

# IN LOVE WITH THE CLUB!

## Valentine's Day Training 2008 by Mark Edmonds

"I hope you've brought your pads with you!" laughs chairman Chris Payne as we make our way towards the indoor training centre. "I think we'll be lucky to get more than five or six tonight, it is Valentine's Day after all!" Indeed, Chris or "Payney" as he's otherwise known, is right with his assumption and the turnout is low. The same can also be said for Broad Oak CC who share the facilities during the training session.



One player who hasn't been distracted by the females of Yorkshire on this particular night is young batsman Tom Oakley. Having come through the junior ranks at Slaithwaite, the Golcar-based player is a bit of a rarity in the league. While many young players go away to university and join teams around their new home, Tom is returning home from a dentistry degree in Manchester each week to take part in training. "I'm living at home for the first year so it's a lot of travelling at times," says the 19-year-old. He continues: "Next year I'll be living in Manchester all the time, but I still think I'll be coming back to play here, hopefully throughout my course."

This is good news for SCC as Tom is an opening batsman for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI, and a talented one at that. Making a range of scores in the 50s and 60s, he has a range of targets he still wants to achieve. "I really want to hit a century this season," declares the batsman. "Last season my highest score was 78, so I've been close! Also, in the next couple of years I'd like to try and break through to the first team, but I know that it's going to take a lot of work because the batsmen we've already got are so good."

As the session continues, a few more players make their way in blaming the wife, the girlfriend for their lateness. One player remarks that he wasn't going to come to training that night, thinking it would have been a good idea to stay with his wife instead. As it turned out, she ends up asking him why he's not at cricket when she comes home, sending the rest of the players into fits of laughter. Luckily, the training session the week after is better attended with 13 players going through their paces; the road to the start of the season has begun in earnest.