

SELECTION, SCHOOLS AND SIBLINGS

Profile of Simon Sykes by Chris Knowles

At 13 years of age, aspiring batsman Simon Sykes began his cricketing career at Emley along with childhood friends Jon Lee and Matthew Wood. The trio had previously been a part of the junior set-up at Thornhill CC in Dewsbury, where they had been introduced to the game.



The Combs, home of the ex-Thornhill CC

With the exception of a single appearance for the 2nd XI, Simon has spent virtually his whole senior career as an integral part of the 1st XI, eventually captaining the team to promotion in 2000. He says, 'Although I'm now opening batsman for the 1st XI, I have bowled for the 2nd team and also kept wicket a few times. Pretty much all of my time at Emley has been in the 1st team.'

When questioned on his career highs, the Emley batsman lists numerous successes from recent years. 'Reaching the Central League cup final was pretty special but one which stands out personally was hitting 102 not out in the first season we entered the new league.' He adds, 'I was also captain throughout the promotion-winning season and that will always rank up with the best.'

During his role as 1st team captain, and more recently as co-captain, Simon has found it necessary to approach his relationship with the players in different ways. He explains, 'Because we have all grown up together we have a great relationship and there aren't any problems when it comes to selection issues.' He continues, 'Sometimes it's all about explaining your decision and hopefully that person will understand and react in a positive way.'

Aside from the game, Simon works as a secondary school PE teacher and has recently been promoted to become Head of Year 10, a role which requires huge commitment and has had an effect on his cricket. He tells me, 'Since I've taken on this role it's obviously become a lot more demanding and I've found that I sometimes don't have the necessary time that I used to have for my cricket.'

Consequently, Simon won't be playing a part in the first team for the forthcoming season, although he admits he may occasionally lend a hand to the seconds if necessary. 'With the holiday season and so on, the team can sometimes struggle with numbers. If that's the case I'd make myself available to Alex [Moors - 2nd XI captain] for selection.'

Simon is the younger brother of fellow Emley favourite Tim Sykes and in their spare time the pair also play football together for Penistone FC. Simon enjoys turning out alongside his brother in the Emley 1st XI. 'Tim was at Hall Bower for a while and when he eventually joined us at Emley we became the two opening batsmen for the club. We've never really had a problem because we have such a brilliant relationship!'