

Was Shaw A Shamateur?

In the 1897 Halifax Parish Cup, Southowram St Anne's lost to Shelf in the Preliminary round, largely thanks to a score of 56 plundered by an all-rounder named J.Shaw, who won the round's batting prize for his impressive score.

But Southowram officials smelt a rat. They were convinced that Shaw was a professional, playing in contravention to the rules of the Parish Cup. On June 4, 1897, a special meeting of the Parish Cup committee was called to hear Southowram's grievance. It was alleged that Shaw had had received his travelling expenses – and that was enough to brand him a pro.

A Shelf representative owned up, but stated that Shaw had received only his bus and railway fares and not a penny more. Shaw was 'not a professional; in any shape or form,' said Mr Hind, the Shelf president - and the club's books were examined. The committee decided that Southowram had not produced sufficient evidence to prove Shaw's professionalism and the case was dismissed.

Whether or not he was a pro, Shaw was certainly a fine player. In the next round of the cup he won the batting prize again, scoring 70 for Shelf against Luddenden Foot. And in the semi-final he won the BOWLING prize, with a haul of five for 30 against Illingworth.