

ALL-ROUND STAR

Alonzo Drake (1884-1919) by Peter Redding

Teams: Honley, Yorkshire, MCC

Few careers have been as short and as sweet as that of ex-Honley star Alonzo Drake. He had to wait until the age of 25 to make his First Class debut for Yorkshire and a combination of the First World War and ill health restricted him to just six seasons at the White Rose County but it didn't stop him from writing his name prominently into the echelons of Yorkshire's proud cricketing history.



Drake's cricketing career began with Honley at Far End Lane in 1906 and it is a testament to the impact he made that he is still the most talked about player at the club 101 years on. The 1907 season was arguably his best as he picked up the Huddersfield League Batting Prize with an impressive average of 53, however his bowling is arguably what he is best remembered for. Over the course of his career he gained a reputation for being one of the most lethal bowlers around on uncovered pitches.

Establishing himself in the notoriously strong Yorkshire side proved to be taxing despite making decisive contributions in his early games. He made a half-century on his First Class debut against Derbyshire and picked up 6 for

34 including a hat trick in his second game against Middlesex. The 1909 season proved to be a frustrating one though as he made only five more appearances that summer.

It wasn't until the 1911 season that he began to cement his place in the side averaging 35 with the bat and picking up 79 wickets at 22.4 with the ball, in the process forming a deadly all-round alliance with fellow Huddersfield raised star Wilfred Rhodes. During the 1911 season he also made his maiden First Class century against Derbyshire at Chesterfield, scoring 147 not out, which remained his career best score. The highlight with the ball was 6 for 57 in the Roses win over Lancashire at Old Trafford.

Drake's bowling was even better in the seasons that followed. He picked up 86 wickets in the 1912 season as Yorkshire won the County Championship. The 1913 and 1914 seasons, which proved to be his last, provided some of the most memorable performances in the County's history. He picked up 7 for 7 in the match against Somerset and 4 wickets in 4 balls against Derbyshire. The most famous performance of all came in his penultimate First Class game against Somerset as he picked up all 10 wickets for 35 runs in the second innings and finished with 15 wickets in the match.

Throughout his career Drake remained loyal to Honley, the club where he first learned to play the game, turning out whenever his First Class commitments allowed him to. Sadly 1914 proved to be his final season in First Class cricket as the First World War resulted in no First Class cricket being played until 1919, the same year that he died aged just 34.

| 1909-1914 | Batting and fielding averages | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|------|----|------|------|-------|-----|----|----|----|
| | Mat | Inns | NO | Runs | HS | Ave | 100 | 50 | Ct | St |
| First-class | 157 | 246 | 24 | 4816 | 147* | 21.69 | 3 | 20 | 93 | 0 |

| Bowling averages | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|-------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|----|----|
| | Mat | Balls | Runs | Wkts | BBI | Ave | Econ | SR | 5w | 10 |
| First-class | 157 | 21278 | 8656 | 480 | 10/35 | 18.03 | 2.44 | 44.3 | 29 | 1 |

Source: www.cricinfo.com