

LEG-SPIN WIZARD

Profile of Eddie Leadbeater by David Brenchley

Born in Lockwood in 1927, Eddie Leadbeater started and (finished) his cricketing career with Almondbury. He went on to represent Yorkshire and Warwickshire as well as gaining two Test caps before returning to Almondbury after retiring.



Leadbeater won the Sykes Cup twice while with Almondbury. The first time came in his first spell with the club in 1943 when he took an impressive 6-16. 19 years later he won it again when he joined the club as a professional. This time his significant contribution came with the bat – he scored 105.

In between these spells, he played for his home county – Yorkshire – between 1949 and 1956. He was then brought to Warwickshire for the 1957-1958 seasons, possibly as a replacement for leg-spinner Eric Hollies who retired the season before. Leadbeater was a surprise call-up for the tour of India and his debut wasn't impressive. He took just one wicket (his figures were 1-100 from just 25.1 overs), held one catch and scored just 2 runs in his one innings.

His second Test turned out to be his last and was just as expensive as his first. He scored 36 in his last innings for England before taking 1-118 from just 23 overs. These two matches gave him a bowling average of 109 and an economy rate of 4.52. Leadbeater still remains a rarity as an England Test cricketer – having played for his country without being awarded a county cap.

Although he wasn't renowned for his batting (he averaged just 15.17) he made three 50s – his highest score for Yorkshire was 91. While playing for Warwickshire against Glamorgan in his last year, though, he managed to break into three figures. Entering play as a night-watchman, Leadbeater hit 116, sharing a second-wicket stand of 206 with Fred Gardner.

His bowling was much more impressive in first-class cricket. His economy at the end of a nine-year career was 2.87 and he averaged 27.49. In possibly his greatest match, Leadbeater took his best figures of 8-83 as Yorkshire beat Hampshire by more than an innings.