

“IF IT WAS HIS DAY, SO MUCH THE BETTER”

Arnold Hamer (1916-1993) by Peter Redding

Teams: Primrose Hill CC, Derbyshire CCC and Yorkshire CCC

If ever there is a cricketing example of persistence paying off it is that of Arnold Hamer. Having first played second-eleven cricket for Yorkshire in 1937 and made only two First-Class appearances in three seasons either side of the Second World War, Hamer had to wait until 1950 to earn a regular taste of First-Class cricket, when at the age of 33 he made the switch to Derbyshire.

He more than made up for lost time passing 1,000 runs in 10 consecutive seasons opening the batting. Hamer was a fearless batsman, Guy Willat, one of his captains at Derbyshire, said “Arnold was totally fatalistic. He always played the same way and if it was his day, so much the better”. It was an approach that earned him cult hero status at the County Ground.



Hamer’s cricketing journey began at Primrose Hill, where he was one of three brothers to come through the ranks of the junior team before going on to play for the seniors. He was a member of the 1934 Hinchcliffe Cup winning team alongside his brother Frank. His sporting prowess was not just limited to the cricket field either as he chalked 8 appearances as a full-back for York City FC in 1938.

Hamer’s First-Class batting career rather mirrored the form of the Derbyshire team as a whole throughout the 1950s in that he was always quite consistent but never quite reached the peak of the game i.e. England recognition or

County Championship honours. The highlight of his career came in the 1955 Championship match against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge where he made a career best 227 out of a total of just 354, it was all the more impressive given that only two other players reached double figures in the innings.

In addition to his batting he was also a useful off spinner, claiming 71 First-Class wickets with a career best of 4 for 27 against Leicestershire at Chesterfield in 1950. He was also a dependable slip fielder, with 164 catches to his credit.

Hamer continued to steadily accumulate runs throughout the 1950s and scored his final First-Class century against Sussex in August 1959, in the process passing the considerable landmark of 15,000 First-Class runs. The following season, 1960, would prove to be his last as he struggled to 267 runs at an average of just 19 with one half-century.

While Hamer never really threatened to break into the England Test side, his value to Derbyshire at the top of the order was considerable and it wasn't really until the arrival of Kim Barnett in the late 1970s that they really replaced him.

Batting and fielding averages 1938-60

	Mat	Inns	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	Ct	St
First-class	295	515	19	15465	227	31.17	19	79	164	0

Bowling averages 1938-60

	Mat	Balls	Runs	Wkts	BBI	Ave	Econ	SR	5w	10
First-class	295	5365	2363	71	4/27	33.28	2.64	75.5	0	0

Source: www.cricinfo.com