

# EXCITEMENT, EXPANSION AND EXPECTANCY

## The 2008 Fixtures by Chris Knowles

The Drakes Huddersfield League fixtures for the 2008 season have been eagerly anticipated in recent weeks and were released earlier this month.

Emley Clarence's 1<sup>st</sup> XI will begin their campaign with an away fixture against Skelmanthorpe on 19 April. The Lidgett Lane club enjoyed a strong season in 2007, securing a 2<sup>nd</sup> placed finish in the Drakes Premiership 1, turning over the Clarence on both occasions, and so the opening fixture may prove a tough game.



The subsequent fixtures hosting Barkisland (Frank Platt Conference 1 champions) and the trip to Clayton West (runners-up in Cedar Court Conference 1) will match Emley against two of the league's newly-promoted clubs. The Clarence will feel they should be able to capitalise in these two meetings and take the opportunity to put some points on the board early in the season.

Difficult fixtures at home to reigning champions Honley (21 June) and the away return (30 August) will certainly be of interest to Emley players and fans who may want to settle scores, having seen their side beaten in both clashes last season.

Meanwhile, the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI will begin the new season playing host to Hall Bower, who finished 6<sup>th</sup> last season. The early matches of 2008 pitch Emley's 2<sup>nds</sup> against local rivals Lepton Highlanders (April 26<sup>th</sup>, away) and Marsden (May 3<sup>rd</sup>, home), teams who finished the 2007 season in 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> positions respectively.

Emley Clarence's 2<sup>nd</sup> XI were stripped of their Frank Platt Conference 2 title last season after being docked six points for disturbances during an end-of-season game at Kirkheaton. However, in 2008 the team will be looking to eradicate all memory of that disappointing episode and build for the future. The 2<sup>nd</sup> XI will undoubtedly be one of the favourites for the title and need to transfer the justified expectancy and buoyancy into results on the field of play.

It is going to be an exciting 2008 for Emley Clarence across the board. The junior set-up has recently had interest from close on 50 children about the possibility of registering for the forthcoming season. The club has also been significantly boosted by £1,000 in prize money after treasurer Craig Stratford submitted the winning entry in a Barclays/Yorkshire Radio competition. Linked to this feeling of excitement for the forthcoming year, Emley are currently in the planning stages of expanding the clubhouse in order to build for the future.