

Great Match – Skelmanthorpe v Shepley,
Drakes Huddersfield League, Saturday 17 July 1993
By Dave Wooding

**Defending league champions Skelmanthorpe took on
Shepley at Lidget Lane...**

Every local derby fixture is bound to have an extra cutting edge to it, but one match that really stands out between Shepley and Skelmanthorpe is that which took place during the 1993 season. Skelmanthorpe had gone into this match with the upper hand. This particular match, however, featured one of the most exciting and tense finishes in recent Shepley CC history.

One factor that added even more spice to this encounter was the inclusion of two young cricketers who later went on to bigger and better things. The scorecard that day featured a very familiar name on each side: Darren Gough and Ronnie Irani, playing for Shepley and Skelmanthorpe respectively. Both players went on to represent England.

The major talking point was the way in which the result of this match was decided. Having bowled first, Shepley managed to restrict a strong Skelmanthorpe line-up to 136 all out. The pick of the bowlers was, unsurprisingly Yorkshire's Gough, who claimed 5-40 as Skelmanthorpe failed to cope with his seam and swing. He was well backed up by Aidy Guy, who took 3-47.



Ronnie Irani

In their pursuit of the 137 needed to win, opener Greaves made a valuable 47, but the top order failed to support him, with four of the other five Shepley batsmen out before they could even reach double figures! Keeper Dale Skelly made 21, but he eventually fell victim to Irani, leaving the Shepley tail with it all to do. With eight wickets down, Shepley finally clicked into gear. Yates and Guy began to put together a partnership, and begin to have belief that something could be salvaged from the match.

Soon enough, Shepley were left requiring 7 runs, but with just two wickets left, in order to claim their first victory over league champions Skelmanthorpe for a few years. On strike for the penultimate ball of Irani's 12th, and the innings' 43rd, over was Yates, with Adrian Guy at the other end. Swinging and missing, Yates called for a run. However, as the ball had gone straight through to the keeper, he quickly realised he would be run out and ran his bat back into the crease just as the ball hit the wickets. Guy at the other end was sharp enough

to realise a run could still be taken, and signalled to Yates to set off again. With the wicketkeeper off guard and still appealing, Guy was able to safely make it to the striker's end, meaning he had the task of surviving the last ball of Irani's over, knowing that, despite being only 6 away from the target, a wicket would swing the match back in favour of Skelmanthorpe.

With Guy on strike, Irani prepared what would be the final and potentially decisive ball of the match. Spectators at the time will remember watching as Irani ran into bowl, still calculating what type of ball to bowl, and waiting for Guy's movements to reveal what he was going to do. Guy, however, remained perfectly still, right up until the ball left Irani's hand. It was then that the seemingly impossible happened.

It appeared to be a good delivery. As former Shepley captain Geoff Gill says: "If he (Guy) had missed it, he most probably would have been bowled." However, Irani had been hit for six off the last ball of his over, and Shepley had somehow defied the odds to snatch a crucial victory from the jaws of defeat. There was nothing Irani could do after watching the ball sail over the boundary but walk down the wicket and shake the hand of his opponent, acknowledging the quality of the shot that had ended the match.

This match is certainly one that has stuck in the mind of those who were lucky enough to have witnessed it, and even played in it. In fact, Irani is still known to mention the name Adrian Guy when he hears the name Shepley mentioned by those who played with him at Skelmanthorpe.

Scorecard from Lidget Lane:

Skelmanthorpe Innings:

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| Higgins | c. Mahmood | b. Guy | 36 |
| Crosland | c. Skelly | b. Gough | 32 |
| Irani | c. Lynn | b. Ranchod | 8 |
| Cocking | | b. Gough | 1 |
| Thornton | lbw | b. Guy | 1 |
| Hepworth | | b. Gough | 19 |
| Gummerson | | b. Gough | 3 |
| Hurlbatt | | b. Gough | 11 |
| Handman | c. Gough | b. Guy | 0 |
| Darbyshire | not | out | 13 |
| Tyas | run | out | 2 |
| | | Extras | 10 |
| Total (All out) | | 42.3 Overs | 136 |

Gough 16.3-4-40-5

Yates 4-0-10-0

Guy 14-3-47-3

Potter 1-0-4-0

Ranchod 7-0-28-1

Shepley Innings

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|
| Greaves | lbw | b. Irani | 46 |
| Ranchod | | b. Handman | 7 |
| Mahmood | lbw | b. Handman | 2 |
| Gough | lbw | b. Hurlbatt | 9 |
| Gill | | b. Hurlbatt | 1 |
| Skelly | c. Tyas | b. Irani | 21 |
| Potter | | b. Hurlbatt | 1 |
| Lynn | st. Tyas | b. Hurlbatt | 9 |
| Yates | not | out | 17 |
| Guy | not | out | 19 |
| | | Extras | 5 |
| Total (for 8 wkts) | | 43 Overs | 137 |

Handman 10-1-33-2

Hurlbatt 21-6-53-4

Irani 12-0-46-2