

LOOKING FORWARD

2008 Season Preview by Ian Hodgson

As we move into April the season draws ever closer and the anticipation and expectation increases for what will hopefully be a very successful season for Broad Oak. After narrowly missing out on promotion last year to Clayton West, the young and emerging first team, along with some very useful additions to the side, look as if they will be challenging for promotion.

Broad Oak will fight it out in Cedar Court Conference One with Armitage Bridge, Kexborough, Kirkheaton, local rivals Linthwaite, Paddock, Rastrick and Scholes.



Who will pose the biggest threat?

Kirkheaton: After fighting it out with Broad Oak last year for second place in Frank Platt Conference One, Kirkheaton finished just five points behind. Their secret weapon is their bowling attack - Younis finished last year with a fantastic average of 12.69, taking 46 wickets and he can be very hard to score runs off. They also had two batsmen who scored almost 500 runs last year so they are very capable of putting a good enough score on the board to defend.

Linthwaite: Local rivals Linthwaite were the third side pushing to finish second last year, ending up in fourth place six points behind BOCC and one point behind Kirkheaton. Not only will the derby game be tough, with local pride at stake, but Linthwaite have a very good batsman in Malik who finished 2007 with a batting average in the high 40s, and was one of only two players to score in excess of 150 in a match.

Scholes: After getting relegated from the Premiership last year they will be determined to bounce straight back up, although they will have their work cut out as it is not an easy division to get out of. With their small-sized ground, it is possible that we could see a few high scoring matches at Chapelgate. Weston had a very respectable batting average last season, of just under 40 in the Premiership, and that could head upwards

against the weaker bowling attacks in the Cedar Court Conference 1. A top score of 124 not out means he has the ability to take the game away from the opposition.

Armitage Bridge: They won't be the whipping boys of the league by any stretch of the imagination but there are better teams in the league who will pose a threat. Armitage Bridge finished 5th last year, showing that they can hold their own.

Kexborough: After finishing second from bottom in the Cedar Court Conference 1 last year, it would be hard to make a case for promotion for Kexborough. However, Bray finished with a very good average last year of 40.41, making one unbeaten score of 90, so they hope to stay competitive and win their fair share of games.

Rastrick: Despite finishing 6th last season, their bowler Lawrie took 51 wickets at 22.43 a piece but he can also be rather expensive. They will hope to move up the table this year.

Paddock: After finishing bottom last year, they will be looking for improvement this summer. They did have a century-maker in 2007. This should provide hope along with their bowler Rafiq who took 50 wickets at 24.04 a piece.