

INTRODUCING... MR CHAIRMAN

Profile of Steve Casaru by Mark Edmonds

Mention the word "chairman" in local cricket circles and you witness a sharp intake of breath, followed by a sigh and the muttering of the words "poisoned chalice". Mention it to Barkisland chairman Steve Casaru, however, and you'll get all of the above, but with a smile instead of a shake of a head, tongue firmly in cheek.



Now 18 months into the role, Steve has started to construct a plan to help take the club onwards and upwards; one key aim being to acquire ECB Clubmark status. "Clubmark is one of the most important tasks for this year," says Steve. "It allows us to show people that we run the club to a particular standard in terms of coaching and accessibility." If all goes to plan, the club hopes to achieve the Clubmark standard by June or July 2008, perfect in terms of timing.

What Clubmark signifies is the fact that the club provides ECB-standard training for all junior players as well as being open and accessible to everyone. This includes women, children (both boys and girls), all ethnic groups as well as the disabled. On top of this, it also pushes the club towards the top when it comes to acquiring ECB funding. It's crucial for a club at this level as they try not only to maintain but to improve the facilities that they offer.

However, this isn't the only goal that Steve and the club are working towards. He goes on to explain: "We've been identified as a Focus Club in Yorkshire, which brings us directly under the umbrella of Yorkshire County Cricket Club. This means that coaches and experts from Headingley will make trips to us here at Barkisland, put on masterclasses and help run summer schools for the youngsters."

All of this work the club are putting in is a result of its decision to move from the Halifax League to the Huddersfield League in 2001. "It wasn't an easy decision to make," notes the chairman, inferring that some club people were reluctant to make the move. "Some made the perfectly valid point that we'd been fine as we were for the last 100 years and that there was no need to change. For us here at BCC, though, the main challenge and aim is always to push on and improve ourselves. This league helps us to do that due to the increased competition."

So what else does the chairman do at the club? Well, a lot of the time he's taking on ideas, thoughts and grievances from anyone and everyone. "I've always got to have an ear to everything," he jokes. "It could be anyone from the club captain to the tea lady, but if there's something they want to discuss, then I'll do my best to sort out their issues." With that, Steve returns to one of the club's winter net sessions, doing his best to dodge the balls coming at him from all angles. Such is the wide-ranging role that he performs.