

# RARING TO GO!

## Junior Set-Up

By David Brenchley

After a successful signing-on night, Outlane's junior section are ready and raring to start the new season.

The Huddersfield-based club run four successful junior sides: under-11s (who play on a Monday night), under-13s (Thursday), under-15s (Wednesday) and under-17s (Monday) with all kick-off times 6pm. The club's chairman, Anthony Briggs, and former first-team captain Barry Walsh went around the local schools in order to raise awareness of the set-up they run.



This helped the club find a lot of juniors and under-13 manager Peter Branch believes that he will have a large squad to choose from: "I am expecting to have about 17 or 18 players so there will be some sort of rotation system."

Branch, who has been managing the side for five years now, added, "I won't be rotating the better players because the kids want to play but more importantly they want to win and there is no point rotating your better players and fielding a weak team and being hammered each week."

As the club are now becoming more used to having their junior sides, Briggs stressed the need for the parents' support: "When we have a game on, it is nice if they can come along and support the kids; we got great support last year from the parents and we also need parents for cars and transport to get to and from the games."

As the youngsters become too old to play for the teams they did last year, the managers are expecting inexperienced teams. Branch said: "We have only got two available players from last year's under-13 team so it's going to be a hard season and it's a big step up from the under-11s but we will improve and get better with experience."

He also stressed the difference in both physical size and quality from the lads who were playing last season: "Most of the boys will be 11 years old playing against boys who are 13 years old and there is a huge difference in ability and size and strength between a 13-year-old lad and an 11-year-old."

With regards to training, Branch says: "I am not a qualified coach and don't do a lot of the training. I will come up, particularly at the start of the season, to see who the new players are and to get some sort of gauge as to who the better players are so that I can pick the first few teams based on ability and then I can take it from there."

In contrast, the under-17s will have a more experienced squad and, also, manager Graham Hughes will have the choice of any other junior player he likes: "This year we have more of a settled squad, about six who played last year and will be playing this year but we will probably be calling on under-15s and 13s as well."

Hughes, who is also Outlane's first team captain, added: "The last year that Neil [Crosland] was in charge [two years ago], around ten of them left. If you have a settled squad it is easier because teamwork, in any sport, is needed and if you have a settled squad then they will fit in easier."

After a mixed season last year, Hughes is hoping his side can "break into the top three in the league and a good cup run would be nice. They get to know how each other plays, their strengths and weaknesses and if you play the same players it helps and they will probably get better as the season goes on."

The other team managers are Daniel Crosland (under-15s) and James Pare (under-11s) and training sessions are on Friday nights between 6.30 and 8.00. All matches start the week beginning April 27.