

## Aiming for third time luck

SKELMANTHORPE have been waging a cup campaign on three fronts this season, and their success has forced skipper Graeme Hurlbatt, who originally thought that his club had bitten off more than they could chew, to have a rethink.

As well as winning through to tomorrow's Sykes Cup final, the Lidgett Laners reached the semi-finals of the Heavy Woollen Cup, where they were defeated by eventual winners Mirfield, and the area finals of the Cockspur Cup, where they were defeated in a thrice-arranged match at York.

That led to a hectic fixture pile-up, and at one stage the club played five games in nine days.

"It was all getting a bit much. We were playing more than first class cricketers do and we were also having to fit in our normal jobs as well," says Hurlbatt.

"I originally thought that it was a bad idea to enter so many competitions, but I suppose our success in all three shows I was wrong."

The players' cup commitments don't seem to have adversely affected their league performances, however.

With the exception of a barren spell midway through July, when they lost successive matches to Meltham (3-1) and Slaithwaite (5-0), they've continued to pick up points steadily.

Their scheduled Section "A" clash at home to leaders Shepley earlier in

the season was a casualty of it so much will depend on the draw at Marsh Lane on Saturday August 25.

SKELMANTHORPE are to celebrate overseas man Shahid Boob's three years' service by a benefit match at Lidgett Lane Bank Holiday Monday, April 1.

The match will be between Huddersfield League XI and an International League XI, featuring Top county cricketers.

The Karachi-born 27-year-old joined Skelmanthorpe after leaving Central Yorkshire League at Hartshead Moor, Bradford in 1987. He has also played for Lightcliffe, Central Lancashire League Burnley and Scottish Motherwell.

# Hurlbatt ready to fire cup assault

ANOTHER chapter in The Rise and Rise of Skelmanthorpe Cricket Club could well be written tomorrow.

The former Central League side marked their first season of Huddersfield League cricket in 1987 by winning promotion from Section "B" under the guidance of the volatile Mike Bocarro.

They've climbed steadily up Section "A" since and, led by the experienced Graeme Hurlbatt, are now on the brink of a league and cup double.

Of course there are those who criticise the money methods used to build the side at Lidgett Lane, but claims that the club has bought success cut little ice with Hurlbatt, who himself was one of three "big names"



HILLS SUPPLIES  
  
 SYKES CUP

Skelmanthorpe v  
 Slaithwaite contest  
 71st Sykes Cup final  
 Kirkheaton tomorrow  
 Examiner cricket writer  
**DOUGLAS THOMSON**  
 previews the match with  
 skippers Graeme Hurlbatt  
 and Gary Binks



Slaithwaite skipper Gary Binks

## Final line-ups

*Slaithwaite* - Bink (capt), Mace, Sykes, Payne, Hey,  
 Price, Lines (wicket), Dook, Smith-Butler, Cook, Haigh (M),  
 12th man - Gilroy

*Skelmanthorpe* - Hurlbatt (capt), Bridge, Hinchliffe,  
 Higgins, Crosland, Mahboob, Gummerson, Saville,  
 Crompton (wicket), Redgwick, Teas, 12th man - Hepworth,  
 13th man - Ferry, Bowler, and John Winstoblen

Under his leadership the club—who have used just 12 players all season—have been second in Section "A" since the end of May, steadily closing the gap on pacesetters Shepley, who before today's games were ahead by just one point.

They've also seen off four top flight sides in the Sykes Cup, and Hurlbatt sees no reason why a fifth shouldn't follow tomorrow.

"We're aiming for the double and it's my job to make sure we get there, starting tomorrow.

"It won't be easy, though. Slaithwaite might not be doing so well in the league but they've done us twice this season and beaten two good sides on their way to the final."

Not surprisingly, Hurlbatt names Steve Mace, Gary Binks and Andrew Smith-Butler as the main dangermen.

"Mace is a prolific run-getter who, I hate to say, seems to have come good in recent weeks. It's not a case of containing a player like him, we've got to get him in the tent early on.

"Binks and Smith-Butler are also highly capable. A wet wicket will suit them especially well, so I've been praying for good weather this week!"

Skelmanthorpe's obvious advantage tomorrow, on what should be a good batting track and fast outfield, is the strength of their batting.

They fired out a warning last week by creating a new Section "A" high-scoring record with their innings of 321-5 at Broad Oak.

Hinchliffe hit 131, taking his league and Sykes Cup tally to 721 in 20 knocks, while Crosland cracked 112 to increase his haul to 439 in 19 innings.

Double-chasing Skelmanthorpe skittle Slaithwaite for 89 in cup triumph

# Mahboob's 8-40 is final best ever

RUTHLESS Shahid Mahboob ripped through the Slaithwaite batting and rewrote the record books as Skelmanthorpe secured their first-ever Sykes Cup triumph with a 114-run win in yesterday's final at Kirkheaton.

A bumper 1,800 crowd—the biggest single-day figure in 10 years—looked on as Mahboob marked the glorious 12th by shooting down eight victims at a cost of just 40 runs. His barrage lasted for 21.1 overs (eight maidens) and created a new best for a final, beating Stuart Armitage's eight for 44 for Elland against Hall Bower back in 1971.

The win was also a memorable achievement for Skelmanthorpe, who are just a

## HILLS SUPPLIES SYKES CUP

By DOUGLAS THOMSON



in response to Skelmanthorpe's 203-8 yesterday.

It was hardly surprising that Mahboob's splendid pace bowling feat should earn him the man-of-the-match award, but that shouldn't be allowed to detract from the important batting contribution of Michael Bridge.

The 23-year-old former Honley man, who was one of three winter arrivals at Edgert Lane, produced the kind of

Bridge's dismissal and the introduction of left-arm spinner Andrew Smith Butler, whose 14 overs (five maidens) brought four wickets for 40 runs, combined to slow Skelmanthorpe's drive, although Steve Gummerson's 22 not out and Hurlbutt's 19 kept the scoreboard turning.

Having prevented their opponents from reaching the 250 plus which at one stage seemed possible, Slaithwaite

each of the four previous rounds, was prised out with just seven runs to his name.

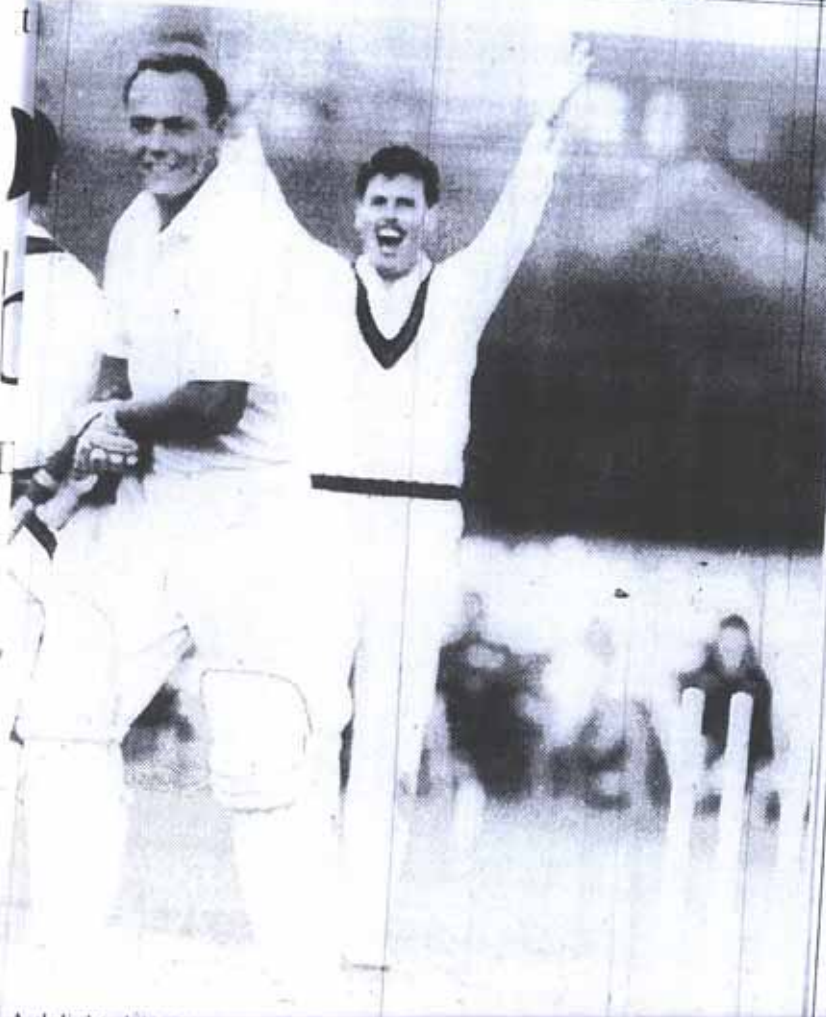
Richard Cook went for a duck in the same over, and although Payne went on to reach 27 before being caught behind, again by Tyas, and again off Mahboob, the fact that Slaithwaite's second highest scorer was wicketkeeper Pete Jones with 16 tells its own story.

Rain forced the players off the pitch for a 20-minute spell midway through the 17th over with the score 40-4, but even the elements couldn't help the beleaguered Colne Valley club.

For Mahboob—who had added John Hey, caught by Gummerson for 3, to his list before the delay—re-emerged in equally devastating

# Summer

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manthorpe, who are just a point behind Section 'A' leaders Shepley and now stand on the brink of a league and cup double in only their fourth season of Huddersfield League cricket.

But for Slaithwaite their first final appearance in 36 years was a big disappointment. For having dismissed Holmfirth and Shepley for similarly low scores in previous rounds, they were given a taste of their own medicine when they were all out for 89

lane, produced the kind of form that has won him a regular place in the league's representative side to compile a splendid 73, after Skelmanthorpe skipper Graeme Hurlbatt had won the toss and elected to bat.

Bridge thumped three sixes and 10 fours and was at the crease for 112 minutes, sharing stands of 33 with fellow opener Darren Hinchliffe (13) and 78 with Graham Higgins (41) before he was caught by Steve Mace off Craig Daek.

seemed possible. Slaithwaite took tea in good spirits. But their hopes nosedived when, following opening maidens from Mahboob and Hurlbatt, they lost opener Tim Sykes, caught behind by stumper Jason Tyas, to the Pakistani all-rounder with only six runs accrued.

Sykes was replaced by Chris Payne, but his plans of a fruitful partnership with Slaithwaite's other opener Steve Mace vanished when the Aussie, a half-century maker in

the 1990s, before the delay—re-emerged in equally devastating mood to account for Price, Payne, Jones and Matthew Haigh.

Hurlbatt, who conceded 40 runs in his 19 overs, and Higgins (one run in two overs), chipped in with a wicket apiece as Skelmanthorpe cruised home.

Gate receipts from yesterday's match totalled £1,141.55.

● Intiaz record and league round-up—see page 14.

## Dukes' Cup boost

**TREBLE-CHASING** Bradford Dukes crushed Swindon at Odsal on Saturday, to stay in the Sunbrite League title race and give themselves a psychological boost for next month's Knockout Cup clash against the Wiltshire side.

But Dukes' team manager Allan Ham, though delighted with their 58-32 win, was the first to admit that the cup semi-final is likely to be a much tougher affair.

Swindon—without

