

## James Crossland: Investing in the Future

By Matt Elston

James 'Hostile' Crossland is another of Skelmanthorpe's senior players who has known nothing but cricket. Local boy James took his nickname after a fantastic 7 for 33 against local rivals Delph and Dobcross in a game covered by the *Yorkshire Post*. Crossland's resolute character has made him a major success since his junior debut aged just 11.



James models himself on his cricketing hero Darren Gough and shares many characteristics with the ex-England and Yorkshire paceman. Not only is James' bowling record outstanding, his demeanour and passion reflect the impact watching his cricketing idols from such a young age has had. The likes of Gough on the international scene and Mahboob and Zahid a bit closer to home have made this guy the bowler and personality he is today.

Crossland began his junior career taking wickets and hasn't stopped since. His first game, as an 11-year-old versus Emley, is complemented by many other memorable performances, including a seven-wicket haul (for no runs) as an under-13. Last season James took 42 wickets for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI and hopes to be able to fulfil what he describes as a 'burning ambition' by taking over 50 wickets for the first time in 2007.

A permanent fixture in the Skelmanthorpe first team under captain Adam Dollive, Crossland recognises the influence of Phil Redgwick who gave him his break as an opening bowler in the second team. He also understands why Skelmanthorpe have been so successful: 'The main thing is enjoying playing and it is impossible not to do that at Skelmanthorpe. It's a fantastic feeling knowing you're playing with ten other friends, many of whom you've grown up with.' He enjoys beating other sides who sometimes include paid players in their line-ups; he also appreciates the importance of team pride and a good work ethic.

Away from playing, James has enjoyed coaching the young talent at Skelmanthorpe. He has been involved with the under-13s for the last five years and is now enjoying the feeling of helping to mould young talent. 'Many of these kids couldn't throw a ball, never mind hit one, when we started. But there is a massive sense of pride and achievement when I see five or six of them now representing the adult side, the Huddersfield side and, in one case, Yorkshire'.

The boisterous, passionate, hardworking and enthusiastic Crossland is a credit to the people who have nurtured him in the way he continues to nurture his batch of budding cricketers. Skelmanthorpe are lucky to have someone who wants to reinvest so much in local cricket.