

A HISTORY OF CURRENT BRADFORD LEAGUE CLUBS

by PETER PICKUP

No. 6 CLECKHEATON

Not always do statistics produce a complete picture. Yet I feel that in two instances at least I can illustrate that sometimes they do give a true record.

Cleckheaton Cricket Club for example have only been in the league for 11 seasons, yet their record is as average as you can get. Twice promoted, twice relegated and one appearance in the Priestley Cup Semi-Final, to show for those 11 seasons. Yet there was nothing average about Rahul Mankad, a batsman of quite outstanding quality and who produced a record of statistics and sportsmanship second to none. Yes, that's right, SECOND TO NONE, for Mankad has scored (in season 1978) more league runs than any other batsman in the league's 83-year history. His 1,251 runs in 26 innings broke the previous record by 145 runs, Arnold Hamer, having made 1,106 for Pudsey St Lawrence in 1949.

In their first league season Cleckheaton had to apply for re-election, duly given, and for their second Rahul Mankad had joined to assist in the club's finest years.

Father, Mulvantrai (Vino) Mankad played in 44 Tests from 1946-1958, and held a record first wicket partnership for India of 413 with P. Roy. Vino scored 231 of them, and holds a record of being off the field for only one hour in a five-day test. At all other times he was batting, bowling or fielding and bowled 60 overs in a day. That surely can't be beaten under present Test circumstances. So, it was son Rahul who came to Cleckheaton and in the best Mankad tradition started breaking records, yet making a name for himself as a truly great sportsman. Mankad is the only player I have known 'to walk' in the Bradford League for LBW.

Helping Cleckheaton improve four places higher in 1977 Mankad helped them up a further three rungs in 1978 — his record-breaking season. The league has never seen such a consistent batsman. Records can be made with large scores punctuated by failures, but here we have consistency almost beyond belief. His lowest score was 6, and only Yorkshire Bank and Saltaire escaped at least one thrashing from him.

Here are the aggregate scores against each club in that remarkable achievement against Saltaire a total of 25 runs, Queensbury 61, Salts 196, Eccleshill 160, Spen Victoria 148, Lightcliffe 127, Windhill 54, Great Horton 48, Lidget Green 79, Hartshead Moor 84, Brighouse 54, Yeadon 206 (108 and 98 not out), Yorkshire Bank 17. That means that only Yorkshire Bank (6 and 11) can say they twice had him out cheaply. Seven times he was not out, usually leading his side to victory. His aggregate would have been higher if Cleckheaton's bowlers had been a little less successful, when in the field first.

League Honours

In 1979 came the club's first league honour with promotion, though not as champions. Only one point was the margin Spen Victoria had, but Cleckheaton had joined the elite. Their highest position to date was reached in that inaugural Division 1 season with 8th place, Mankad was 3rd in the Divisional averages with 756 runs at 47.25 each.

Cleckheaton also decided it was time to honour Mankad's record breaking performance with a benefit against an International XI, and such was this man's popularity that stars like Sandeep Patil, Nayak, Parsana, Shastri and Zarakar gave support. Down to earth with a bump came the side in 1981, relegated with only four wins. Then, after a season of re-building, 1983 saw Cleckheaton

write their name on a championship trophy by winning Division 2. Again they went up with Spen Victoria, but this time Cleckheaton had the upper hand by 6 pts. Bowlers Andy Baxter (57 wickets at 11.12) and Ian Long (33 wickets at 12.00) had a lot to say with that win, and wicketkeeper Ian Gatenby took 27 catches and had 4 stumpings, while having a 26.19 batting average to prove he was the league's best wicketkeeper-batsman. Cleckheaton had been noted for having good wicketkeepers since joining the league, and one feat of exceptional merit was that of five stumpings in an innings by Dave Hallett in 1980 against East Bierley.

In 1984 Cleckheaton had their second relegation season with only six wins in 26 matches. Their 2nd XI won even less (4) and so it was back to Division 2. However, despite all the disappointments of 1984 the club pulled its weight and have been hard to beat since then, without actually threatening to go back up.



Their Priestley Cup record will no doubt be improved upon. First match after joining was against Salts and Cleckheaton won by 4 runs, they entered the quarter-finals, too, by then beating Great Horton by 22 runs. In 1977 they beat Yeadon easily by nine wickets in Round 1 and probably wished they hadn't. Round 2 saw them play Idle where Tony Moore with 183 not out, and Malcolm Mawson with 98 made a record 273 partnership for the first wicket in the cup, and Cleckheaton were beaten by 219 runs. Often getting through the first hurdle, that was usually the end until 1981 when the club reached the semi-final. There was some close cricket en route. A six-wicket win over Baildon, being followed by a four-run win over Great Horton, and a 12-run margin against Yorkshire Bank.

In the semi-final there were thoughts that a final appearance was 'on' for a long time, but East Bierley, doughty cup fighters they have always been, got home by four wickets, and went on to win the final.

First centurion for the club in the Bradford League was Keith Stanley with 121 not out against Queensbury in 1980 for their first cup century, while in 1978 Ian Lang gained their first hat-trick v Hartshead Moor. Highest total by the club so far

is 266-6 declared v Brighouse in 1979.

The first bowler to take eight wickets in an innings was Alan Horner with 8-35 against Yeadon in the cup-tie of 1977. He also took 7-25 against the same opposition in the league, too.

CLECKHEATON'S COMPLETE BRADFORD LEAGUE RECORD (14 clubs in each division)

1976	Pt 26	W 6	L 13	T 0	D 7	Pts 39	Position 13th
1977	Pt 26	W 9	L 8	T 0	D 9	Pts 56	Position 9th
1978	Pt 26	W 9	L 9	T 0	D 8	Pts 61	Position 8th
1979	Pt 26	W 12	L 4	T 1	D 9	Pts 75	Position 2nd (Prom.)
1980	Pt 24*	W 6	L 7	T 0	D 11	Pts 59	Position 8th
1981	Pt 26	W 4	L 9	T 1	D 12	Pts 44	Position 13th (rel.)
1982	Pt 26	W 7	L 8	T 0	D 11	Pts 65	Position 9th
1983	Pt 26	W 12	L 3	T 0	D 11	Pts 89	Position 1st (Prom.)
1984	Pt 26	W 6	L 12	T 0	D 8	Pts 44	Position 12th (Rel.)
1985	Pt 26	W 8	L 8	T 1	D 9	Pts 66	Position 8th
1986	Pt 26	W 8	L 7	T 1	D 10	Pts 64	Position 7th

TOTAL Pt 284 W 87 L 88 T 4 D 105 Pts 662

* In 1980, due to reconstruction of the league's 2nd Divisions, the 1st Division was a club short.

As can be seen very clearly, the Cleckheaton record is about as average as one can get overall. It should be pointed out, however, that although 105 drawn matches may seem high that figure does include matches rained off after commencement, plus games not started at all.

Low totals are not usually associated with Cleckheaton, though earlier this summer after dismissing Great Horton for 130, they were badly shocked to be whipped out for 65. Alan Stansfield had taken 5-15 in 13 overs when Horton batted, and he made top score of 18 when Cleckheaton batted, but it was all to no avail.

Postponed Fixture

The first fixture of the 1986 season was a washout, and much to many people's surprise the league management committee decreed along with club representatives that the fixtures should be added on to the end of the season and played then. There are many reasons I feel for not doing this, the comment most often made is why should the first Saturday be any different from any other washed out Saturday, while another is that players supposedly knowing when the season finishes, book their holidays to commence on that day or that day after. In this respect Cleckheaton benefitted during 1986 for their fixture with Windhill which would have brought a point each, was played on Sunday, September 14th and Cleckheaton went to Busy Lane, dismissed the home side for 130 and then led by Firth (63) and Pickles (42) romped home by eight wickets for a six point win. This in no way affected the position of either club, though one division higher it had dire consequences.

Current bowling star Alan Stansfield is one of very few players to take more than one hat-trick in a season. In 1982 he secured the feat at Hartshead Moor and four weeks later at Bankfoot again took 3 in 3. It was almost three hat-tricks when he turned a match with Saltaire in that same year completely round with a 5 wickets in 3 overs spell which included a 3 wickets in 4 balls.

Of all their performances and results in their first 11 seasons and 284 matches their is probably a different pinnacle thought of by each player. Can I suggest that one performance which may meet with almost complete approval would be a day in 1980 when Cleckheaton had to go to Idle for a league match. Having been once while in Division 2 in the cup, Idle as you read earlier had a massive victory, and when Cleckheaton went back for their first league match there in Division 1 it was with a record of nine matches played, NO WINS, 5 draws and 4 losses. Idle were top by a good margin, and WERE UNBEATEN. Well you can guess the rest, Idle 158 and in reply Cleckheaton 159 for 5 (Mankad 79 not out). A truly great result for them, and to make the day complete Anthony Throup took their top 2nd team bowling record with 8-13 in the reverse fixture. In a short time they've had some great moments, with many more on the horizon, I'm certain.

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