

DROPPING ANCHOR AND BATTING FOR THE TEAM

Q&A by Ian Hodgson

Name: Stephen Rushworth

Position: Ex-captain/batting all-rounder



Stephen (third from the left, front row) and his men

Length of captaincy: I've been captain of the first team for four years, although that hasn't been consecutive years.

Successes: There was just one year when we won the Mini-Examiner competition at Lascelles Hall. Unfortunately, last year when I was captain we lost in the play-off final to Clayton West which meant we missed out on promotion to Section 'A'.

Other clubs you've played for: I played for Leymoor for most of my junior career although I did go for one year up at Golcar because Leymoor didn't have an Under-13 team. Then when I was 17 I went to play for Broad Oak as I was told that I could play at a higher level.

Strengths as a batsmen: I've altered my game a bit because originally I was more of an attacking batsmen but with the team we've got at the moment we've got quite a few aggressive young players so I tend to occupy the crease a bit more so we don't lose too many wickets at one end and let the young lads play some shots at the other. If everyone goes out there to hit the ball to all parts then it can go horribly wrong. I get a bit of stick for being a bit negative and boring but I've put myself down the order because

we've got some good young players and I want to give them a go. The play-off final I opened and I got a half-century.

Strengths as a bowler: I need certain wickets to help me bowl well because the wickets at Broad Oak are pretty good, so it can be quite difficult to get wickets. Dropping down to Section 'B', you can get away with bowling the odd bad ball but in Section 'A' you get punished. If the wickets are doing a bit and it's quite wet then it obviously helps me more and I may be able to get it to swing a bit as well.

High points: In 1985 in my debut season we played Honley and we were bowled out for 31 and they won by 110/120 runs, and I batted for close to 20 overs and scored about three. We then played in the final of the Sykes Cup and my best friend Simon Hoyle and myself opened the batting - we were both 17 when the final started. The final got rained off that many times, though, that I was 18 by the time we won it! Also that year the juniors won the Walker Cup - Simon Hoyle and myself knocked off 140 runs without losing any wickets against Lascelles Hall. As well that year the second team won the Paddock Shield so for all three teams to win something was a great achievement.

Low points: Would have to be getting relegated from Section 'A'. I always had an ambition when I came back that we would always be there because of the amount of talented players we had. However we had three or four players who were related to each other and when one of them left, all the others left as well, so it was a case of rebuilding the team. Then we got a bloke who joined and his dad put a lot of money into the club so we could bring in a professional, which kept us up for a few seasons, until we got relegated. Last season the professional went home halfway through; he wasn't making as many runs as he should have been but he gradually got better and I believe had he stayed we would have got better. We missed his 10 good overs in each game.

First century: Was against Skelmanthorpe when I got 121, batting with Jonny Greaves and he was the youngest ever person to get a hundred at the time. We had a partnership of about 220 runs. I sacrificed my wicket because I had already got to my hundred and Jonny was in the 90s, so I ended up running myself out.

Most memorable match: Would be the semi-final in 1985. We only scored 150, which at Broad Oak isn't really a match-winning score. However, we got them 30-4 and then all out for 80 so there was big celebration after. The final was obviously good to win but the gloss was taken off slightly because it was called off due to rain so many times. We were playing a team much stronger than us, so on paper the semi-final was like Barnsley beating Chelsea!