

FROM PLAYER TO SPECTATOR

Profile of Martin Field by Ian Hodgson

Martin Field's playing career was cut short through injury, a big blow for himself and Broad Oak Cricket Club. In the 1998-9 season, Fields broke his kneecap at Elland, the third match of the season, and this meant he had to stop playing. Although he was in the twilight of his playing career, he could definitely have played on if it hadn't been for this unfortunate injury. As it was, he went to every league match for the next two seasons and competed in a Wednesday-night 10-over game.

Before the injury, Field was batsman/wicketkeeper for 30 years, playing Second XI cricket all his life with a personal best score of 139 not out. He did make one First XI appearance back in 1985, but he stayed mainly in the seconds.

The highlight of his playing career was in 1982 against Honley in the Paddock Shield cup match. Broad Oak batted first and Field scored 56 not out at number seven out of a total of around 140. Oak won the match after Honley collapsed from 70-0. Field was named man of the match - it was the club's first of seven Paddock Shield wins.



The progression from player to spectator was a natural one but Field also undertook many other roles. He used to help organise a lot of club functions but now takes more of a back seat. Since his days as a player, an awful lot has changed in the game. There isn't as much of a community 'feel' about the club: in his playing days he used to meet other players for drinks and everyone would see each other the whole year round. Now you don't see cricketers during the autumn and winter! Field also recalls the rivalry that Broad Oak had with Meltham – and says that it's not the same as it used to be.

Watching Broad Oak, Field has seen many outstanding performances, but there is one man who tops the lot. His name is Ami Kuraysi, a Test batsman and a Broad Oak overseas player who regularly played match-winning knocks. Field described it as amazing the way Kuraysi coped with everything that was thrown at him.

As a spectator, Field's most memorable day was in 1981 when Broad Oak travelled to Lord's (above) for the final of a national village competition. More than 2,000 people watched the semi-final and then around 12 buses made their way down to London for the final, with others making their way down by car. Field went on the players' coach and said it was a 'great experience being with the team'.

The major disappointment of his career was watching Broad Oak get relegated from the Huddersfield League top flight. He also says that it's a shame that there is so much money involved in cricket now as the clubs who haven't got the money can struggle.