

Fund-raising fun day voted a winner



Match organiser Andrew Gardner flanked by a section of the big crowd

THOUSANDS of sports fans descended on Brighouse Cricket Club to see their heroes take part in a charity cricket match.

Leeds and England goalkeeper Nigel Martyn donned his whites for a spot of umpiring while former England soccer star Frank Worthington, 'Emmerdale' actor Stuart Wade, who played Biff, and Bradford Bulls stars took to the crease.

Many of the Bulls' first team players turned out, including Henry Paul and team coach Matthew Elliott who slogged two gargantuan 'sixes'.

The Tom Gardner Memorial Cricket Challenge was held to raise money for Northowram Hedge Top Cricket Club and the special care baby unit at Halifax General

Hospital.

The event was organised in memory of Northowram team captain Andrew Gardner's baby son, Tom, who died in May 1999 when just 10 days old.

"It was a brilliant day - especially considering the weather conditions turned nasty from tea-time onwards," explained Mr Gardner, who was helped by his wife, Nicola, together with members of the Northowram Cricket Club committee.

He estimated Sunday's event had raised £23,000. "It's a fantastic amount. We didn't really know how much we were going to make." The money will be split evenly between the baby unit and cricket club.

A new pavilion is planned for Northowram while £10,000 will finance a new incubator at the hos-

pital.

"It was just a huge team effort from the people of Northowram. The whole club was there," said Mr Gardner.

And a crew from Sky Sports were on hand to film the match. Their report was broadcast on Wednesday.

A host of entertainment was on offer for the crowd of 2,500, including a tombola, stalls, face painting, beer tent, barbecue, refreshments, bouncy castle, magic shows, the Bulls Roadshow and dancers the Bullettes.

The Bradford Bulls also bought along the Challenge Cup with which visitors could pose for photographs.

A giant raffle was one of the highlights of the day. A Bradford Bulls shirt raised £160, a signed Leeds Utd shirt £360, a signed Leeds Utd soc-

cer ball raised £195, a Bradford City shirt made £130 and a pair of tickets to see Brighouse rock band Embrace raised £300. Henry Paul's signed shirt raised £160. In total, the raffle made just short of £2,300.

Following on from the success of the event, Mr Gardner was hopeful a similar fundraiser could be staged next year. "Quite a few people asked me if we'll do it again.

"I've been at the club for 20 years and it was my way of saying 'thankyou' for the time I have spent with them. It was a great day."

He thanked all those who supported the event, including Bentley's Restaurant at Shelf, who supplied the food.



Playing it for laughs, from left, joint organiser Mark Oldman, rugby stars Jon Hamer and John Bentley, and TV favourite Stuart 'Biff' Wade