

# NEWSOME LINK

## Pre-Season Nets by Paul Rai

A summer jam-packed with cricket awaits Armitage Bridge in 2008. The Bridge will not only be competing in the league but will also take part in the Examiner Twenty20 and the Npower Village Cup.

Preparation for the campaign ahead began late last year at Newsome High School, with regular weekly winter net sessions. However, the festive period and New Year brought an abrupt halt to the club's pre-season training.

Current first team captain and strike bowler Rick Lunn is a history teacher at Newsome High School. Through Rick's connection with the school, ABCC have been given the green light to use its quality indoor net facility. Bridge captain Lunn explained how the mutually beneficial relationship works: "Armitage Bridge get to use the school's indoor nets free of charge and in turn the school are allowed to use the facilities at the Bridge for free."



There is nothing that can quite match the sound of leather on willow, and it can be heard on a regular basis on Sunday afternoons from 3pm till 4pm. ABCC senior net sessions resumed on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2008. Senior and junior nets began

on 18<sup>th</sup> February at the same venue but at a different time, commencing at 6pm and concluding at 7pm.

Indoor nets provide an opportunity for all players to brush up on their skills. Batters can work on their square cuts and even their 'leaving' technique outside off peg. Bowlers can also work on their actions, run-ups and even develop new deliveries to deceive opposition batsmen come April.

Skipper Lunn is of the opinion that indoor nets have many benefits: "They should allow everyone to brush their cobwebs away for the start of the season." However, he openly admits: "I've never liked indoor nets at any club I've ever been at. The conditions are so unrealistic and in no way does it replicate what it is like out in the middle - it often gives a false sense to the players."

On a Sunday two nets are available to the Bridge and often one net is left empty, leaving Lunn disappointed at the turnout. Attendance at nets is entirely optional for the team and the captain understands the reasons why people can't attend: "Many of the squad have family commitments and some of the team play football on Sundays."

The skipper goes on: "Outdoor nets begin in about seven or eight weeks, it's about the time the clocks change". When asked whether he preferred netting indoors or outdoors, he replies: "Oh, definitely outdoors, it's more realistic, more fun and more enjoyable."

Armitage Bridge will not be left wanting when the new season arrives. Practice makes perfect for cricketers of all levels and, as the saying goes, those who fail to prepare only prepare to fail.