

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS!

**2008 Preview by Mark Edmonds**

As you approach the sports hall at Huddersfield New College, the first thing you notice is the echo of leather on willow. For some, it's a sound that is slightly strange on a February evening but that's the nature of winter training. On entering the sports hall itself, there are three nets set up: one for the quicks, one for the spinners and medium pacers, and one for the thirds, all with four or five bowlers coming in one after another.

Captain Paul Winrow's main objective with this first training session is to get the players back into their cricketing rhythm. "Getting them batting and bowling again is the first thing we do as a side," says Paul. "It helps everyone to get back into the swing of things and at the end of the session we'll all come together and talk about where we want to be this season."



**2008 club pro Love Alish**

One person who definitely seems to be back into the swing of things is last year's professional from Zimbabwe, Tanashe Panyangora. Taking a slow five- or six-step run-up, all seems gentle and calm when suddenly there's a whirl of the arms and down goes a ball which must be nearing 80 miles per hour. The African bowler's performance will be crucial to the success of the side in the high-quality Huddersfield Drakes League.

Making his debut in the Drakes League this season is opening batsman Simon Wheelwright, a prospect he's eagerly looking for to. "We're really going to give it a good go. We're not just there to make up the numbers," he explains. "I don't see why we can't aim for a top-five finish. Even though we're not one of the big clubs, we're definitely not the smallest by any means."

The opener's optimism is well founded, however, as the club has secured Indian bowler Love Ablish as this year's professional. With this year's promotion in mind, does that give BCC an added advantage? "I think with two professional strike bowlers we can really attack sides from the off," says Simon. "What we obviously then have to do, though, is to make sure we come together as a side and help to back them up. If we do that, then hopefully Paul [Winrow] and I can also build a solid base when we come to bat."

As the session continues, spirits are high with lots of laughing and joking among the side. The main thing that stands out watching on is the quality of the younger players who are training, Ben Jobson being one in particular. Although primarily a batsman, he also spends much of the session concentrating on his leg-spin technique, a rarity in the game at any level. It's the juniors at a club like Barkisland who can be crucial to the side's success. If they can be brought through into the senior sides then the club will go a long way to keeping its 'community club' character.