

Third [Sunday] XI

2024 Season

After an amazingly successful 2023 season which brought us promotion to the Third Division of the Sunday League, we looked forward to 2024 again facing something of the unknown. And we did so with a new Captain in Jimmy Lee and without the services of Keith Gilert, Dave Picton and Steve Cox and their unstinting commitment to developing young players of recent years. Rafaqat, Taariq & Naseem had returned to Glusburn. The squad would include six adult seniors Jimmy, Sultan, Noman, Stuart, Tim, Amin and recent juniors, now adults Elis and Louis. Five Juniors to be included would be Asim Khan, Mohammed Saad, Dawud Shahzad, Logan Scarborough and Ollie Thompson; whilst others would come in when reviewed as capable.

In common with most others Sunday 28th April was a washout for the Home fixture with Queensbury. So the long journey to Golcar heralded our second season in the HSL. Jimmy won his first toss and asked the Golcar captain to bat. Opening the bowling were Dawud and Asim who soon set the tone with 3 wickets between them and Golcar at 13-3 on a dampish pitch. Our second pair of Ayaan and Jimmy didn't let up and wickets continued to tumble. From 30-3 Golcar were in the mire losing another 6 wickets for just 9 runs. It was Ayaan who proved the spearhead with 3-10. A last wicket stand of 12 brought Golcar to 51 all out. Dawud had 1-8, Asim 2-5, Jimmy 1-15, Logan 1-6 and Tim 2-6 to add to Ayaan's lead. What a start! Paul Carter [19] and Saad [17 no] opened the batting, needing only Sultan to join for 6 no and the win came at 52-1 in the 17th over for an early return to Oakworth with 20 points and top of the Division.

Two weeks on it was time to visit old friends at Crossflatts, where we were asked to bat first. Sultan fell for 13 at 30-1 but Paul remained to help add a further 40 with Amin. Paul was bowled for 35 with 6 boundaries. From 70-2 we lost Amon [20] at 75-3 and brought Jimmy and Noman together for a 66-run partnership with the skipper scoring at SR 124. Jimmy [47] was the next to fall at 141-4 and immediately followed by Noman for 10 at 142-5. The remaining juniors added another 26 for 4 further wickets to conclude our knock at 168-9. Three of the later wickets fell to professional coach Scott Kershaw 3-14. Mazey 2-3 and Brooksbank 2-32 were the principal Crossflatts bowlers. Juniors Asim, Dawud and Ollie all claimed a wicket each as did Jimmy to have the home side at 22-4 and in need of a partnership. Graham Love and Liam Brookes provided that with 30 runs before three other wickets fell by the time the total had reached 75 when Brookes was bowled by the skipper for 29, A final wicket thrash brought the final score to 99 all out. Jimmy turned in 4-29 and Logan again claimed a brace. A second 20-point win and we remained on top, Next week the Lightcliffe trip to Wide Lane was not necessary due to rain. E took 8 points each from that.

Into June and a trip to Stainland to try and keep the roll going where we were asked to bowl first. At 21-3 that looked to be in our favour with 2 wickets for Asim and 1 for Dawud. Jenkins led their recovery staying to face 72 balls and scoring 36 when ninth out. Logan's twirlers winked out 3-19 in his 5 overs as our attack was firmly in charge. Stainland posted 111 all out. Sultan was lbw early on but Jimmy [29] was his usual resolute self but he and two others were out at 53-4. Further wickets fell until 83-8 and the arrival of Dawud at the crease. He put bat to ball swiping 2 sixes and a four on his way to 24 [22 balls] when he was bowled by Doran at 97-9. E required 15 to win with debutants Cody and Henry asked to do it. They dug in well and kept the Stainland attack at bay for 23 balls between them. Sadly Henry [3] was run out with our total on 102 all out and we took just 5 points from the match [61 our total]. Back at Wide Lane a week later we entertained Stones CC. What a strange match it turned out to be. We asked them to bat first and

their full 40 overs were used in making just 70 runs after the opener Walton made 20. But for bowlers it wasn't all plain sailing as we took out only 8 of their batsmen with no 4 Pearson facing 100 balls for 13 runs. Logan again was the trump card with 3-13 from 9 overs. 2 wickets went to debutant Liam Brookes, 2 weeks after playing against us for Crossflatts but had now become an Oakworth player. The batting response was a formality as we met the target in 16.1 overs with 27 for Sultan and 22 for Paul in our 71-2. The 'Winning Draw' provided us with 16 points. Frustratingly 2 weeks later we were due to visit Sowerby St Peters but they cried off and we took the full points [97 the total].

We got on the field against Greetland who opted to bat. The form bowler this time was Dawud who was looking the part with 4-16 in 8 overs. Ayaan too picked off a couple but their no 7 Riaz went for it and came off with 71 no from 69 balls, whilst wickets fell around him. His team made 148 all out in 36.5 overs. The wicket-taking didn't end there though and disastrously we reached a parlous 15-5 after Ahmed and Yasser ran riot. Michael had turned out but needed a partner to halt the carnage. He found him in junior Adnan who 85 balls for 19 teaming with Michael who reached 50 from 60 balls only to be given out lbw after a partnership of 60. 75-6 was somewhat better than it had looked and with some help from Liam and Ayaan the three figures were passed.. We closed after the 40 overs on 117-9 in a 'Losing Draw' situation, taking 7 points from the game. With Greetland picking up 13. In mid-july we trekked up the mountain to Queensbury, who asked us to bat. It was another strange match as we struggled to compile runs on a tricky wicket. At no 6 Sajjad chipped in 29 to a faltering total that had reached 36-7. He had a tried ally in Ayaan but Sajj was bowled at 54-8, still parlous. Young Ayaan added 15 and Tim 12 not out to enable a still paltry 84 all out in the 31st over. Queensbury opening bowler Ashraf had 4-14 and Reppion 3-20, both boosting their averages. But cricket is a funny old game. Not many would have bet that We would emerge winners by 39 runs, but that is exactly what happened. Dawud maintained his good form with 4-20 and then Liam added icing to the cake with 3-0 in 15 balls to cap 2-4 from Sajjad and 1-19 from Jimmy. There were 7 Queensbury ducks shit down in the 45 runs total, Ali their top-scorer with 17. If we could get plenty of points from our next home match with Golcar we would be in a promotion position.

We asked the visitors to bat but things did not work out as hoped. Under-15 Golcar no 4 Ben Gash went on the smash and rattled up 101 before retiring. With 37 from Dyson, 32 from Kendal and 29 they posted a hefty tally of 249-7 was rattled up. There were 2 wickets each for Dawud, Jimmy and Logan and one for Liam but everyone shipped some punishment as we chased leather. With a poor start of 19-3 the odds on a win were slim but we could claim bonus points if we could avoid an 'all out'. Jimmy with 40 and Liam proving to be the signing of the season. with a run-a-ball 53 gave us hope of a reasonable outcome. The Scarborough father and son combo chipped in 17 no [Logan] and 20 [Michael] to underline the potential. We closed on 153-8 and took 7 points for it. In a successive home match our next opponents were to be Crossflatts. A 43-1 opening set us on the way to 110-5 with the skipper on his way to 53. The score was further boosted by a terrific 26 from 31 balls from Henry who was unfortunately run out by Graem Love. 192-9 was a challenge for the Flatts. They couldn't meet it as Ayaan rose to the occasion with 4-19 with wickets for all our bowlers. The Flatts lead scorer was Rawnsley with a modest 21 in the all out 104 tally in 37.3 overs. This time we grabbed the full 20 points to retain our promotion prospects with a total of 154 points from 11 of the scheduled 16 fixtures.

Over at Lightcliffe we asked the hosts to bat. Their opener Lun was pleased as he made 41 whilst nom3 Jagger produced 63 from 76 balls to propel them to 109-2. Taariq Khan was back in our side but ge copped 35 from his 8 wicketless overs. But final we found the brakes and Jimmy

took 4-29 and Logan 3-49 to halt their progress. So much so that their total reached just 168-9. Also back from Glusburn was Naseem and he immediately struck gold with terrific 59 but only Ayaan with 20 before being run out could capitalise on his innings. We made 141, 28 short of what was needed thanks to the attentions of all the Lightcliffe bowlers. 6 points for efforts. Stainland were top of the league and our next visitors. They chose to bat. 28 became their highest partnership between Robinson and Jenkins as they sought the double over our lads. Nit for the first time Logan led the bowlers with 3-27 with 2-fors for Taariq and Liam. Dawud, Ayaan and Adnan all also picked up one as Stainland struggled to 97 all out inside 32 overs. Wajid 22, James 23 and Liam 22 made sure there was no slip up and we marched to 20 points in the 23rd over with just 4 wickets lost. Bullseye [180 points] was our reward for defeating the leaders as we stayed in 2nd place. With three matches left the final one with Greetland was looming large in the mirror and Golcar were still in the mix with a match in hand.

The team drove to Stones in good heart, seeking a full win having had the best of a winning draw earlier in the year. We were asked to bat and at 38-4 the innings was at a crucial stage as opening bowler Harker was in the wickets. Enter Wajid and Naseem the dynamic duo conjured up a 125 run partnership with 64 to Waja and 63 for Nas with 17 boundaries between the pair. Harker's 4-3 had been brushed aside as we reached 195-8. Stones opener Crosland kicked off with 40 but none of his team-mates reached 20 as they stumbled 101-9 with Baigent and last-laughter Harker still at the crease for a repeat Losing Draw. Again we took 15 points to tally 195.

But a turn of events with our last Home opponents St Peters again conceding whilst Golcar eliminated Greetland from the promotion race. We must face Greetland whilst Golcar would tackle Queensbury with the advantage that Golcar were one point ahead after gaining sufficient points in the rain affected match with Greetland. If we won and Golcar also won, then they and Stainland would be promoted. The reverse was that if we won and they lost we would be promoted with Stainland.

Greetland was not a happy hunting ground for our lads and on winning the toss they opted to bat. Three of their batters passed 30 and three others score handy double-figure scores in their 206-8 tally. We had 2 wickets each for Dawud, Logan and Tom Raby backed by 1 each for Ayaan and Liam. We hadn't bowled them out and with 207 to win we had a mountain climb, somewhat higher than the one Golcar would face at Queensbury in the misty, dingy weather with rain in the offing. Jimmy was again highly focused and repeated his brilliant 64 of last week. But there was no Naseem to back him up. Michael did his best making 18 but was fourth out lbw to Yasser, who went in to record 5-38 along with 3-4 from Iqbal to win the match for Greetland as we were all out for 118 in 27.1 overs. Golcar in fact were rained off at Queensbury after the home side had posted 133-9 and then the heavens opened. So we missed promotion, finishing in third on 217 points, 8 behind Golcar and 23 in arrears of Stainland.

Summary

We had stacked up 5 outright wins, 2 concessions, 2 winning draws, 2 losing draws, 2 abandonments and 3 defeats for those 217 points and third place.

Year <small>[fixtures]</small>	OAKWORTH				OPPONENTS				OAKWORTH			
	HOME		AWAY		HOME		AWAY		HOME		AWAY	
	Runs	Wkts lost	Runs	Wkts lost	Conceded	Wkts taken	Conceded	Wkts taken	Av Bat	Av Bowl	Av Bat	Av Bowl
2024 [12]	631	32	860	58	667	45	790	65	19.72	14.82	14.83	12.15
2023 [16]	450	17	202	22	720	46	595	16	26.47	15.65	8.18	37.25
Change	+181	+15	+658	+36	-53	-1	+195	+49	-6.75	-0.83	+6.65	-25.10

At Wide Lane

The Fortress remained un-breached as our 2 wins, 1 win by concession, 1 winning draw, 2 losing draws and 2 abandonments, just kept the walls intact. In the six innings, we tallied 631 runs, an average of 105 per match. But this represented all that was necessary as we lost only 32 wickets. In contrast we took 45 victims. Our opponents averaged 111 per match, the bulk of the difference deriving from the Golcar innings. We tallied 106 points, average 13.3 per fixture.

The batters engineered a 19.7 RPW at Wide Lane significantly better than our visitors 14.8. Of the six Home matches we batted second five times as our bowling attack generally had the visitor batters subdued. The one match when we batted first [Crossflatts] we posted 192 runs.

Away in the HSL

The balance of power was more evenly discernible with 3 wins, 1 win by concession and a winning draw for us and 3 defeats [at Stainland, Lightcliffe and Greetland]. 860 runs came our way in the 7 fixtures contested on the field [St Peters conceded]. They led to an average of 123 per match compared to our hosts who had 790 runs at average 113. Our highest score was 192 vs Crossflatts. The wicket taking differential was also in our favour with 58 lost whilst taking 65 of the 70 on offer. The points tally was 111, above our Home match total.

Our batting effectiveness was reduced to 14.8 RPW but so was that of our hosts who managed only 12.2 reflective of our bowling dominance. We batted first 3 times and won all 3, scoring 168 [Crossflatts], 84 [Queensbury] and our highest 195 [Stones] showing the batters could also lead from the front. Chasing our opponents on their middens brought only 1 outright win [at Golcar] and all 3 of the defeats.

Overall

The batters churned out 1,298 runs, averaging 108 per match. Our opponents topped our tally with 1,462 at 122 per match. But our bowlers came out on top in the head-to-head taking 110 wickets whilst conceding just 90.

Appearances

12 of the scheduled 16 matches were completed on the field, 2 abandoned and 2 conceded. Youngsters Dawud and Logan appeared in all 12 matches whilst James and Sultan missed 1 each. Next came Ayaan [9], Adnan [8] and Stuart [8]. Paul [70] and Jimmy [67] are our leading players, appearing on the all-time Third XI list. After two seasons in the HSL Logan appears with most [19], one ahead of Sultan.

Batting

In true Captain's style James batted 10 times with two scores of 64 and led the run-scoring with 284 at 31.56, the third best in the Division. In just 6 appearances Naseem racked up 133 at 27.17, best 63. Paul had only 5 trips to the crease but tallied 127 runs at 25.40 [best 40]. Fourth over 100 runs was Liam on 101 from 6 knocks at 20.20, best of 53. Of the juniors Adnan led the way with 60 at 10.00, his best that amazing 19. All-in-all we racked up seven half-centuries, the best three 64s from the Captain [2] an Wajid [1]. Others went to Liam, Naseem [2] and Michael.

Bowling

Leading wicket snatcher was Logan with 23, the 2nd highest in the Division. His terrific average of 13.1 shows amazing progress and is built on a great SR of 20 and better than average Econ of 64.

His finest return was 3-13. Usually the opener, Dawud also shows tremendous development with 18 wickets at 12.8 average. With SR 25 and Econ 50 he is more or less bang on where a fast bowler should be, his best was 4-16. The skipper Jim wasn't far behind on 17 at 13.1, best 4-29, now back as the all-rounder he was at age 15. Dawud's opening partner was usually Ayaan and he too has advanced tremendously with 13 wickets at an amazing 11.6 and a best of 4-19. Finally Liam, playing most Sundays as well as Saturdays picked off 12 wickets with his tweakers also at 11.6, his pinnacle a 3-0. These five have been a great bowling section within the team, taking 83 of the 110 wickets [75%] during the season from 70% of the overs bowled.

Junior Development

The Sunday team has been understood as our principle vehicle for assisting young players make the transit to senior cricket, particularly those not yet ready for 2nd XI cricket. They have been led by adult players before moving upward when ready. This year that role fell on captain James [28], Paul [47] & Sultan [55] in particular. A total of 8 juniors have benefitted in 2024. And as above, Logan, Dawud and Ayaan have taken huge strides forward with their bowling whilst their batting remains a work in progress. Saad has generally now taken a place in the 2nd XI. Asim too is moving forward but hasn't been seen since early June, Adnan, Henry and Cody will no doubt be regulars in 2025.

Overall 43% of appearances were made by juniors, more or less on target to meet the strategic plan envisaged. The Junior player contingent bowled 121 overs, 60% of the attack, whilst taking 61% of the wickets. Batting for 40% of the trips to the crease, albeit generally to the lower end of the innings, indicates the need for more top-six junior batters to be identified.

Fielding

James was leading catcher with 5 whilst keeper Stuart tallied 6 victims.

Looking to 2025

Sultan is now 55, Amin 53, Taariq 50 and Naseem 49 whilst from the 2nd team Michael is 53, Stevie 55 and Sajjad 50, and so we must recognise their commitment also cannot be called on for ever, and nor can their top performance be guaranteed.

In 2025 we may see availability from Louis and Elis for all senior teams and under-18s, Ollie [returning from injury], Daniyal, Daanish & Zakariya will be under scrutiny for possible inclusion as will under-15s Haroon, Dexter, Arthur & Beau. Albie is destined for Kaighley CC it seems. Additionally under-13s Sam, Leo, Jack, Charlie and Zak all become age-eligible for consideration. Harry, Adil, Hasan, Jack B and Sufyann will not be considered as all are currently registered elsewhere, whilst MZ and Amaan are newcomers.

So the 2025 line up for a second season in the Third Division is nowhere near settled as the numbers and permutations to consider are great. Which seniors will take the lead this year and which juniors will make breakthroughs? What does seem certain is that Logan, Dawud and Ayaan will probably be more under consideration for the 2nd XI, so the opportunities should be plentiful for those looking to make an impact.