

Nail-biter!

Shepley v Honley, 15 September 1984

By Dave Wooding

An impressive 'against the odds' season culminates in nervy title decider

The 1984 season saw Shepley, tipped for relegation in the Examiner's season preview, battle against the odds to put together a challenge for the title. The Marsh Laners relied on a mixture of determination, luck, and good captaincy to see them set themselves up for a nail-biting climax to the 1984 season.



The winning side

Reflecting on the 1984 season, Shepley's captain at the time, Geoff Gill states: "We must have had about seven matches that, in the end, could have gone either way, but the fact that we managed to win them all says a lot about the sort of team we had at the time."

Indeed, the tactical acumen of Gill may well have been behind the surprising success of 1984. Geoff regularly won the all-important toss, which allowed the side to put their gameplan into operation. In his own words, many of the decisions he made about bowling and batting "regularly seemed to pay off."

Eventually it came to one match, the final game of the 1984 season, when the league champions would be decided. Shepley went into the match requiring just one point to see off the challenge of Kirkburton, meaning that if they avoided being bowled out

they were guaranteed to bring the Byrom Shield back to Marsh Lane. However, in their way were a tricky Honley side, meaning the title was by no means sealed.

Having being put into bat, the Marsh Lane outfit set about getting a big total. However, a strong Honley bowling attack along with a deteriorating wicket began to put Shepley on the back foot and the dream of a second title win in three years started to fade.

Gill fell for just 5 and Walker 2, with the score at one stage 19-4! What followed was one of the tensest innings in Shepley history. What initially seemed like an easy task of getting just a point from the match started to look more and more like a pipe dream, as lasting for 50 overs without being bowled out became a big ask for the struggling batsmen. Indeed, having to watch the rest of the innings from the pavilion was not easy viewing, as skipper Gill recalls: "That innings must have been the longest 50 overs of my life."

For those at the crease it could not have gone much quicker. Keeper Dale Skelly, batting at no.4, lasted 72 minutes before falling leg before. However, in over an hour of batting, he managed to muster just 7 runs. Top scorer and opening batter Lindley took 26 overs to accumulate his 34 runs.

Top Marks again for Kirkburton in final fling but . . .

It's Shepley's title after crawl to a point

SAFETY FIRST Shepley claimed their second Section "A" title in three years on Saturday. Needing just one point to be assured of the Byrom Shield, their normally attack-minded batsmen dug in after being

Trophy, played for over the last six matches, with a 0.22 superior scoring average to

Huddersfield Cricket League round-up by ROBERT GILFILLI

Dalton, who were all out for 101 as left-arm seamer Kelvin Gillespie took six for 39 from 15.4 overs and Bob Davies and Roy Brook held some fine slip catches for the home side, who finished third for the third successive season. Opener Kevin Whitehead

He took a catch behind and made 18 but, although they chased all the way, Hud-

Eventually the tension proved too much for a normally cool Gill, who admits: "I couldn't take the anxiety. It was so nervy to watch in the end that I left the ground and went for a walk around the village."

When Stevie Carter, in at no.6, was caught without troubling the scorers, things really looked gloomy for Shepley. However, David Barber and Adrian Guy managed to survive the final overs, and Shepley ended their innings on a total of 72. The lowly total will have meant little to the away team. The key fact was that Honley had only managed to take six Shepley wickets, meaning that regardless of how well (or indeed badly!) Shepley bowled, they had won the title. As a result of his nerves failing to hold, Gill missed the exciting conclusion to the innings...

Having secured the title in dramatic style, Shepley took to the field for the Honley innings, and made a bright start. Stevie Carter held two catches in the gully in the second over (bowled by Adrian Guy) to give Shepley a sniff of victory. However, Honley eventually secured three points for a winning draw.

The achievements of the Shepley team should not be underestimated; it could easily have been very different had a few key matches not been won. Looking back now, Geoff says: "Achievements like that will probably never come around again."

Scorecard

Shepley

Lindley	c. Green	b. Bocarro	34
Walker	c. Green	b. A Hinchcliffe	2
Gill	c. Bocarro	b. J Hinchcliffe	5
Skelly	lbw	b. Armitage	7
D.Cocking	run out		7
Carter	c. Kenworthy	b. Armitage	0
Barber	not out		13
Guy	not out		1
		Extras	3

Total (for 6 wkts) 72

Bowling:

A.Hinchcliffe 1-20
J.Hinchcliffe 1-16
Bocarro 1-18
Armitage 2-10
Bridge 0-5

Honley

Bridge	c. Glover	b. D Cocking	23
Tinker	c. Carter	b. Guy	3
Green	c. Carter	b. Guy	0
D Hinchcliffe		b. Guy	9
Moorhouse	c. Skelly	b. Carter	9
Denton	not	out	9
Dacarro	not	out	19
		Extras	3

Total (for 5 wkts) 75

Bowling:

Glover 0-26
Guy 3-24
D.Cocking 1-15
Carter 1-7

Huddersfield Cricket League Final Standings (top three)

	P	W	L	3pts	1pt	T	Pts
Shepley	22	9	2	7	4	0	61
Kirkburton	22	11	3	4	4	0	60
Elland	22	8	3	7	4	0	57