

Ex-champs routed

YORK Cricket Club had high hopes of winning the Haig National club knock-out competition this year — but they crashed to a sensational 12-run first round defeat by the little Copley team from Halifax yesterday.

Copley, champions of the Halifax League, originally tried to enter the Haig Villages event but were told by the organisers they were a bit too big for a village team. They are marginally over the 2,500 population limit.

York cricketers crash to little Copley

When they heard they had drawn mighty York, Copley thought they would be merely the first in a line of easy pickings for a team which won the trophy two years ago.

But it didn't turn out that way and today York chairman John Leaf said: "There was no fluke about it on the day. I have nothing but the highest praise for Copley, who deserved their victory. We gave an abysmal performance. The players didn't adapt themselves to the conditions, which were not at all bad. The wicket was slow and a bit wet, but that's all.

"The Copley fielding was magnificent and they clung on to some wonderful catches. It would have been unjust if York had won."

Paul Jackson won the toss and put Copley in to bat — a

decision he may have had cause to regret later.

They made slow progress against Ken Skilbeck, but Tony Stilgoe was knocked out of the attack after three overs. Geoff Skilbeck, too, bowled his overs tidily, but it was left to spinner Chris Kirk to make the initial breakthrough.

Kirk removed both openers Ian Ball and Ken Jones in his eight-over spell, but Copley continued to make quiet progress. John Taylor was given the big stick, but Des Wyrill, coming late into the attack, picked up three wickets, as did Stilgoe on his return.

Copley were all out on the last ball of the 45 overs for a modest 148. It was more than they had appeared likely to get.

York's reply was total disaster, mitigated only by the valiance of the middle-order batsmen. Wyrill was out in the first over. Ken Thompson trod on his wicket in the second.

Alec Backhouse and Paul Jackson both went cheaply.

Jack Sinclair was fifth out with the innings only 11 overs old and he had got more than half the 21 runs on the board! It was an incredible collapse.

The rest batted magnificently. Brian Shirley was going well until out lbw in full flight. Chris Kirk shared two effective stands, first with Shirley, then with John Taylor, who, redeeming his bowling failure, hit the highest score of the match and put York back in with a chance. Geoff Skilbeck contributed a valuable 20 until he was involved with Taylor in a distressing yes-no interlude and was run out.

There were still eight overs left when Ken Skilbeck was lbw and York's dreams were shattered.

COPLEY: I Ball, c and b Kirk 27; K Jones, c Thompson b Kirk 17; D Smith, lbw b Taylor 14; M Doggett, c Shirley b Stilgoe 17; G Spencer, c Kirk b Stilgoe 0; A

Brennan, c Kirk b Wyrill 26; R Dixon, lbw b Wyrill 5; H Wood b Stilgoe 2; P Gatehouse, c Thompson b Backhouse 13; T Thorpe b Wyrill 2; D Bowyer, not out 7; extras 8. Total 148.

Fall of wickets: 34, 45, 86, 96, 97, 144, 149, 120, 123, 148.

Bowling: K Skilbeck 8-5-10-0, A Stilgoe 8-2-21-3, G Skilbeck 8-1-16-0, C Kirk 8-2-20-2, J Taylor 5-0-35-1, D Wyrill 7-2-22-3, A Backhouse 1-0-7-1.

YORK: D Wyrill, c Smith b Gatehouse 4; K Thompson, lbw b Brennan 0; A Backhouse, c Bowyer b Brennan 3; P Jackson, c Spencer b Gatehouse 2; J Sinclair, b Thorpe 12; B Shirley, lbw b Bowyer 26; C Kirk, c Dixon b Doggett 25; J Taylor, c Spencer b Doggett 36; G Skilbeck, run out 20; A Stilgoe, not out 6; K Skilbeck, lbw b Doggett 0; extras 2. Total 136.

Fall of wickets: 4, 5, 8, 16, 21, 63, 79, 123, 136, 136.

Bowling: P Gatehouse 8-3-14-2, A Brennan 8-0-24-2, T Thorpe 8-1-37-1, D Bowyer 8-1-26-1, M Doggett 5-4-0-24-3, D Smith 1-0-9-0.

Tonight's soccer

Division 1: Arsenal v Aston Villa, Coventry v Derby County (both 7.30).

Why Copley can feel especially proud today

The cricketers of Copley confirmed yesterday what many have long suspected . . . that it is wrong to generalise the Halifax League as a set-up with wishy-wash standards and no future.

Some would say that York must have been unlucky to be beaten yesterday in the shadows of the Copley viaduct in a Haigh Trophy competition which they won two years ago.

They were not unlucky! York's chairman Mr John Leaf says so. Today, after watching his Yorkshire League runners-up hounded to a stunning humiliation, he had no excuses.

Copley were magnificent, the wicket was perfectly playable and York did not come up to scratch. As simple as that he says.

For Copley to have lost gracefully in such a match would have been interpreted as a considerable achievement. But to win . . .

Copley are a credit to themselves, and a credit to the teams who play against them. Our headline in last week's cricket supplement — "Is this the dawn of a bright new era?" — seems even more significant now.

Magnificent Copley — page 10.

' Evening Courier ' Halifax and District

Cricket

Parade, Season 1977

Magnificent Copley book a place in cricket's hall of fame

HALIFAX League champions Copley set themselves up as giant-killers of the first order yesterday when they beat mighty York, last season's Yorkshire League runners-up, in a Haigh Trophy match at Copley.

A wonderful all-round team performance which provided a terrific advertisement for the undervalued Halifax League, led to a 12 runs win in a competition won last year by Scarborough, who pipped York for the Yorkshire League title.

York, in fact, won the competition two seasons ago and their team was strengthened from the one which last season beat Halifax twice in the league—by seven wickets and nine wickets.

Copley are in the competition only because the village's population exceeds the 2,500 limit imposed on the Haigh Village Competition, in which several Halifax League teams are entered.

And this afternoon, there were no excuses from York. Their chairman, Mr John Leaf commented: "There was no fluke about it. I have nothing but the highest praise for Copley. We were abysmal and our players did not adapt themselves to the conditions, which were not at all bad. The wicket was a bit slow and wet but nothing more. Copley's fielding was magnificent and they clung on to some wonderful catches. It would have been unjust if York had won."

York's only regret was that

they won the toss but sent Copley in. Added Mr Leaf: "Had we batted we might have scored 200 and Copley could have become dispirited. But that's all supposition."

Consistent early batting — Mike Doggett and Ian Ball top-scored with 27 and Arthur Brennan hit 26 — paved the way for a total of 148 in the allotted 45 overs.

Then fast bowler Philip Gatehouse, medium pacer Brennan and spinner Thorpe ripped the heart out of York's batting and had them reeling at 30 for five.

A middle order revival threatened Copley until Doggett rounded off a superb all-round performance by capturing three for 24 with medium pace bowling which he uses only occasionally at local level.

York were all out for 136 in 38 overs.

Copley 148: I. Ball c and b Kirk 27, K. Jones c Thompson b Kirk 17, D. Smith lbw b Taylor 14, M. Doggett c Shirley b Stilgoe 27, G. Spence c Kirk b Stilgoe 0, A. Brennan c Kirk b Wyrill 26, R. Dixon lbw b Wyrill 5, H. Wood b Stilgoe 2, P. Gatehouse c Thompson b Backhouse 3, T. Thorpe b Wyrill 2, D. Bowyer not out 11, extras 8.

Bowling: K. Skilbeck 8-5-10-0, Stilgoe 8-2-21-5, G. Skilbeck 8-1-16-0, Kirk 8-2-29-2, Taylor 5-0-35-1, Wyrill 7-2-27-5, Backhouse 1-0-7-1.

York 136: Wyrill c Smith b Gatehouse 4, Thompson hit wkt b Brennan 0, Backhouse c Bowyer b Brennan 3, Jackson c Doggett b Gatehouse 2, Sinclair b Thorpe 12, Shirley lbw b Bowyer 26, Kirk c Dixon b Doggett 25, Taylor c Spence b Doggett 36, G. Skilbeck run out 20, Stilgoe not out 6, K. Skilbeck lbw b Doggett 0, extras 2.

Bowling: Gatehouse 8-3-14-2, Brennan 8-0-24-2, Thorpe 8-1-37-1, Bowyer 8-1-26-1, Doggett 5-0-24-3, Smith 1-0-9-0.