Shepley devastated by Firth's six-wicket haul

Bradley's blast takes Elland to another record

Cricket writer DOUGLAS THOMSON reports on the 70th Sykes Cup final from Hullen Edge yesterday
Pictures: PAUL WELCH

TIGHT fielding and determined running proved decisive as stylish Elland lifted the Sykes Cup in record-breaking fashion with a comfortable 49-run victory over Shepley at Hullen Edge yesterday.

It was a record twelfth cup win for Elland and their daunting 226-5 was the highest final score since 1955 and the best ever under limited overs.

Meanwhile, middle order man Stewart Bradley, who equalled former opening partner Ian Kenworthy's record nine final appearances yesterday, celebrated by hitting a splendid 53 not out in 14 overs and deservedly scooping the league's man-of-the-match award.

Without the 38-year-old headmaster's forceful innings, the Hullen Edge club, who were at only 139-3 after 40 overs, might just have been struggling.

An estimated 1,200 crowd watched John Webster anchor the Elland innings, the 26-year-old former Primrose Hill man taking two hours and 37 minutes to compile a steady 50, which included partnerships of 57 with fellow opener Nick Speak (30) and 68 with Mark Curry.

Aussie all-rounder Curry, who was later to take three for 46 with his left-arm spin bowling, contributed 43 to his side's tally before being caught at square leg by Shepley skipper Geoff Gill off Rob Holiday.

Barnsley-based Holiday bowled Charles Stanley for a golden duck off his next ball, but was denied a hat trick when his optimistic appeal for lbw against Webster, whom he eventually bowled middle stump, was turned down.

With eight overs remaining, Bradley came into his own, hitting four boundaries and in tandem with Richard Whiteoak (12) and John Rawson (15 not out) pushed his side towards that record-breaking 226-5 total.

With Elland skipper Denis Midwood directing his fielders cannily and youngster Robin Firth in devestating form, a Shepley surprise was never really on the cards.

The 19-year-old medium pace man claimed an impressive six for 63 in 15 overs, which alongside Curry's three for 46 and Watson's one for 27 helped Elland scuttle the villagers for 177 in 47.4 overs.

Dale Skelly and Abdul Azeem opened patiently, hitting 27 off the first 10 overs. But when the Indian, who had earlier caught both Speak and Whiteoak, was himself similarly trapped by wicketkeeper Stanley after a rash attempt to boost his 30 score, it was clear that Shepley had a real fight on their hands.

To their credit, they never threw in the towel, and Skelly amassed 28 before being caught by Midwood at mid-off. The hard-working Holiday (15) and skipper Gill (30) fought equally hard to retrieve the situation.

But middle order wickets fell thick and fast, and by the time Simeon Barber (19) and the hard-hitting Stevie Carter (20) entered the fray, Midwood's men had the match sewn up.

As a jubilant Midwood said after the game, that's one down and three to go in Elland's bid to end their decade of domination by doing the league and cup double at both first and second team levels.

Mr Eric Simpson, of the cup sponsors, Hills Supplies, presented the trophy and mementoes and gate receipts from yesterday's match totalled £630.

Elland opener John Webster anchored his side's innings with a steady 50. He was eventually bowled middle stump by Rob Holiday in the 42nd over

Scoreboard

ELLAND

[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
Extras	21
Total (for 5)	226

[illegible]

[illegible]	28
[illegible]	30
[illegible]	15
[illegible]	30
[illegible]	4
[illegible]	13
[illegible]	3
Cocking c Whiteoak b Curry	19
Barber st Stanley b Firth	3
Shaw b Curry	20
Carter c Speak b Firth	2
Cheetle not out	10
Extras	
Total	177

Watson [illegible], Firth 14.4-2-63-6, Narroon [illegible], Curry 11-3-46-3.