

## **XI Season Review 2011**

**y Captain Ashley Free**

2011 proved to be a topsy turvy season for the 3s never managing to win or lose more than two games on the bounce before finishing a respectable if somewhat frustrating sixth in Division A of the Dales Council.

The season began with high hopes as we maintained the nucleus of the side which had finished with such a flourish in 2010. This early optimism however was short lived as we suffered a bitterly disappointing away defeat at my old club Shipley Providence on the opening day. With the second team having University issues and players giving back word the face of the squad soon changed and hopes of mounting a title challenge were quickly replaced with aiming for mid table respectability. These early weeks of the season were tough especially for myself where I found myself playing with a broken finger and toe at Roundhay Park but the pain was certainly numbed by our first victory of the season.

Gradually however the new faces in the squad began to gel and the performances started to improve. Special mention has to go to our resident opening partnership of Ayaz Ali who weighed in with five half centuries and Leon Risdon whose promotion from the fourth team paid dividends as he began to show the potential that all those who have seen him play know he has culminating in a fine 121 against Crompark in mid August, not to mention his improving glovework. In the middle order Syed Hashmi returned after a short spell with Manningham Mills to provide some aggression with both bat and ball and Adil Wahid also showed his capabilities with some quick runs and tidy medium pace. Daniel 'Mini' Metcalfe was the only one to make the bowling averages often demonstrating that it isn't the good balls that take wickets with his swinging left armers. Mohammed Ebrar despite seemingly always being away with the fairies which involved him having a curious conversation with a neighbouring Cow at Hawksworth showed he is one of the best spinners in the league as he provided a lot of control at crucial times as well as picking up crucial wickets. In terms of the future it was good to see juniors Robbie Duke and Kane Whittal come into the side and not look out of place and they as well as other promising youngsters will continue to be given opportunities while I'm at the helm.

Performance of the season? Well like in 2010 we saved our best until last where a patched up team pulled off an unlikely victory over Halifax Direct where we showed a great will to win until the end on the final day of the season on what can only be described as a 'tricky deck' to put it politely.



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ous vice captains who helped me along the way, Tom  
terfield and Daniel Bates who all led the side when I was

2012 will no doubt be a tough season, as we are the only third team in the top division the bar is being raised year on year and whilst our better players get deserved promotion to the second team we undoubtedly need the better players from the lower teams to have the commitment and desire to step up. I have to say that this issue is one that I find a bitterly disappointing aspect of our club and I find it unfair having to bring players in because 'they are good club men' so as not to upset the apple cart with players who are good enough to step up but are unwilling to do so for various reasons.

Overall though it was a thoroughly enjoyable season and to see the side develop and improve was pleasing and hopefully we can continue this into 2012 and beyond.

Ash