

## **GREAT MATCH**

### **Skelmanthorpe v Delph and Dobcross, 2006, by Matt Elston**

Rarely can a cricket club say they have spent almost two weeks playing the same opponents day in, day out. But this was the case with 'The Epic' which began on an overcast Sunday in June 2006 and finally concluded ten days later.

Skelmanthorpe were the visitors to rivals Delph and Dobcross in an enthralling Sykes Cup encounter. On a damp afternoon Delph elected to bat and managed an impressive 275 from 50 overs. Outstanding performances from Delph batsmen Ashby and Jones, 51 and 84 respectively, helped the hosts to a good score before tea. Skelmanthorpe's first innings was rudely interrupted, firstly with the dismissals of Safraz and Amit, and then by bad weather. The game was called off and rescheduled for the following Monday with 'Shat' on 20-2.

The weather played havoc with the fixtures all week and Skelmanthorpe travelled to Delph on four occasions. The weekend saw the league programme recommence and Skelmanthorpe travel to Elland hoping to build some form to finish off Delph. Max Joice was the stand-out performer with an amazing 129.

Sunday saw the long-awaited cup match resume with Max Joice making a quickfire 46 before being caught off the bowling of Zahoor. Unfortunately, Skelmanthorpe seemed to have picked up where they left off ten days previously and soon stumbled to an unassertive 60-6 after losing Whittaker and Dyson cheaply. Richard Cocking and Adam Dollive took to the crease and started pushing the ball around, reclaiming some of the advantage from a confident bowling attack.



**Richard Cocking**

Cocking and Dollive had a lucky break when confusion descended on the two and left them stranded in the middle. After the wicketkeeper had inadvertently broken the bails, tugging a stump out of the ground with ball in hand was the only way to run Cocking out. The Delph boys thought they had made the vital breakthrough but it wasn't the case. Cocking eventually made his ground and the umpires rightly decided he was not out as the ball wasn't in contact with the stump when it was removed from the ground. Delph were livid.

When Cocking fell for a hard-fought 59 Richard Aspinall joined Dollive in the middle and produced the best innings he will probably ever play. Dollive top scored with 77 while Aspinall provided support on his way to an unbeaten 31. Dollive fell to a sharp catch on the boundary edge and then tailender James Crossland entered the fray. 'Crossy' hit a six from his first ball and left 'Shat' in need of 3 runs from 3 balls. Skelmanthorpe managed two and forced the match to a replay at Lidget Lane.

Skelmanthorpe triumphed in the replay, knocking Delph over with 11 overs to spare. The ties were dominated by outstanding performances. Max Joice and Adam Dollive were consistent with the bat and great all-round performances from Crossland, Cocking and especially Aspinall saw the quality of Skelmanthorpe's line-up shine through and push on further towards the Sykes Cup final.