

SCHOLES 1993 – 1996 - Paul Wharton

Sunday 11th of September 1994. Thongsbridge Cricket Club. Thongsbridge v Kexborough. If Kexborough win we get relegated. Our chances – slim to non-existent. With 12 overs to go Thongsbridge's last pair are at the crease. Sean Jessop and Mark Dean trying manfully to block out until stumps. The irony is that this round of fixtures should have been played on 24th April but for Huddersfield Town going to Wembley. If it had, maybe we'd have played too instead of our game against Linthwaite being washed out. At least our fate would have been in our own hands. John Belfield standing next to me started to call out the balls remaining ... 'sixty nine, ... sixty eight, ... sixty seven, ...'

The Scholes side of the early 90's had finished 9th in section B in 1991 under Steve Booth with unbelievably only Rastrick, Penistone, Huddersfield/Lockwood & Paddock below us. In 1992 with Stuart Greaves as skipper the side had finished 4th behind Linthwaite, Golcar and Marsden. That year we had Neil Fletcher from New Zealand as overseas man for the first half of the season followed by an Aussie Ritchie Webb.

At the start of season 1993 we'd had largely the same squad, however there was one very important addition – Rashid Patel, the start of Scholes' Indian Connection. During the previous year Steve Booth and I had discussed the balance of the team and recognised the need for an out and out strike bowler who could take 80 League wickets. Rashid didn't let us down. A tall, amiable man with the broadest smile you'll ever see, Rashid was an amazingly accurate left arm quickie who swung the ball in sharply to right handers. Mark Guymer, Ian Bray, Steve Booth, Ashley Pamment, Coddy and the Brook brothers all made critical contributions with the bat during our promotion season and Rashid was well backed up by Tony Marsh, Ritchie Howarth, Mark Mitchell, Anthony Coldwell and various occasional bowlers. The scene was therefore well set on the final weekend of the season with Scholes in 2nd place behind Thongsbridge with Hall Bower breathing down our neck. Almondbury were dispensed with easily enough on the Saturday thanks to a superb delivery from Rashid, which took out Shahid Nawaz's off stump. Sunday should've been a formality facing a moderate Armitage Bridge side at home, and after we'd amassed 314 – 3 at tea the bookies stopped taking bets. But as we all know, cricket's a funny game and an excellent knock from Tim Sugden (109), ably supported by Suhail Aslam meant that as the light faded on that September day Scholes had the first of what would be many experiences of staring into the abyss. Happily our nerve held and the players involved had taken part in a match where both sides had scored over 300. We'd won by 14 runs and had pipped Hall Bower for second spot.

SCHOLES v ARMITAGE BRIDGE SCHOLES	
Wharton run out	118
Brook (N) c Aslam b Rhodes	73
Coldwell c Webb b Rhodes	14
Patel not out	25
Booth (S) not out	58
Extras	26
50 overs	Total (for 3) 314
Roebuck 12-4-33-0, Cooper 13-2-72-0, Harrison (P) 6-0-45-0, Sanderson 7-0-43-0, Webb 5-1-44-0, Rhodes 7-0-56-2.	
ARMITAGE BRIDGE	
Sugden c Pamment b Mitchell	109
Harrison (P) run out	1
Aslam run out	51
Sanderson run out	36
Cooper (T) c Brook (O) b Patel ...	1
Harrison (S) b Mitchell	14
Vickerman c and b Coldwell	43
Webb b Patel	1
Rhodes not out	1
Roberts not out	8
Extras	35
50 overs	Total (for 8) 300
Patel 24-1-110-2, Mitchell 16-0-88-2, Wharton 1-0-16-0, Coldwell 9-0-56-0. Scholes 5pts Armitage Bridge Opts.	

P24 W5 L1 D(5)13 D(1)2 Ab3 103 PTS (2nd)

'Forty five, ... forty four, ... forty three, ...' Belf was now warming to his task and Jessop and Dean were looking determined, but as I glanced around at the faces of our team, all of whom were there, I felt a unanimous sense of resignation. Steve Booth turned to me and barely audibly mouthed our prospective venues for 1995: 'Paddock, Penistone, Dalton ...'

The season of 1994 had begun optimistically enough. After gaining a point at home to Kexborough, where Rashid Patel had scored Scholes' first ever Section A runs by hoisting the ball over the clubhouse for six, we performed well at Meltham for another point before beating Holmfirth by 6 wkts, (a side including Brandon Nash, Arnie Sidebottom and Stuart Fletcher) Elland by 4 wkts (a side containing Dave Weston) and a strong Lascelles Hall side by 2 wkts (knocking off 220!). Unfortunately we were derailed during the bank holiday weekend by a Thongsbridge team containing Derek Randall and Lesroy Weekes, who exposed the increasingly obvious fact that Rashid was carrying an injury. Over the next month he tried hard to bowl through it in an effort to recapture his form of 1993 but sadly after the Broad Oak game at the end of June he acknowledged the fact that

SECOND XI 1992 - DOUBLE WINNERS



FIRST XI 1993 - RUNNERS UP SECTION B



FIRST XI 1987 - CENTRAL LEAGUE RUNNERS UP



FIRST XI 1988 - FIRST GAME IN THE HUDDERSFIELD LEAGUE



SCHOLES 1993 - 1996 Continued ...

it wasn't going to happen and left soon after for India - he was a great loss to the side. For very different reasons Mark Mitchell also decided to part company with us meaning that we lost both opening bowlers at a stroke. Our other two pre-season signings endured slightly different fates. Harvey Ownsworth was taken away by work commitments while the incurably spendthrift Andy Hutchison was slowly coming to terms with Section A cricket. Aware of Rashid's problem we had been looking around for a possible replacement and even such an eminent agent as Jack Simmons hadn't come up with someone suitable. Lords groundstaff had a good young New Zealand batsman who was keen to come (but Jack didn't rate him) and Gordon Greenidge would play but only in 7 of the remaining fixtures. As the signing deadline drew near, the phone rang.

'Hello Paul it's Jack Simmons. I've got a good un for you. He's played Test Cricket.'

'What's his name Jack?'

'Hey, he's an allrounder too. Bats and bowls' (Yes he did actually say that.)

'What's his name?'

'Must've played in over twenty tests. Did Gattings up like a kipper.'

'Jack, his name. What's his name?'

'India he played for ... I think?'

'Jack for God's sake we're not signing him until we know who he is!'

'Listen, I'm nearly at my office. I'll phone you back in a minute.'

Ten minutes later ...

'Paul, Chetan Sharma. Do you want him?'

'Damn right we do but we'll need to move quickly to get him registered.'

Chetan Sharma! Jack couldn't remember Chetan Sharma! The Indian Test star made his debut for us away at Linthwaite on the 23rd July. We won and never really looked back, the abiding memory being his utterly professional demolition of Lascelles Hall - one of the best bowling performances I've ever seen. Good wins over Kirkheaton and Shepley saw us moving out of danger but the weather conspired against us to leave us at Thongsbridge's mercy. The side, essentially the same as the previous year, had struggled for half the season without the benefit of a fit pro. Chetan had filled the breach and the boys responded with Kenworthy, Hutchison and Coldwell providing good support for him. Our final record read ...

P26 W1 L4 D(5)7 D(1)9 Ab5 60PTS (12th)

'Thirty, ... twenty nine, ... twenty eight'. Belf was bellowing the numbers across the ground. On 'twenty seven' an unbelievable thing happened; Ian Gray, whom we would subsequently acknowledge as being one of the best ever gully fieldsmen, responded sharply to a thick edge off the bowling of Gary Hampshire. He got both hands to the ball, which was travelling slowly,

too slowly, pounced it, held it, safe as houses – but then just as we rose to leave, ... he dropped it. It was inexplicable and so ironic as it would turn out. 'Twenty six' triumphed Belf, and we all knew, just knew, that when next season came we'd be in Section A – it was written in the stars.

In 1995 we learned how to win tight games and also how to rack up huge numbers of runs. In Weston, Milne and Gray we acquired three men capable of big innings. All of the top six in the order made over 500 runs with Gray and Sharma the pick with 922 and 818 respectively. 250 plus totals were almost expected and the opposition were often batted out of the game. This was just as well since bowling out the opposition was always a problem. Chetan had 58 wkts at 24.5 but the support bowling picked up wickets in the mid-thirties and forties, although Cuddy proved an emerging talent with 15 at 28. Against Thongsbridge we achieved an unlikely win by declaring after 41 overs and bowling our overs in two hours in a rain affected game.

The other impression we'd started to make was on the social life of Holmfirth. There would regularly be eight or nine members of the first team at Karbowski's (as was) from 9.30 until 11.00 and then either the Tapas bar or Henryk's from 11.00 until they closed. They were happy days indeed as was often stated by Dave Weston who would shake his head in bewilderment at all the years he'd wasted at Elland when he could have been at Scholes in a post-cricket lager frenzy. By the end of 1995 we'd arrived in section A in a big way.

P26 W1 L1 D(5)12 D(1)6 Ab6 84PTS (4th)

In any game involving a ball and two teams the relative will of the teams is at least as important as the relative skill. Also, ... you can never have too much luck.

As we walked off the field after losing the match of the 1996 season to Shepley we gave a collective shrug of the shoulders and attributed our failure to chase a target of 147 to early season rustiness. But, just as a golfer can lose the British Open by missing a put on the first green, we were destined to finish second in Section A due to this clumsy failure on the first day of the season.

However, exactly three weeks after this inauspicious start a tall, laid back chap called Simon Parkinson made his Scholes debut. His figures of 1 for 48 off 13 overs weren't particularly brilliant but everyone who saw him bowl that day knew we had suddenly become significantly stronger. A trophy was now definitely on the cards – but it could, and should so easily have been two. Rastrick were accounted for in the first round of the Sykes Cup by 61 runs, and Honley in the 2nd round by 10 wickets. The third round presented rather more of a

problem but 81 from Dave Weston and 70 from Ian Gray saw us home to our target of 194 with 7 wickets to spare. (Chetan claimed 6 for 55 to add to his 5 for 48 in the previous round.) This brought us face to face with Slaithwaite at home in the semi-final and, batting first, they made a fairly handy 182-6. In spite of 63 from Bob Milne we were struggling at 121-5 with only 10 overs left when Ashley Pamment strode in and quickly closed them out with a superbly hit 32 off only 29 balls – they must have wondered what they'd done to deserve it.

None of us will ever forget the final. Unfashionable, ex Central League, village side against the mighty Elland on their own ground. We won a good toss and elected to bat on a rain-threatened day. The rain finally stopped threatening and started to fall during the 50th over of our innings. By then we were feeling very happy after a painfully slow start orchestrated by Bob Milne had been turned into 206-6. Displaying the most astonishing brinksmanship, he had finally accelerated to an excellent 90. To add insult to injury Ashley Pamment smashed the last ball of the innings over the pavilion and in the same motion tucked his bat under his arm and walked off. We celebrated for rather longer than we should have that night.

On Monday the excellent Simon Parkinson whipped out three of them and Chetan had one to leave them at 59-4 after 23 overs. For the second time that night we celebrated winning the Sykes Cup.

On Tuesday the admirable and always dangerous James Thornton made us reassess the situation by compiling a wonderful 73 under severe pressure. He was ably assisted by Michael Midwood with 36, as he took the score from 99-7 to 169-7. How relieved we were when he finally holed out to the infallible Hutch at the start of the 47th over. When the dust had settled we'd won by a misleadingly comfortable 32 runs with Chetan taking 3 for 80 off 24 beautifully controlled and disciplined overs. The lion-hearted Parkinson bowled one over less for the magnificent return of 7-85, a feat which justifiably won him the man of the match award. For the third day running we celebrated winning the Sykes Cup in the sure knowledge that our photograph would hang on the club wall, leering down at everyone for the next hundred years.

Sadly the Captain and Vice Captain were in no fit state for the rest of the week to ensure that the wicket was watered for Saturday. The resulting dust bowl gave Meltham the match and ultimately the championship. But hey, we're Scholes; admittedly slightly eccentric but all the more rounded for being so.

SYKES CUP FINAL – ELLAND C.C. 11th August 1996

Scholes won the toss and elected to bat

INNINGS OF SCHOLES C.C.

D.WESTON	c. MIDWOOD.M	b. BRITTON	6
R.MILNE	c. and b.	b. SINCLAIR	90
P.WHARTON (c)		b. SINCLAIR	55
C.SHARMA	c. KINGSTON	b. MIDWOOD.M	9
I.GRAY	c. THORNTON	b. MIDWOOD.M	7
P.PHILLIPS	RUN OUT		16
A.PAMMENT	NOT OUT		10
A.COLDWELL	NOT OUT		1
I.BRAY	DID NOT BAT		-
S.PARKINSON	DID NOT BAT		-
A.HUTCHISON	DID NOT BAT		-
	EXTRAS 12	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>206 for 6 wkts</u>

FALL OF WICKETS: 8-1, 102-2, 147-3, 166-4, 192-5, 192-6

SINCLAIR 19-1-72-2; BRITTON 5-1-13-1; MOORE 10-0-30-0
THORNTON 6-0-32-0; MIDWOOD 10-0-49-2

INNINGS OF ELLAND C.C.

HIRST	c. PHILLIPS	b. PARKINSON	0
WEBSTER		b. PARKINSON	27
GLENDENNING	c. PHILLIPS	b. SHARMA	8
KINGSTON	c. WHARTON	b. PARKINSON	5
THORNTON	c. HUTCHISON	b. PARKINSON	73
BRITTON	L.B.W.	b. SHARMA	3
SINCLAIR	c. PHILLIPS	b. PARKINSON	5
STANLEY		b. PARKINSON	2
MIDWOOD.M		b. PARKINSON	36
MIDWOOD.D (c)	NOT OUT		2
MOORE		b. SHARMA	1
	EXTRAS 12	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>174 all out</u>

FALL OF WICKETS: 4-1, 19-2, 31-3, 59-4, 78-5, 91-6, 99-7, 169-8, 171-9

PARKINSON 23-1-85-7; SHARMA 24-4-80-3; GRAY 1-1-0-0

RESULT: SCHOLES WON BY 32 RUNS