

Linthwaite Hall CC

Huddersfield & District League side between 1907 and 1916

Sep 1985 Cutting:

When Linthwaite Hall were top of the league

SOME critics argue it's high time for a change in the Huddersfield Cricket League, while others wonder why they want to spoil a good thing.

By the end of next season, the two-section scheme will have been operating for 55 years and it's certainly proved the most popular format in the league's history.

Whether the league expands into three sections of 10 remains to be seen, but if it does go through, it will certainly not be the first time the structure has been altered.

The league was formed in March, 1891, and the original 10 clubs—Armitage Bridge, Cliffe End, Huddersfield United, Golcar, Lascelles Hall, Linthwaite, Lockwood, Meltham Mills, Slaithwaite and Holmfirth—were former members of the Huddersfield and District Cricket Association.

The first championship programme was played the following year and the title was shared between Armi-

As the Huddersfield Cricket League consider expansion plans, **ROBERT GLEDHILL** looks at how things have changed over the years

tage Bridge and Slaithwaite.

Primrose Hill and Kirkheaton joined in 1893, Meltham came in as Cliffe End dropped out for good in 1894 and Friarmere and Honley joined in 1895 when Huddersfield United dropped out for good and Linthwaite went out for four seasons.

Marsden (1896), Dalton ('97), Paddock ('98), Huddersfield (1901), Linthwaite Hall ('07), St Andrew's ('08), Thurstonland ('10) and Kirkburton ('11) followed as the league's strength varied between 12 and 14 clubs up to 1920.

That's according to a full set of league tables supplied to Golcar batsman David Thorpe by Tom Webb, of Oldham, who died recently and who is best remembered as a Rugby League statistician.

They vary in some re-

spects with a history of the league, published in the diamond jubilee book in 1951, and also suggest there were championships in 1915 and 1916, although league handbooks do not name the winners. For the record, Linthwaite Hall—yes, that renowned stronghold of crown green bowling—finished top in 1915 but Lockwood won the top-four play-off to take the title. Slaithwaite were top in 1916 but they were beaten by Huddersfield in the top-four play-off final.

The league increased by eight clubs to 20 in 1920. Broak Oak, Almondbury and Bradley Mills were the newcomers, Armitage Bridge rejoined after 13 seasons' absence, Primrose Hill returning after 11, Meltham and Friarmere coming back after dropping out in 1899 and Honley returning after a four-year gap.

The league was then split into four groups of five and two points were awarded for a win and one for a draw or a tie.

Marsden came back after a six-year break in 1922 and replaced Primrose Hill, who returned in the following year along with newcomers Rastrick. The league was then split into three groups—one of eight and two of seven—and these were arranged geographically.

Elland and Thongsbridge joined in 1926 and three groups of eight were formed. In 1930, the league was split into four groups of six and two evening league matches were played.

DISCIPLINE appeared a lot stricter in the early days of the Huddersfield League.

In the second season, Meltham Mills had one point deducted for being late on the field, and, according to a brief note with the tables, had another deducted in 1894 for "refusing the umpires' instruction to take the field."

Honley fielded an ineligible player in 1895 and lost two points, while Golcar had one point deducted for disobeying an umpire, as did Dalton in 1902!

Thurstonland suffered most, losing six points in 1912 for fielding ineligible players, and Paddock had one point deducted for a "broken engagement" in 1917.

In a season where there have been a number of instances of dissent shown to umpires, perhaps league officials should consider re-introducing a points penalty in order to persuade captains to take a much firmer grip on the behaviour of their players.

Finally, the league was split into two sections of 12 in 1932 and has remained that way ever since—Shepley replacing Friarmere in 1933 and Hall Bower taking over from Meltham Mills in 1940.

Of those 10 original clubs, only four have competed in every season—Golcar, Holmfirth, Lockwood and Slaithwaite—while Lascelles Hall missed just the 1916 season.