

All-rounder Irani to boost trophy chase

By DOUGLAS THOMSON

SKELMANTHORPE Cricket Club are hoping that the arrival of Lancashire all-rounder Ronnie Irani will help bring the silverware back to Lidgett Lane.

Teenage Australian spinner Darren Bull is another new recruit to a side which will be skippered by Graham Higgins following Graeme Hurlbatt's decision to relinquish the captaincy because of work commitments.

Shahid Mahboob, the club's professional for the last three seasons, has not been re-engaged, while experienced campaigner Mick Saville has announced his retirement, although club officials are still trying to persuade him to continue his career.

Leigh-born Irani, 20, is a right-hand batsman and medium pace bowler who has played second team cricket for Lancashire since 1988 and made his first team debut against the Zimbabweans at Old Trafford in 1990.

A six footer who has played

for the North of England at basketball, Irani will be among the Lancashire party which flies out to South Africa for a pre-season tour later this month.

Irani is likely to bat in the middle order, and along with 18-year-old left armer Bull, will join forces with Hurlbatt, Higgins and Ian Glover in what should be a well-balanced attack.

Meanwhile Higgins, who captained the Drakes Huddersfield Cricket League's representative side last term, is the obvious successor to Hurlbatt, who skippered Skelmanthorpe to the league and Hills Supplies Sykes Cup double in 1990.

"Graeme has just had promotion at work, and will be travelling more than ever before. He's not sure if he'll be able to get to practice regularly, and being the type of player he is, didn't want to continue as captain if he was unable to give 100% to the job," explained club chairman Richard Greaves.

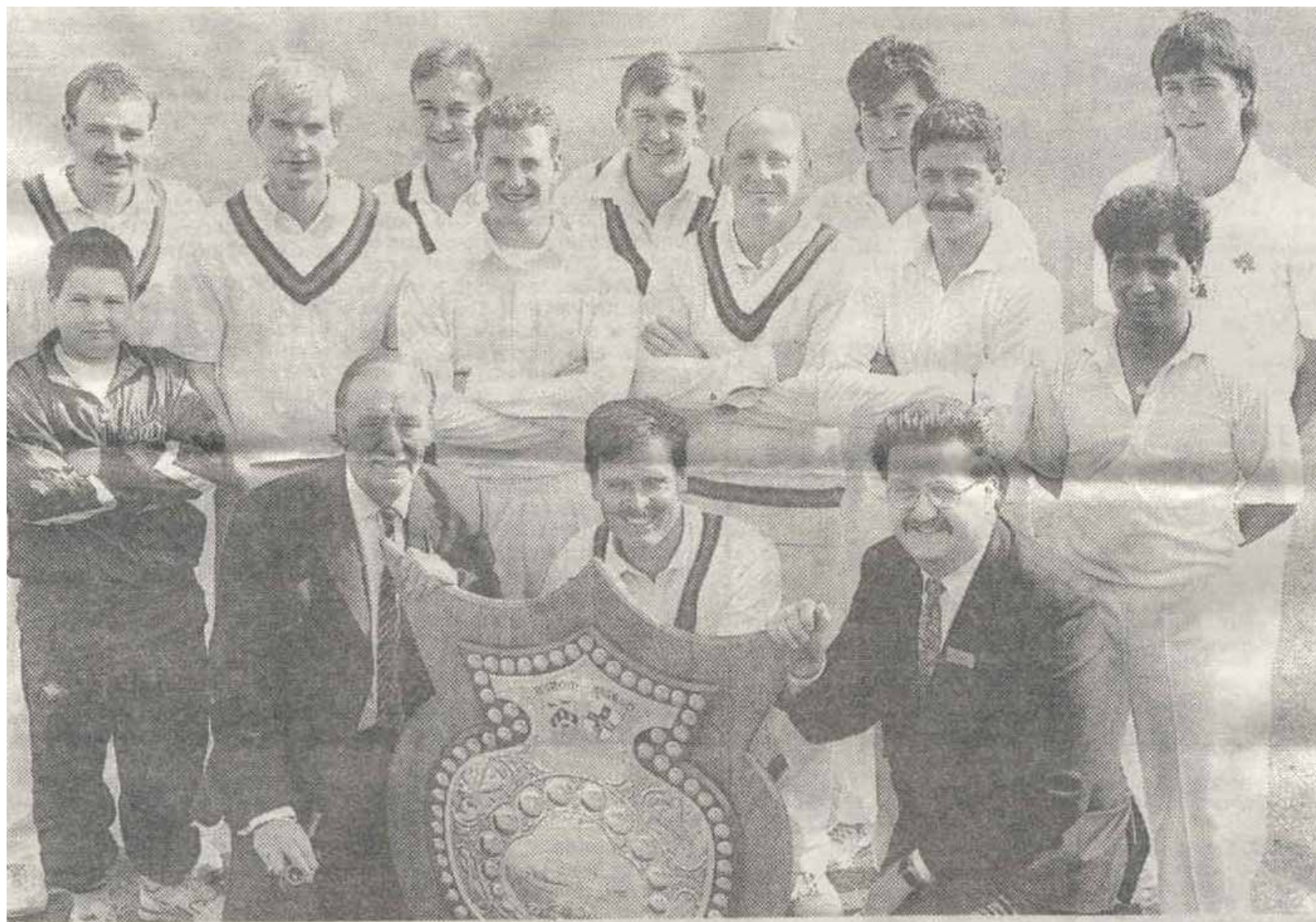
Former Honley man Higgins will be looking to repeat his batting form of last year, when he made 1,103 runs at 44.10, while opening pair Darren Hinchliffe (754 at 26.00 and Michael Bridge



Graham Higgins — new Skelmanthorpe skipper

(712 at 25.40) will both be seeking an improvement.

Richard Crosland, Steve Gummerson, Phil Redgwick and wicketkeeper Jason Tyas will also figure in the first team again.



Trophy time — champions Skelmanthorpe were presented with the Byrom Shield before completing their fixtures with a five-point defeat of Kirkburton. Pictured with skipper Graham Higgins (centre) and his teammates are Drakes Huddersfield League president Bob Platt (left) and Paul Chandler of championship sponsors the Pennine Hilton National Hotel



M Bridge D Bull) Heyworth G Harlbatt R Iran I
 T Mahmood) Tyas G ^{capt} Higgins Scorer D Crompton
 U Hinshelwood B Crossland J Glover

Skelmanthorpe suffered disappointment when they made their first appearance in a Paddock Shield final on Sunday. Andrew Clarkson and teenager Bevis Moynan claimed three wickets apiece, but opponents Scholes still reached 195, 76 too many for the Lidgett Laners. Pictured before the match are — Back row (from left): Bevis Moynan, Jonathan Hepworth, Brendan Aspinall, Phil Redgwick, Andrew Clarkson, Andrew Radley, Richard Saville. Front row: Patrick Leach, Wayne Greaves, Stewart Greaves, David Greaves, Geoff Crompton

