

“WE WILL BE A SETTLED SIDE WITH A GREAT TEAM SPIRIT”

2008 Season Preview by Mark Edmonds

It is now less than two weeks until the 2008 season begins, and preparations for this year's campaign are coming to a head. April 3rd sees the start of outdoor training with a series of sessions to make sure that the players' fielding skills and fitness levels are up to scratch. After that, there is the annual "Team Bonding" night before the pre-season game away at Southowram, involving beer, curry, some dancing, and probably a lot more beer!



The week between Southowram and the first game of the season at home to Meltham sees more fielding practice, and the chance for players to hone their batting and bowling before the season's start on April 19th. The game against Meltham is the only home fixture for the first team in the month of April with the Seconds' first home game being against Linthwaite on April 26th.

In a piece of good news, the Heavy Woollen Cup doesn't come into play for Barkisland until the middle of May thanks to a first-round bye. The same situation also applies for the second string in the first round of the Crowther Cup, with both sides hoping to secure their first-ever acquisition of their particular trophies. The sides must, however, play in the opening round of both the Sykes Cup and the Paddock Shield. The Sykes Cup sees BCC host

the 2007 runners-up in Honley while Nick Oddy and his side travel to face Holmfirth, with both games taking place on May 4th.

With the success of Twenty20 competitions both in county cricket and on the international scene, there is also the chance for BCC to claim success in the shortest format of the game. The competition, sponsored by the *Huddersfield Examiner*, is to be held weekly on Tuesdays throughout June and July with at least four games guaranteed thanks to the opening pool stage. In the "Holmes Pool", Barkisland will face Elland, Golcar, Paddock and Rastrick with only the pool winners and the two best second-placed teams out of the six groups qualifying at the end of it all.

Two of the biggest matches for the club in any season, though, are the fixtures against local rivals Elland. The first game takes place at Elland on May 24th with the potentially season-defining return fixture being scheduled for August 16th. Confidence is high in the camp, and captain Paul Winrow is more than hopeful of a good campaign: "With Tinashe and Love Alish heading the attack we really feel we can get stuck into the top order of our opponents," said Paul. "And though we do not have the big-name recruits of some of our rivals, we will be a settled side with a great team spirit and I think we can more than hold our own."

Here's hoping!