

## **2009 1st XI Opening Day Opponents Preview**

**Clayton West's 1st XI kick-off their 2009 Drakes Premiership campaign at Back Lane against Barkisland, but what do we know about the visitors? Paul Ellis investigates...**

### Brief History

Formed in 1899, Barkisland C.C. is based in the village of Calderdale, approximately four miles away from Halifax town centre. The club originally played their home fixtures at Norland Moor, a rural area of West Yorkshire, before moving to their current ground Woodfield in 1920. Previous to switching to the Huddersfield League in 2001, Barkisland had played in the Halifax and District Amateur Cricket Association League and the Halifax Parish League where they enjoyed substantial success, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s

Undoubtedly, their greatest achievements came under the captaincy of local hero Barry Tennyson when he led the club to a hat-trick of Parish Cups between 1977 and 1979; Tennyson now holds the position of chairman of the Halifax Cricket League. Although the 3rd XI and junior teams at Barkisland still ply their trade within the Halifax League, the 1st and 2nd XI play their cricket in the Huddersfield League; prior to the 2008 season however, neither team had lifted silverware in the League or Cup competition.

### Last Time Out

The club finished the 2008 season in a respectable fifth position on 92 points, four places and 29 points higher than Clayton West. From their 26 fixtures, Barkisland recorded victories in half of their games and lost only six times; on only two occasions did the Scammonden Road outfit fail to pick up a single point from their defeats. Their fine campaign was symbolised by their bowling attack of overseas Indian pace bowler Love Alish and Tinashe Panyangara who tore through many of the batting line-ups put in front of them in the Drakes Premiership; the former finished the season with the second best average ahead of team-mate and off-spinner Mathew Steers.

The icing on the cake to a perfect season was sealed as talismanic captain Paul Winrow led his team to Sykes Cup glory, beating Delph & Dobcross by 27 runs. In what was seen as the greatest day in the club's history, the delighted skipper said after lifting the trophy: "The feeling is absolutely out of this world. It has been a win earned by all 11 players and we have batted, fielded and bowled superbly, but we have done it thanks to team-work. It is a great day for everyone at the club and the supporters who gave us such great backing. We have beaten what are probably the three best Cup sides in the competition in Honley, Elland and Delph so we have done it the hard way and I'm very proud of all the players." Winrow led from the front for Barkisland, hitting a superb century which earned him the Man of the Match (Joe Robinson) award, plus receiving The Clifford Sykes Cup for the most catches taken during the competition.

## Players to Watch

Paul Winrow's leadership skills and ability with the bat should not be underestimated by Clayton West; as he proved in the Sykes Cup, the all-rounder has the quality to win a game for his team in an instant. On the bowling front, Mathew Steers' six wicket haul in the Sykes Cup Final ended another fine season with the ball; his third place finish before Ablish in the bowling averages followed his second place finish in the Conference averages in 2007. His economical approach to bowling (conceding the third lowest number of runs during the 2008 season) mixed with the ability to take wickets could again be crucial to Barkisland's season.

Although the club have lost key players Ablish and Panyangara ahead of the 2009 season, their three new recruits have the potential to make an instant impact at Back Lane. Along with being on the verge of signing an un-named South African pace bowler, said to have represented his country at Under 19s level, Barkisland have moved to bring in last season's top Central Yorkshire League all-rounder Alex Scholefield and promising teenager Tom Earle from Halifax League outfit Mytholmroyd. Scholefield is seen as a direct replacement for Panyangara in the bowling attack and Earle boosts an already powerful batting force which could prove to be the difference on April 18th.