a delivery away from his body in unorthodox fashion, offering an easy catch to mid-on. This proved a mere statistic, however, as player of the season Dean Smith entered the fray. He top scored with 63, handling the Queensbury bowling attack with comparable ease.

The partnership of Smith and Dimbleby provided the majority of the entertainment in a relaxed affair, with the Shelf captain ending the day 47 not out. However, the remainder of the batting order was removed relatively comfortably. 14-year-old Alex O'Keefe was bowled for a duck, and opening bowler Chris Wolfenden followed him to the dressing room with a mere 10 runs. 'Specialist fielder' Steven Priestley did offer some resistance before departing for 27. However, having once been 132-5, Shelf will not have been too disappointed to have batted their way to 246-8 in the 40 overs.

Queensbury opened in similar fashion to the home team, using the match as an opportunity to crash a few boundaries on a well kept surface. However, while their confident opening partnership quickly scored off the Shelf bowling attack, the remaining batters failed to add to their good work. Eventually, off the first ball of the final over, Shelf dismissed the Division 2 side for a respectable 240. The ball which confirmed the victory was struck by the impressive Wolfenden, who finished with four wickets.

"We just wanted to get a feel for the ground again," opener Andy Dimbleby said after the game. "They looked like a useful team but nothing to be worried about". Club legend Billy Sugden was equally optimistic following the success. "If we play like that then we should win this league," he said.