

## **Captain's Corner: Richard Aspinall**

By Matt Elston

Second-team captain Richard Aspinall (below) exudes a sense of cautious optimism when speaking about his team. His manner is positive and his belief is absolute. A resolute character, Richard is forceful and logical out in the middle, a well respected man in Skelmanthorpe circles.



The 2006 season saw Skelmanthorpe's second XI ensure their survival in the league. The intention at Lidget Lane is not necessarily to win big with the seconds. This team is a transition for junior cricketers already at the club; giving these guys a chance to establish themselves as senior cricketers is a big thing at Shat. "Our main players last year were Phil Redgwick, Stuart Artill and Dan Barber had a really good season and was still a junior". An early Paddock Shield exit is the only issue in Richard's mind from last season and is something he and the team are keen to rectify for 2007.

For the new season, 'Aspy' is adamant again that his juniors hold the key to success. "Potential players for the season really are all juniors: Jamie Jagger, Tom Barber, Dom Storey, Dan Barber and Josh Clarkson. These are the players who we are looking to bring forward and play in the first team in years to come". He recognises also the need for experience, which is provided by Redgy, Artill, Clarkson and himself. The mix of youth and experience could harbour huge potential for the second team at SCC.

Aspinall's cautiousness is reflected in his aims for the season. It would be easy to assume his attitude is pessimistic yet it is actually anything but. His approach reflects the emphasis placed on the integration of juniors into senior cricket. "We'll take this season one step at a time. We are still a very young team with only four or five adults who make an impact. The rest is juniors making a contribution."

Last season saw Dan Barber have a blistering season. The then junior played a pivotal role in the team's fortunes. "Dan opens the batting and bowling and won the batting averages last season. We'll be looking for another good input from him this time". Other juniors supporting Barber are also expected to step up and stamp their authority on senior cricket. "Jamie and Dom will be looking to make an impression with the ball and Tom Barber with both bat and ball I expect".

The second team lads can expect a tricky season with the team to beat, Elland, looking very strong in the skipper's eyes. "Skelmanthorpe have quite a few rivals in the second team but Elland are the team to beat. They've got a second team full of blokes, which is unusual for second teams, who are normally a mix of juniors and old-timers". If nothing else Skelmanthorpe can rely on the unrivalled support and team spirit that is present within the club. Couple this passion and belief with outstanding talent, and a slice of luck, and a cautious captain could soon be polishing his latest piece of silverware.