

2009 2nd XI Opening Day Opponents Preview

Just like the 1st XI, the opening fixture of the 2009 season for Clayton West's 2nd XI pits them against a side from the Calderdale region. Paul Ellis takes a look at the history of Rastrick C.C. and assesses the players to look out for ahead of the game at Round Hill

Brief History

It is said that cricket has been played in Rastrick since the 1840s, a time when no leagues existed; instead, fixtures were arranged between teams and scorecards were issued. A regular fixture every year was played against local rivals Brighouse with the rivalry between the two escalating after the formation of a cricket club at Rastrick in 1863. Although it is unclear where Rastrick first played their matches, they moved to their current home at Round Hill during the 1860s and began to play competitive fixtures after joining the Huddersfield & District League in the early 1890s. However, the cricket club moved to the Spen Valley League in protest after being demoted following the introduction of a second division by the Huddersfield League. Although they were only crowned champions on one occasion before switching back to the Huddersfield League in 1923, one player will remain a part of the club's folklore for his amazing feat in 1899. In one match, a Rastrick bowler named Shaw recorded figures of 10-2 - a superb feat regardless of the era.

Success for the 1st and 2nd XI of Rastrick has been sporadic throughout their history, with only one Sykes Cup and eight League titles (five for 1st XI, three for 2nd XI) to show for their efforts. To say that the last success for the 2nd XI came in 1981 speaks volumes for the lack of silverware; although the club offers superb picturesque views around the ground and a pristine outfield with a £26,000 20 foot-high scoreboard at one side, the club have not progressed on the field, albeit not for the want of trying. In December 2008, Rastrick became only the fourth cricket club in the Huddersfield area to be awarded the ClubMark certificate, meeting required conditions such as offering a child-friendly environment and a fully structured coaching scheme with fully qualified staff.

Last Time Out

It is fair to say that the 2008 campaign was one to forget for Rastrick's 2nd XI despite showing signs of promise in 2007. Looking to build on their third placed finish in the Frank Platt Conference, the Brighouse-Halifax outfit competed in the Cedar Court Conference where they only managed to win three of their scheduled 22 games, losing sixteen (from which ten of these Rastrick did not earn a single point). Perhaps surprisingly, the club finished second bottom on 30 points ahead of Linthwaite who were further hampered by a 6 point deduction for fielding an ineligible player. Arguably, this is the only positive for Rastrick's 2nd XI in what must have been seen as a hugely disappointing season, and must be looking to start their 2009 campaign on the right note at home against Clayton West.

Players to Watch

Despite their vastly disappointing season, Allan Bottomley managed to put his name on the seasonal bowling averages chart with an impressive average of 15.96. Clayton West, in particular Dale Baxter, have to be wary as it was his wicket that Bottomley took with an lbw decision at Round Hill in the 2008 fixture; his bowling figures of 1-33 also proved to be the most economical in the match for Rastrick.

J.Marsh could potentially provide the attacking threat for the hosts in a repeat of last season's match, top-scoring with 45. Although he was at the crease for over an hour, the batsman made his total from 40 deliveries before he was caught by Dale Baxter off the bowling of Phil Rigby. All-rounder N.Hyde may also pose a threat; although he was extremely expensive through bowling figures of 0-70, Hyde responded with the bat by hitting a quick-fire 35 off just 23 deliveries before being bowled by Jacob Hawke.