

MARSDEN SETBACK

**Under-17s Match Report
Holmfirth 'A' v Marsden
Wednesday 29 April, 2009
Marsden 78 for 6 beat Holmfirth 58 for 7**

By Sam Hollis

Holmfirth Under-17s slumped to a disappointing defeat to Marsden at Bridge Fold last night in the Huddersfield Area 'C' league match. After a last-minute withdrawal, Holmfirth were forced to take the field with only 10 men and gave a valiant, but ultimately unsuccessful performance.



Marsden had been in good form coming into the game, winning their only previous league match, and predictably elected to bat after winning the toss in an effort to put pressure on the hosts. The simple logic being that with a man short, extra effort in the field could possibly tire the young Holmfirth side for their batting performance.

In this 20-over game, Marsden put in a solid batting display to post a respectable score of 78. Any first-class cricket team will tell you that a good opening partnership gives the team a great platform to build on and achieve a high score, and Marsden did just this, with opening duo Simon Hall and David Bain hitting 27 runs, an extremely good partnership at this level.

In a period of play which produced four boundaries and a handful of singles, both Bain and Hall looked like they enjoyed the predictable bounce off the

wicket. It took a fine delivery from Holmfirth's opening batsman Michael Devene to trap Hall lbw with the ball nipping back off the seam and going on to hit leg stump in the umpire's mind. Hall ended the match as Marsden's top scorer with 18 runs, a key contribution for his team.

The remaining runs were shared out across the Marsden team. Bain was brilliantly stumped by Holmfirth wicketkeeper Tom Gardner for 9, while Jamie Smith hit 8 quick runs before spooning to Mark Battyewood at extra cover. This brought Ryan Brown to the crease, and he produced arguably the best shot of the game, launching a blow back over the bowler's head for 6.

Not only did it show great power but also self-control and technique to hit this shot. This ambition and attacking play proved to be his downfall, however, after he attempted to hit a similar shot. The bowler got the better of him this time and Elliot Drummond picked up his first wicket of the game. Drummond went on to take the last two wickets of the innings with a spell which produced some exceptional deliveries but lacked consistency, and he conceded 27 runs in his four overs. Max Murphy added 5 before Gavin Greatbatch followed him to the pavilion after a solid 11 off 7 balls. Nick Shaw and Alex Beardsall added 9 runs between them as Marsden posted a commanding 78, which included only 4 extras.

Unfortunately, Holmfirth's batting performance was below par, and this is a match they will want to forget quickly. Club administrator Simon Cave spoke before the game of the high confidence the team has with the bat, which is something Holmfirth as a club work hard on. Other age groups also excel in this area of the game; however, for this particular game the home side struggled to gather any momentum and a few individuals will be cursing poor shot selection.

One of the most important aspects of Marsden's innings was the confidence of the opening pair, and Michael Devene and Ben Wilkinson walked to the crease knowing it was vital they made a score. Devene lasted just three balls, and before he could settle, the youngster was out lbw to David Bain to dampen the mood in the Holmfirth camp. Wilkinson can perhaps be proud of his display as he hit 13; unfortunately though, he was bowled by man-of-the-match Graham Greatbatch who ended the game with 11 runs off his bat and stunning bowling figures. The seamer picked up two wickets off 5 overs for just 11 runs. This is particularly impressive when you consider that out of Holmfirth's score of 58, 17 of those runs were extras; therefore, Greatbatch showed great discipline in his bowling and saw the benefits. His next victim was Mark Battyewood whose indecision resulted in a caught-and-bowled, and he departed for 6.

The wickets of Jonny Cave and Tom Gardner both fell quickly as they suffered a lack of front-foot movement, allowing deliveries to sail past them onto middle stump. This is surely an area in which coach Tony Eustace will be looking for improvement over the following weeks. James Finch then hit a highly impressive 10 and finished not out with an efficient and patient innings; he indeed witnessed teammate Mark Wozniak succumb to a brilliant piece of

fielding by Greatbatch, as he ended his exceptional match with a catch to his name. Morley then fell to Smith who picked up his second wicket of the game – both of which were deliveries clipping the off stump – and sadly the Holmfirth innings faded like the sunset over Bridge Fold, and Marsden completed a convincing 20-run victory.

This young Holmfirth side will learn from the defeat; every disappointment turns into experience and something to work on in training. Fielding at this level can always be improved, a few opportunities were let slip with catches being dropped which handed Marsden a few extra lifelines which they duly took. Similarly, some cheap wickets fell in the Holmfirth innings; many times players lost their wicket due to indecision, rather than poor shots.

However, Holmfirth boast extremely successful youth teams in all age groups and youth development is something the club prioritise highly. Ensuring that young players grow through the club into good cricketers is beneficial in more ways than one. Firstly, it increases participation in the sport generally in the local area, which promotes a healthy community and brings people together both socially and competitively. Secondly, and perhaps crucially, it saves the club's first and second XI searching elsewhere for talent to improve the squad (which saves time and money), as they have homegrown players on their doorstep. Local leagues and matches such as this one ensure the future of cricket looks bright in Huddersfield.

Man of the Match Interview

Name: Graham Greatbatch

Age: 17

Team: Marsden CC

What are your interests away from cricket?

I am really into my music, I play guitar and any spare time I have I'm generally listening to music, and more specifically rock music. Although I'm still young, I'm hoping to go to a few festivals this year, my friends are going to Leeds Festival to see Kings of Leon, but I'd rather go to Glastonbury as I've always been a huge fan of Blur. Me and my dad sometimes go to see Huddersfield Town play as he's a big fan, and although I've always enjoyed playing cricket, I do like football as well. For some reason I've always liked Manchester United, but that's probably because they win a lot and Huddersfield don't!

What is Marsden like?

It's alright, I suppose. It's nice enough, but there's not much to do. I sometimes go into Huddersfield to the cinema or when I need to go shopping. My parents really like it as it's quiet and they like walking, for some reason.

Why cricket?

I don't really know to be honest. I remember playing it at school as it seemed a lot easier than most other sports. I was never really any good at football so I played for the cricket team instead. I sort of fell into bowling; when I started I could only bowl really fast balls, but the more I've played the more accurate I got. I enjoy bowling as I like the idea that batsmen are afraid of your bowling, and it's a great feeling when you take a wicket. Probably the most enjoyable part of playing cricket is the fielding, though. It's great to stand with your mates and try to beat the opponents, plus you get a lot of praise when you take a catch or stop a boundary! The excitement of not knowing when you'll be needed as a fielder also makes the match interesting.

Do you still see yourself playing in 5 years?

I hope so, although I guess in 5 years I might be at university or working full time. I still think I'll enjoy the game so hopefully I'll still be playing. It depends if I'm good enough or not. Plus cricket is quite expensive, with all the gear you have to wear, but I hope so.

What did you think of today's game?

I thought it was great! I played really well but so did the whole team. I really look forward to every match, it's great fun as you feel important when you're on the pitch and most of the time we get a lot of people watching us, like our parents and also sometimes just people walking past who stop to watch. When I was batting I thought we might win, but you never know as we haven't really seen Holmfirth play before, but I had a good feeling. Luckily they dropped a few catches which helped, and we fielded really well. It also helps when there's nice weather like today! It's really annoying when it rains and games get called off, but I suppose you have to put up with it when you play cricket.