

# Significance of being Kings for the day

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By PETER SNAPE

OUTSIDE the Halifax area, the four-wicket victory by toiling King Cross at struggling Sowerby Bridge had little significance in the major issues of league cricket in Yorkshire in 1984.

But for a club used to failure it was something special. Not only did it give them the double over their deadliest rivals, it was the first time in recent memory they had enjoyed two successive wins following their nine-wicket triumph over Wakefield Thornes the previous week.

The victory was only their 13th in five seasons, the last four of which have seen them bottom of the Central Yorkshire League. Most important it lifted them to the dizzy heights of 11th and pushed Sowerby to the foot of the table.

King Cross owed their success to a remarkable spell by slow left-arm bowler Paul Carter whose 7-23 included 6-2 in 18 deliveries to finish off the Bridge innings.

The home side were reasonably comfortable at 72-3 when Carter, who had earlier dismissed Bland, struck. He bowled Andrew Roy with a long-hop and had Eastwood caught. The veteran Helliwell chipped in to dismiss Dalby, lbw, with a delivery that kept low and then it was all Carter.

He took three wickets in his tenth over with the aid of two fine catches by his captain Richard Pinder, one running in from the square leg boundary, the other diving one-handed at short leg, and bowled Smith first ball. When he had the home captain, Doug Pilcher, caught in his next over, victory was assured if they could keep their heads on an unpredictable pitch taking increasing turn.

Carter, a product of Long Lee in the Craven League, admitted: "Although the bounce was uneven, I wasn't

bowling my spinners very well. So I decided to concentrate on the arm ball and push them through. I have never had more than five in an innings since junior days."

In such circumstances with only 89 to defend, how many captains would have pinned their faith in a diminutive 15-year-old left-arm spinner to open the attack? Pilcher backed Richard Sladdin and right well he repaid him.

After conceding ten in his first over, the youngster had Pinder stumped in his second and, never afraid to give the ball air and plenty of turn, reduced King Cross to 47-5 with three wickets and the lucky run-out of Law who was out of his ground as the bowler missed a hard return catch and the ball rebounded onto the stumps.

A six and three fours by Briggs stilled doubting hearts while Robinson, who hit an unbeaten 100 for Sowerby against King Cross before switching clubs last season ensured success with a priceless 21 not out.

Pinder, in his third season as captain, admitted: "It is very difficult when you are losing every week but we are getting the club right. Facilities are vastly improved on and off the field and that must attract better players. Of course, you get depressed at times but I get it out of my system by working on the ground.

"Bar takings have quadrupled in two years, the second team are doing a lot better, the third team in the Halifax Association are providing competition for places and we add an Under-14 side to the Under-17s next season. The future is brighter than for several years."

Pilcher, 45, pointed to being out on a limb

geographically as Sowerby's chief problem. "It is easy to move from Dewsbury to Dewsbury Cavaliers but not too many want to travel right out here. We know we have not enough players of first-team ability but three of our defeats have been by only two wickets and we have paid for dropping catches.

"It is not easy keeping heads up when you have won only once but I have known dressing rooms with far more bitchiness. We take the positive view that the game is for enjoyment and a win is a bonus. We shall be trying as hard as ever against Cavaliers next week to climb the table."

But Sowerby, a First Division side in the late 1970s, are considering the drastic step of leaving the Central Yorkshire for the Halifax League. Their chairman, Leyland Smith, explained: "It is a possibility. If the club are to have a future we may have to move into a different scene after an unsuccessful recruiting drive locally last winter.

"We are hoping that the trough might bottom out but it doesn't look like it and a switch to local cricket might be the only answer both to attract players and improve bar takings."

It is a move King Cross, members of the Yorkshire League from 1935-56, would not consider. "However bad things are we feel we can improve standards," said Pinder. "Why step down when you are playing on better grounds against good players?"

**SOWERBY BRIDGE:** S. Bates c Carter b Helliwell 23, P. Hick b Ashton 13, R. Bland c Ashton v Carter 10, D. Roy c Pinder b Carter 18, A. Roy b Carter 3, A. Eastwood c Jackson b Carter 1, S. Dalby lbw Helliwell 0, D. Pilcher c Wade b Carter 6, L. Smith b Carter 0, J. Cockcroft c Pinder b Carter 0, R. Sladdin not out 1, Extras 14, Total 89. Bowling: Pinder 9-4-19-0, Ashton 7-2-17-1, Carter 10-2-1-25-7, Helliwell 9-4-16-2.

**KING CROSS:** M. Wade c Sladdin b Dalby 18, R. Pinder st D. Roy b Sladdin 1, P. Carter c A. Roy b Sladdin 12, D. Robinson not out 21, J. Law run out 7, S. Ambler c A. Roy b Sladdin 1, G. Briggs c Bates b Cockcroft 18, R. Smithies not out 5, Extras 8, Total (for 6 wks.) 91. Bowling: Sladdin 13-2-4-46-3, Dalby 9-1-19-1, Smith 2-0-8-0, Cockcroft 2-0-10-1.