

Shepley v Skelmanthorpe

Sykes Cup Final

Sunday 21 August 2011

Hullen Edge, Elland

Shepley made history in winning the 92nd Sykes Cup Final, becoming the first club to win the Sykes Cup and the Heavy Woollen Cup in the same season. And just like the Heavy Woollen Cup Final three weeks earlier, this was an extraordinary game of cricket.

Shepley players don't do cricket the easy way. Supporters get used to the twists and turns of the game, but these two finals have been remarkable. Three weeks ago Shepley posted a huge total against Gomersal in the Heavy Woollen Cup Final, but found themselves staring at defeat as a brutal innings from Richard Whitehurst threatened to take the match away from them. Here, Shepley seemed on the brink of a heavy defeat before turning the match on its head.

As Sir Alex Ferguson once nearly said: "Cricket. Bloody Hell!"

Danny Glover won the toss on a sunny day at Hullen Edge and chose to bat against the cup holders. Elland has been a low-scoring ground in the recent past, but it looked a decent track as the large Shepley contingent settled down in front of the clubhouse. Australian pace bowler Paul Davis opened the bowling and struck an early blow, having Tom Denton caught behind off the fourth ball of the innings. Tim Rees joined SP Singh and the two began to build a partnership against some good new ball bowling from Davis and Lombard. Rees was the next man to go with the score on 31, as Lombard produced a great ball to bowl him. Singh followed 14 runs later, adjudged lbw to Crossland.

Liam Wiles, meanwhile, looked in good touch and, with a restrained Amar Rashid, began to repair the damage, taking the score up to 78-3. Disaster then struck as Wiles, his concentration possibly broken by an imminent change of bat, was run out by a smart piece of fielding as he thought about a quick single. Huw Ellis fell two balls later and Rashid, Nigel Hoyle and Ben Wells quickly followed leaving Shepley in disarray at 98-8 with twelve overs remaining.

Danny Glover, however, was still there and, with brother Craig, was determined to bat out the remaining overs and try to reach a credible total. With great discipline and skill, the pair eked out a partnership of 46 precious runs, before Danny was out to the penultimate ball of the innings for an excellent 45: a real captain's innings. Craig was run out going for an impossible second run off the final ball, leaving Shepley all out for 145.

Would that be enough? The interval saw smart phones combing the internet for scores at Elland this season and giving a bit of hope. The average score batting first in the previous couple of months was just 131. It was still, however, a daunting task against a Skelmanthorpe side with some dangerous batsmen and a proud history in the Sykes Cup. Shepley needed something special: enter the Glover boys once again.

Danny and Craig opened with a superb spell of fast bowling that defined the game. After 7.2 overs, Skelmanthorpe were 3-3, with the top three all out for nought and only one run coming off the bat. Craig took two of those wickets and went on to destroy the Skelmanthorpe innings to record 8-26: a superb Man Of The Match return that stunned the crowd and surely matched the best performances in the long history of the competition. Danny bowled beautifully at the other end, getting the other two wickets for just twelve runs, and SP Singh bowled five tight overs in support. The bowlers were helped by some great fielding and catching – Tom 'Munch' Sykes taking five behind the stumps – and a collective determination not to be beaten.

Skelmanthorpe were blown away for just 53 with 24 overs to spare and Shepley made history. Since its formation in 1871, Shepley has had just two pieces of major silverware to show for one hundred and forty years of cricket: the two championships in the early nineteen-eighties. This squad of players, under the leadership of an inspirational captain, has turned Shepley into winners. Two major trophies in three weeks; two remarkable finals; a host of excellent individual performances; and a team to be proud of. Winners!

Shepley

Tom Denton	c J Clarkson	b P Davis	0
SP Singh	lbw	b J Crossland	19
Tim Rees		b P Lombard	20
Liam Wiles	run out		23
Amar Rashid	c P Roebuck	b P Davis	14
Huw Ellis	c J Clarkson	b J Crossland	0
Danny Glover*	c H Rashid	b A Dollive	45
Nigel Hoyle	c J Clarkson	b P Davis	2
Ben Wells	lbw	b A Dollive	5
Craig Glover	run out		13
Tom Syke†	not out		0
		Extras (1w;1lb;2nb)	4
		Total (50 overs)	145

Fall of Wickets: 1-0; 2-31; 3-45; 4-78; 5-78; 6-86; 7-92; 8-99; 9-144; 10-145

Bowling

P Davis	15	4	37	3
P Lombard	11	0	45	1
J Crossland	11	4	21	2
A Dollive	13	0	41	2

Skelmanthorpe

Adam Dollive	c&b	b C Glover	0
Louis Aspelung	lbw	b C Glover	0
Haroon Rashid		b D Glover	0
James Dollive*	c T Sykes	b C Glover	5
Kris Whittaker	c T Sykes	b D Glover	5
Paul Davis	c T Sykes	b C Glover	26
Paul Roebuck	c T Sykes	b C Glover	6
Pete Lombard	c T Sykes	b C Glover	0
Josh Clarkson†	lbw	b C Glover	8
James Crossland	c SP Singh	b C Glover	0
Dominic Storey	not out		0
		Extras (3lb)	2
		Total (25.5 overs)	53

Fall of Wickets: 1-0; 2-1; 3-3; 4-10; 5-26; 6-34; 7-34; 8-47; 9-47; 10-53

Bowling

D Glover	8	4	12	2
C Glover	12.5	3	26	8
SP Singh	5	2	12	0

Shepley beat Skelmanthorpe by 92 runs