

# ‘LOCAL’ ASPECT KEY TO SUCCESS

By Chris Knowles

One of the finest aspects of Emley village is the enormously popular cricket club. Based at the heart of the small South Kirklees community, Emley Clarence CC has prided itself on providing local people with somewhere to play cricket for the past 120 years.



Now, at any one time, Clarence can field in their 1<sup>st</sup> XI eight or nine players who are villagers and, more often than not, attended school in Emley as youngsters. On this matter, club chairman John Moors said, ‘I’ve always believed that, while we’ve been developing the club, we should try to hold on to the local aspect of village cricket. Both our senior teams are made up mostly of lads who used to, or still do, live in the village and most of them have come through our junior set-up.’

It could be argued that there may come a time when this policy of selecting local players becomes a weakness. For instance, in order to improve the team in the future it may be necessary to trial players from surrounding areas and look at ways of strengthening the team. A wider range of players would almost certainly improve competition and, as with all sports, a selection headache is perhaps the best problem to have.

Nevertheless, the positives that can be drawn from such a ‘homely’ policy can be that the relationships between the players are often ones based on

childhood friendships and, therefore, players are already accustomed to each other's style of play. The organisation of matchdays, training and other social functions is often made easier when the people involved live locally or know each other well. Other logistical issues such as transport are also less tricky to handle.

In addition to this, something which is often overlooked is the help that local clubs receive from volunteers who are related to, or know, the players in some way. When a club such as Emley strives to be a locally-centred organisation, it invites volunteering help from people in and around the club - help which perhaps wouldn't be received if the players were from different parts of the region and, therefore, not so closely-knit.

Emley is a family-orientated club, evident in a flourishing junior set-up which would rival any in the division, and this allows for parental involvement. At a meeting last month Child Welfare Officer Sue Tedder made it clear that this is an area which could be utilised to the benefit of all involved. If more parents were to participate in helping out on junior match days, indoor nets or simply selling refreshments, it would make for a better environment and a more efficiently run club.

John Moors told me: 'No matter how much improving and developing we do, it's still village cricket and it means everything to me. It's a lovely place to play cricket and I'd never change that; all we need to do is continue with developing the future of the club and people will still want to play for us.'