

# ASHES EFFECT

## History in the Making

By Ian Hirst



England's Ashes success in 2005 saw a major influx in players, both juniors and those who had given up the game but came back after 'semi-retirement'. As the BBC website clearly indicated, the amount of interest after the Ashes captured the nation's imagination. The statistics by Palmer on the site in 2005 show what happened as the public needed the input of information about the Ashes.

Average figures over all five days of a Test were 2.5m, with a peak of 7.7m when England were on the brink of victory, 42% of the total share.

Nearly 2.4m people accessed the BBC Sport website on a Monday, clearly keen to follow the latest updates and listen to the *Test Match Special* commentary.

115,000 fans inside Old Trafford over the five days was the largest crowd aggregate at the ground since Richie Benaud bowled Australia to victory there in 1961.

20,000 fans were either locked outside or told not to travel to the ground on Monday by Manchester police.

Steven Archer, the club development officer for Yorkshire CCC who works for the Yorkshire Cricket Board, explains the role that he plays in the area in encouraging youngsters in getting into the game. He said, "We link with competition managers and school sport partnerships. We do a lot of school competition and create exit routes into clubs from that. We try to link our clubmark focus by doing the school partnerships. We consider funding into focus clubs and some into clubmark clubs. We have a programme called

'Chance to Shine'. Focus clubs get £6,000 a year over three years to deliver coaching in schools and to make them exit routes into clubs".

With the increase in input from schools and the Yorkshire Cricket Board in encouraging youngsters into the game, it clearly seems to be that the project is working. Elland is a prime example of this.

For the first time in the club's history, Elland will have an under-elevens side. They will be playing in the Halifax Junior League South Division and will be managed by Andrew Scott. It is a huge step for the club that has produced many graduates from the juniors into the senior ranks.

First-teamer Jimmy Thornton came through the ranks as a junior and is now an established all-rounder in the team. There are current youngsters in the first team which shows what a god set-up it is at Elland in nurturing young talent. Greg Finn is now the first-team wicketkeeper and Jack Pulley has opened the batting and is starting to show his talent and at times score quicker runs than fellow opener, captain and former county player Ryan Robinson.

One of the most famous players to come out of Elland was Richard Blakey. He became one of the most recognisable figures on the county scene for Yorkshire over a career that spanned three different decades. He also went on to gain the highest prize that any cricket player aims for. He represented the Three Lions both on the Test scene and on the one-day international stage.

This season proves to be an interesting and exciting time for the under-11s. Their specific rules incorporate every player into the game so they get a chance to bowl and bat. The ECB is also aware of the dangers that face young cricketers and they have instituted strict bowling regulations into every junior league. It means that players up to under-13 can only bowl up to four overs per spell. This is due to the injuries that juniors can pick up due to their bodies not being fully developed.

These are the current rules put in place at under-11 level.

Teams shall comprise 10 players. Where a full team cannot be raised a less than full complement of players may be fielded. In the event of one team's complement of players being less than their opponents, then the manager of the larger team shall have discretion over which of their opposing teams batsmen bats twice.

Matches shall commence no later than 6.00pm.

Each game to consist of one innings per side.

Score to start at 200 for 0 wkts. Winning team is scorer of most runs after deducting 8 runs for each wicket lost.

Players to bat in pairs for 4 overs each.

When a wicket falls, the batsmen shall change ends, except on the last ball of an over (excluding run outs).

Every player (except wicketkeeper) must bowl at least 1 over; however, no player is allowed to bowl more than 3 overs in an innings.

Wicketkeeper must wear their helmet at all times during their opponent's innings.

Clubs must use 4.3/4 oz balls.

Pitches shall be 20 yards in length

Elland will have almost a full complement of junior teams. With the under-11s now in place, there will be a natural progression into the under-13s, 15s, and 17s and then hopefully into the second and junior teams. These teams will be battling it out in the Sellers Huddersfield Junior League again this year. It is also highly likely that the likes of Jack Pulley will be pushing to be in the Huddersfield representative teams.

With a club that did not have an under-11s side in the past, but was still able to teach the youngsters the key skills to be a successful cricketer and go on to the highest level, it proves that Elland have an intricate network of coaching. If someone in the area was looking for a club where their youngster could learn the ropes of the game then they could do a lot worse than taking them to Elland.

Now that they have their first ever under-11s side, and who knows in the future they might go even further and create an under-9s, the club and coaches will be able to set the techniques in place from an even younger age. Who knows, there may be more youngsters who come off the Elland junior conveyer belt and who go on to represent Yorkshire and even their country.

If any parents are looking for information for their kids to find a club in their local area then they can visit the Huddersfield Sellers Junior League website at [www.hjcl.org.uk](http://www.hjcl.org.uk). Also if they want their children to join the ranks at Elland then they can visit [www.ellandcc.co.uk](http://www.ellandcc.co.uk).

These are the names of the team managers for each of the age groups if you want to know who to ask for.

Under 11 – Andrew Scott

Under 13 – Noamann Wilson-Baig and Steven Farrar

Under 15 – Adrian Finn

Under 17 – Peter Jennings