

# HEAVY WOOLLEN CRICKET CLUB DEADLOCK.

## OSSETT AWARDED SEMI-FINAL.

### Were Birstall Given A Fair Hearing?

Ossett will meet Chockenley at Heckmondwike this week end in the Heavy Woollen Cup competition final.

This was decided by the Cup Committee on Monday, when, after hearing Birstall's claim to the semi-final with Ossett, on the grounds of the non-appearance of the latter to continue the game at Birstall cricket field on Friday, Birstall were ordered to complete the match this week.

With four of their regular players not available the Birstall Committee declined to play this week and the Cup Committee awarded the match to Ossett.

When play was completed last Thursday, after a full day on the previous Saturday and two hours each on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, Birstall were 221 all out and Ossett had scored 100 for three wickets.

Ossett would not have been at full strength on Friday, and alleged that agreement had been reached with Joe Blakeley, the Birstall captain, that if the game were not complete on Thursday play should be continued on Monday. Blakeley, knowing that his side would be handicapped by absences this week, denies that any agreement was reached.

On Friday, Ossett did not appear and Birstall walked to the pitch with the umpires. A few deliveries were bowled at the stumps.

Birstall, in a letter to the Cup Committee, claimed the match on the grounds of Ossett's non-appearance on Friday, and the President, Mr. J. H. Margetts, on their behalf, argued that they had not had a fair deal. Birstall had given way to Ossett last week by allowing Ossett to play two Council matches on Monday and Tuesday, and, in all fairness, Ossett, he said, should have continued the match on Friday. The wicket, too, would not be in the same condition as when the game ended on Thursday night.

The Committee decided that the game should be continued this week.

As an "eleventh hour" attempt to settle the dispute, Messrs. R. Clegg (Chairman of the meeting), S. Ellison (secretary), G. Blackburn (treasurer), H. Brooke (Hartshead Moor), R. A. Lord (Cleckhutton), C. Spivey (Hanging Heaton) and G. A. Goodall (Healey) formed a deputation after the meeting to visit Birstall Club sitting in committee at Birstall.

The deadlock was once again frankly and fully discussed. Birstall Committee, however, informed the deputation they would be unable to play this week.

Birstall supporters are keenly disappointed by the Committee's decision and their views are largely reflected in the statements made by Mr. Margetts, in an interview with a "News" reporter.

He sums up the position as follows: "Birstall are very disappointed with the attitude of the Cup Committee, who, they consider, have sullied their own Cup and have taken away from this season's winners any honour that may have attached to the final victory."

Messrs. J. H. Margetts and R. Stone (Birstall representatives) were then invited into the room, and the Chairman, addressing them, said:

"This Committee has decided that the match be continued this week, and you have the choice of two nights—Tuesday or Wednesday."

Mr. Margetts: It can't be played this week. My instructions from my committee are that on no account can we play this week.

The Chairman: For what reason?

UNFAIR AND UNJUST.

Mr. Margetts: It is unfair and unjust. The men can't possibly get there. The first reason to me is much more important. You can't possibly expect us to finish the match under these conditions—not if you are fair cricketers. The wicket would not be the same. Have you ever heard of a match being finished under such conditions? The wicket can't be the same after a rest. This is an exceptional case and that is why we are here. Why didn't Ossett turn up on the Friday? That is what you are here to inquire about.

The Chairman: The captains disagreed. Mr. Margetts: You must consider the circumstances and give each side a hearing.

The Chairman: We have done. Mr. Greenhough has been here all the time. Mr. Margetts said he could not find a rule that covered the case.

Mr. Blackburn: Yes, there is. Mr. Margetts: We wanted Monday and Tuesday for Ossett's benefit.

Mr. Stone: Surely Ossett could have come on Friday had they wanted.

"PLAY THE MATCH OVER AGAIN."

Mr. Margetts: We don't want to go into the final without playing for it. The only fair way is to play the match over again.

The Chairman: You have written and asked for the match to be awarded to you.

Mr. Margetts: Purely official; we could not do otherwise.

Mr. Blackburn: I am concluding a rule. When there is a disagreement between the captains the matter must be settled by this Committee.

Mr. Margetts: You can't conclude a rule.

Mr. Stone: Mr. Smith has been present all the time.

Mr. Blackburn: He is entitled to be present.

Mr. Margetts: We want a fair deal. We don't want to fall out.

The Chairman: We want the match to be played out.

"ORDER A REPLAY."

Mr. Margetts: The match cannot be played out this week. Give the match to

"UNFAIR AND UNJUST."

Birstall President's Views.

### WHY NOT A RE-PLAY ON NEUTRAL GROUND?

Exclusive to the "News."

Asked by a News representative what he thought of the situation, Mr. J. H. (Jim) Margetts, President of the Birstall Club, replied:

"My objection to the whole procedure was that Birstall had not the same opportunity to state their case as Ossett. I was invited to attend the meeting, along with our assistant secretary, Mr. Robert Stone, and we were never given an opportunity of stating our views until the decision was taken. When I was called into the Cup Committee meeting I was told I had to answer one question only. I was told 'The Committee has decided this match shall be finished and we want to know what evening you wish to play'."

"I think we have a right to complain that while the President of the Cup Committee, an Ossett man, was allowed to stay in the room during the meeting, I, as President of the Birstall Club, was not given that privilege. Since he was in the meeting it would certainly have been only sportsmanlike and at least, more courteous if I had been given an opportunity to be present at the same time.

### Wanted a Replay.

"Let me state quite definitely that Birstall did not go to the meeting with the idea of getting the match given. We claimed the match simply to put ourselves in order in bringing the matter before the Committee to decide who was in the right. We asked really for a replay.

"I think the Committee should have taken more evidence. The captains and umpires were there, but were not called in. The umpires were never given an opportunity to state their version. They left without having been interviewed at all.

### What Birstall Captain Did Say.

"I went to the meeting fully prepared to refute the allegation that we had agreed to continue the game on Monday if it were not completed by Thursday. I interviewed our captain, Joe Blakeley, twice, to make sure of his position. He denies absolutely that there was any agreement to play on Monday. He admits saying to the Ossett captain, when the matter was mentioned, 'We have not fallen out up to now.' Which is quite non-committal. Having discussed Ossett's proposal to continue on Monday with his own players, Joe said he informed the visitors it was absolutely impossible to do that. It is simply a case of Ossett's word against Joe Blakeley's."

