

What Happened on D-Day?

Golcar's Huddersfield League success of 1944 is one of the most bizarre of all time. During the second half of the season they accumulated fewer points than any other team in the league and yet still emerged as champions.

For the first half of the season the Lilies were invincible. On 3 June, the Saturday before the D-Day landings, they were nine points clear at the top of the league with eight wins, most of them utterly comprehensive, and one abandonment from nine matches. Paddock had been demolished in the first round of the Sykes Cup and the double seemed inevitable.

Incredibly, on the Saturday following D-Day, Golcar began a run of five consecutive defeats. One of these was a thrashing by Kirkburton, who were fourth from bottom of Section B, in the second round of the Sykes Cup, one of the biggest upsets in the competition's history.

Golcar's lead was steadily eroded. Three matches from the end of the season they were still equal top with Broad Oak but only four points separated these two from Meltham in eighth place. This marginal advantage took on greater significance when rain decimated the following Saturday's fixtures. A narrow victory at Rastrick on the penultimate weekend returned Golcar to the top and, with another washout on the final Saturday, that is where they stayed.

Six points from the last nine matches, and two of these from complete abandonments, represents a spectacular reversal of form, so why did it happen?

Perhaps the team became depleted by holidays or calls-up to the forces. 1944 was, after all, the year when Britain committed most men to the war. Yet this does not appear to be the case. A solid core of players represented Golcar all season, with barely more variations than would be expected in peacetime. The nucleus of the squad was: J Carstairs, B Gibson, C Turner, C Walker (pro), W Iredale, JW Keegan, R Booth, G Priestley, J Waddington and HA Walker. These ten were supplemented by fringe players R Shaw, E Rogers, N Hall, KA Lockwood, J Woodhead and E Waddington.

Perhaps the fixture list was imbalanced and all the more difficult games were in the second half of the season? This argument also holds no water. In the first half of the season Golcar beat stronger teams such as Holmfirth, Broad Oak and Lascelles Hall quite comfortably whilst in the second half they were equally comfortably beaten by weaker teams such as Huddersfield, Hall Bower and Linthwaite.

The biggest clue, it seems lies in the scores. The early part of the season was very wet and professional Clifford Walker, supported by opening partner Waddington, was devastating with the ball. He was much less effective in the drier conditions of June, July and early August. Golcar lost on four of the seven occasions they topped 100. Of the nine matches won, they topped 100 only twice. Basically, Golcar won the matches when conditions favoured the bowlers and lost the matches when conditions were more in favour of batting.

It wasn't the war which caused Golcar's bizarre imbalance of results; it was the good old British weather!

1944

League Matches

Date	Opponents	Venue	Total For	Total Against	Result
April					
Sat 15	HALL BOWER	HOME	40(2)	38	W
Sat 22	Lascelles Hall	away	45(2)	41	W
Sat 29	HOLMFIRTH	HOME	98(6)	96	W
May					
Sat 6	Broad Oak	away	52(6)	51	W
Sat 13	HUDDERSFIELD	HOME	97(4)	96	W
Sat 20	Honley	away	34(1)	32	W
Sat 27	RASTRICK	HOME	129	119	W
Mon 29	Paddock	away	Aban	206(8)	D
Tues 30	PADDOCK	HOME	82(5)	81	W
June					
Sat 10	Linthwaite	away	113	198(6)dec	L
Sat 24	Hall Bower	away	143	197(9)dec	L
July					
Sat 8	LASCELLES HALL	HOME	98	136	L
Sat 22	Holmfirth	away	156	157(8)dec	L
Sat 29	BROAD OAK	HOME	148(6)	8(3)	D
August					
Sat 12	Huddersfield	away	83	85(4)	L
Sat 19	HONLEY	HOME	Abandoned		D
Sat 26	Rastrick	away	112(8)	111	W
September					
Sat 2	LINTHWAITE	HOME	Abandoned		D

Sykes Cup

June					
Sat 3	PADDOCK	HOME	49(3)	48	W
Sat 17	Kirkburton	away	117	211(5)	L

Final Table 1944

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
Golcar	18	9	4	5	31
Holmfirth	18	8	5	5	29
Broad Oak	18	8	4	6	28
Elland	18	8	4	6	28
Lascelles Hall	18	8	4	6	28
Meltham	18	8	3	7	27
Rastrick	18	8	3	7	27
Paddock	18	7	4	7	25
Linthwaite	18	6	4	8	22
Hall Bower	18	6	3	9	21
Honley	18	5	3	10	18
Huddersfield	18	5	3	10	18

N.B. Every team played nine of the other eleven teams twice and did not play the remaining two at all. Golcar did not play Elland and Meltham.

Points Totals Match-by-Match

Match Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Golcar	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	22	25	25	25	25	25	26	26	27	30	31
Holmfirth	0	3	3	6	7	8	11	12	15	18	18	18	21	24	24	25	28	29
Broad Oak	3	6	9	9	9	12	15	16	16	19	19	22	25	26	26	27	27	28
Elland	0	3	6	9	10	10	10	11	14	14	14	17	20	20	23	24	27	28
Lascelles H	0	0	0	3	6	7	7	8	8	11	11	14	17	20	23	24	27	28
Meltham	3	6	9	9	12	12	12	13	16	16	19	22	22	22	22	23	26	27
Rastrick	0	0	3	3	3	6	6	7	10	13	16	19	19	22	25	26	26	27
Paddock	3	3	3	6	9	9	9	10	10	13	16	16	19	20	23	24	24	25
Linthwaite	3	3	3	3	6	6	9	10	10	13	16	16	16	17	20	21	21	22
Hall Bower	0	3	3	3	3	6	9	10	13	13	16	19	19	19	19	20	20	21
Honley	3	3	3	6	6	6	9	10	10	10	13	13	13	16	16	17	17	18
Huddersfield	0	0	3	3	3	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	10	10	13	14	17	18

N.B. Figures in bold represent league leaders