

“I WAS GUTTED WHEN WE NARROWLY MISSED OUT ON PROMOTION”

Profile of Tom Baxter by Sam Smith

Teenage batting prospect Tom Baxter certainly likes to aim high. For a start, the young right-handed opener tries to model his style on his hero, England captain and strokemaster Michael Vaughan.



And Baxter, a home-grown talent who has been with Blackley since the age of nine, has set himself some demanding targets for what will be his first season starting in the First XI.

He wants to score his maiden century, establish himself as a first-team regular – and help the club win promotion to the Halifax Premier Division.

“These are my goals for the season – if I don’t achieve them it won’t be for the lack of trying,” said the 18-year-old who broke into the senior side last year and finished the campaign with three successive half-centuries.

“I was gutted when we narrowly missed out on promotion,” he said. “I hope I don’t have to experience that disappointment again this year. It has made me all the more determined to do well and make a contribution to Blackley winning some honours.”

Baxter enjoys opening the innings and like most batsman who are first to the crease he aims to be calm and collected in playing himself in. This season he wants to stamp his authority on opposition bowlers and score his runs at a speedy rate.

He said, "My strength is opening the batting - that's what I love to do. I like to build an innings and not let the bowlers get on top of me. When I feel comfortable in the middle I look to be aggressive and scores runs quickly."

The Blackley youngster is currently sitting his final A-level exams and if all goes well he will be moving away to university in September. Baxter is keen to continue with his studies but insists moving away from home will not get in the way of playing for his beloved Blackley.

"I'm hoping to go to either Sheffield or Leeds. But I think wherever I go I can always see myself back here playing for Blackley. My whole family are involved with the club and I have some great friends here", he said.

The "local lad" is keen to make a name for himself this season and points to a successful run in the second team last year as evidence that he can produce consistent performances at the top of the innings. "I had a spell of about eight consecutive innings last season where I did not get a score under 30. I was then moved into the first team and I felt I adjusted pretty well. I felt more confident with every game and I will be looking to take that confidence into this season", he enthused.