

# “I ENJOY UMPIRING VERY MUCH AND LIKE BEING INVOLVED”

## Profile of Roy Chappell by Sam Smith

Veteran umpire Roy Chappell is one of the most respected in the Halifax League, but there is one team he is never given the chance to officiate on. That's Blackley – where Roy has been club president for a quarter of a century.



“I would never be biased in favour of the Blackley players but the league quite rightly think it best that I don't umpire Blackley matches,” said Roy. “If I gave Blackley a close decision the other team would perhaps think I'm favouring them – I suppose it's human nature. More likely I would go the other way and be over-harsh on Blackley, and that would not be fair on them.”

Roy, aged 78, had been retired as an umpire for a decade – after a stint of eight years' service - but was asked to resume three years ago because the league had a shortage of umpires. Now he aims to carry on his Saturday afternoon duties until he is 80; after that milestone the league can no longer insure him.

“As long I can keep standing I am happy to keep doing do it,” said Roy. “I enjoy umpiring very much and like being involved. On the whole we don't have any

hassle in the Halifax League – it is played in a good spirit. In some leagues umpires receive a lot of hassle. I wouldn't umpire in those leagues.”

Roy thoroughly relishes his role as Blackley CC president. Although he describes himself as “just a figurehead”, he takes an active interest in club affairs. He said: “Nowadays I am not doing as much as I used to because of my age but I'm there if they want any advice or if I can help in anyway.”

He is certainly quick to praise the way the club is run and particularly admires the junior set-up. “The future is looking very rosy for Blackley, especially when you consider the number of teams we have. It's a pleasure to go to the ground on a Saturday morning and see about 60 youngsters running around.”

Roy's long association with Blackley started in 1962 when he joined as a wicketkeeper – “I was also a defensive batsman.” He had played for two other teams, Heckmondwike and Greetland, but only for a short time. He started in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI and then moved into the seconds, “as the younger lads came through.”

Roy has held the positions of groundsman, chairman and president, but he cites his happiest season – as you might expect – as a player in 1967 when Blackley topped the second division and reached the final of the Parish Cup. “We had a good side and that year really stands out in my memory.”

When Roy reaches his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday it will be cause for a celebration at Blackley. And, although it will be the end of Roy's umpiring days, there will be a silver lining to this particular cloud. “I will be able to go to watch Blackley play every Saturday afternoon,” added Roy, with a hint of eager anticipation in his voice.