

LOCAL BOY WITH THE CLUB CLOSE TO HIS HEART

Profile of Will Appleyard by Chris Knowles

Will Appleyard has been playing for Emley Clarence for over 15 years, initially filling vacant positions when the Kirklees club were short of players. The keen batsman made his way through the under-15s and under-17s before securing a place in the 2nd XI in his teenage years.

I talked to Will about his early cricketing years and he said: 'My next-door neighbour at that time was the under-17s captain at the club. I was of a similar age and whenever they were short I'd fill in.'



After success in the 2nd XI, the 30-year-old had a lengthy spell in the first team before deciding to move back down to the 2nd XI a few years ago to aid the emergence of new talent from the junior set-up. Will explains: 'We had a good group of young lads coming through and they weren't really getting the help they could have been from the 2nd XI.'

While turning out for the 2nd XI, Will found that his best position was opening bats; however, he sacrificed this for a middle-order place when he made the step up to the 1st XI: 'The quality is obviously higher so I was just happy to be playing for the 1st team.'

Aside from being honoured with the captaincy of the 2nd XI a couple of seasons back, perhaps one of the more impressive accomplishments in Will's career was smashing 137 not out in his first match as captain of the 2nd XI. In the following season he also hit two centuries – an achievement that was unsurpassed in the 2nd XI.

On the flipside, luckily to date, Will hasn't suffered from any injuries that could have set him back. 'No real injuries at all,' he says, 'except at the start of last season while training at the last indoor nets. I broke my finger and missed the first five or six games.'

Outside the world of cricket, Will occasionally watches friends play for Emley Moor's rugby team but as he puts it: 'I don't really rate any other sport!' He is a local cricketer, having grown up in Emley and only recently, in the past few years, moved out of the village. Nevertheless, he is viewed as an experienced, longstanding player and he is also part of the club committee.

Will talked about his future with the club and made it very clear that playing cricket with Emley is something close to his heart and something which he will enjoy for a long time to come. 'I see myself playing for as long as I can! I'm happy playing in the 2nd XI but if the 1st team were ever short I'd step up to help.'