

JOURNEY TO THE TEST ARENA DEPARTING FROM 'THE BRIDGE'

Profile of Schofield Haigh by Paul Rai

When young Schofield Haigh arrived at Armitage Bridge Cricket Club in 1887 aged just 16, few would have believed he would go on to play for Yorkshire, let alone England. At the old Wanderers, Johannesburg, South Africa on February 14th 1899, Haigh became only the 113th man to represent England on the cricket field at the highest level.



Haigh's right-arm medium pace caused serious damage to batsmen's averages in a variety of cricket competitions around Huddersfield. After just two seasons at 'The Bridge', Haigh had deservedly earned a bowling award for the second XI, forcing his way into the first XI. 30 wickets at an average of 8.11 the following season in 1888 were more than enough to secure yet another bowling award. Haigh's journey to Test Match stardom had begun and the foundations were laid at Armitage Bridge CC.

Outstanding performances for Armitage Bridge did not go unnoticed and Haigh's talents allowed him to move to Scotland where he spent a number of seasons. While playing for a Scottish club against a Lancashire XI, Haigh was brought onto bowl and conceded 63 runs before taking a wicket. He then went on to show his true ability with the ball and finished with figures of 8 wickets for 78 runs. Displays like this interested county teams and Haigh was invited to play for the Yorkshire second XI in 1895 for whom he took a hat-trick on debut. He made his first XI debut in July 1895 against Derbyshire, impressing with a five-wicket haul and also contributing with the bat.

Haigh went on to play 561 first-class matches and formed one third of the 'HRH' triumvirate at Yorkshire - George Herbert Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes completed the legendary alliance. While plying his trade for Yorkshire, Haigh also got a hat-full of overs under his belt for Armitage Bridge. In the same season that he earned his first cap for Yorkshire he also finished top of the bowling averages for the 'Bridge', with 19 wickets at an average of 3.3! - astonishing figures that would make any bowler proud.

Haigh is known for his right-arm medium pace and his famous off-cutter on sticky wickets that even the greatest of batsmen found unplayable. Sir Pelham Warner, captain of England on the 1905/06 tour in South Africa, said "he possessed an enormous and very quick off-break, he had a capital fast Yorker and his flight was deceptive, for he used to pull the ball back in the air without any apparent change of action."

Born in Berry Brow, Huddersfield, Haigh went on to play 11 Tests for England, taking 24 wickets, a record that is astonishing considering his first-class record. Haigh has over 2,000 first-class wickets, half of which were clean bowled, and on top of that he has 11,000+ first-class runs to his name, showing that he was no mug with the bat. Throughout his life Haigh supported the 'Bridge' as player, vice-president and also volunteer winter groundsman. Schofield Haigh can be described as one of the greatest players to have graced Armitage Bridge Cricket Club.