

TOWNSEND AIMS FOR 2008 SILVERWARE

By Sam Smith

Blackley CC 1st XI captain Dave Townsend has targeted double success for the 2008 season as he aims to bring home the Parish Cup along with gaining promotion to the top division of the Halifax League. Townsend has never experienced cup glory in over 25 years playing for Blackley but is determined to get his hands on some silverware this time round.



He said, "The only trophies I have won in the past are league titles but never actually a cup competition. So I will be looking to have a good Parish Cup run but the main thing is to get promoted to the top division."

It will be Townsend's fourth consecutive campaign as first-team skipper and he is hoping his decision to relinquish the wicketkeeping job will benefit the batting side of his game.

He explained, "I took over three years ago and got over 800 runs in my first season but in the last couple of seasons I've dropped down quite considerably. I think the combination of keeping wicket, opening the batting and captaining the side has had an effect on my personal performances. I've stepped down from keeping wicket and opening the batting so hopefully I'll be able to balance it out now and it won't affect my game too much."

It is undecided whether Townsend will have any new recruits at his disposal for the forthcoming season so he is hoping the leading players from last year will yet again deliver the goods. The Blackley captain has identified key players whom he expects to be the most consistence performers during the season.

He enthused. "We have Dan Houldin, opening batter, a good, good player who has been with us a long time. Tom Baxter, again an opening bat, he turns 18 this week and is one to watch out for. Craig Taylor, former Copley captain, is our all-

rounder who joined us last year and is a very good player. Tom Greenwood, opening bowler and hard-hitting batsmen, reminds me a bit of Freddie Flintoff. They are the names I look upon to get us a lot of runs and wickets throughout the season.”

However, Townsend believes good team spirit and contributions from every member of the team will be the main ingredient for success this year.

He stated, “We are all sort of the same in the team really, there is nobody who is more outstanding than anybody else. We all play as a unit and I think that is the best way. There is nobody that stands out every week, we all contribute.”

Is it clear Townsend is relishing his role as captain for the upcoming season and his desire to succeed is plain for all to see. He believes a lot of responsibility lies on the captains’ shoulders and is prepared to take the blame if things don’t go to plan out on the field.

He said, “I do feel a lot of responsibility, especially when Saturday afternoon comes round, I still have a few butterflies in the stomach. I know I have to go out there and get runs, I’ve got to field well and on the odd occasion that I bowl, I’ve got to bowl well. At the end of the day it’s my responsibility to get the team playing well and it lies on my shoulders if the team aren’t performing. It is a big responsibility but I love it, I really enjoy doing it.”