

## 2008-09 Season review

Well, this isn't the kind of speech we are used to giving at Huntington. In recent years we have shown year on year improvement, patting each other on the back along the way. I suppose that couldn't continue without us having some sort of setback. That's how I see this last season – a setback. But the best teams in the world all suffer setbacks and bad periods. Last season got off to the worst possible start as in pre season we didn't really know which players would be with us and which wouldn't. It led to unrest in the camp, poor numbers coming to pre season training and a general lack of dedication required to be winners of a tough, competitive league.

I was going to hold my hands up and accept the responsibility for this season, as in previous years I have accepted the compliments when things have gone well. To a certain extent I along with Matty may have taken the foot off the gas so to speak. We maybe didn't get things right from the off last year, but like I said all successful teams need setbacks to improve.

Matty and I have had the plaudits over recent years and I feel with those plaudits we did state on many occasions that it was mostly the players that made it all a success. So with that in mind, whilst we made mistakes, I feel the players as a whole have to share some of the responsibility for this years lack of success. At times it seemed to matter more to us than some of the players that we were preparing poorly and not getting results.

True that *after* games passion was shown when we hadn't performed and players got all angry and there were all the right sounds coming from players about how we needed to improve etc etc. It was interesting to me then that after those games, I expected a mass turnout at training only to be greeted by the usual 7 or eight players (thanks to them for coming).

There were training sessions last year that were 3 a sides!! That simply isn't good enough to win titles. I have been told that the team which came 6<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> in the league this year regularly attracted over 20 players a session. They came 6<sup>th</sup> with regular, supposedly top of the shelf professional training! I feel that over the last 5 years you lads have shown such commitment to the cause that you actually *got away without* training so much last year. That shows the progress you made over the period we've known you but also shows to me how much better you could've done last season.

We had some really good runs this season and we have gone unbeaten for god knows how many games recently which has reminded me that we are still *potentially* the best team in the league.

Training is amazingly important, like pre match warm ups, if only for the fact that teams manage to get a camaraderie amongst themselves. We have moved training around to suit people last year but it was only the introduction of the 5 a side at

Rocco that really seemed to get you're attention. The new comp will start in a few weeks and teams will be chosen on the first night, captains will be appointed and fixtures decided. I sincerely hope you all take part. If you have to miss sessions then just let us know, that's all we ask – a text costs nothing so make sure you have our numbers.

The five a side will start soon, like I've said, and this will be on Tuesday nights, hopefully at a better time. But really we need a good pre season to get us off to a flyer and we will be starting a little earlier this year. Harry will be helping out to get you physically right – don't underestimate him, he's not there to make you better footballers (that's my job), he knows what he's doing and he's there to make you physically fit and strong.

My guarantee to you is that the more sessions you attend this summer the better a footballer you'll be, which can only be good for the club and your own well being. Training will be stepped up this summer but we need all players to be committed as without you we can't improve.

We have plans for more friendlies – hopefully a game in Whitby followed by a team bonding night out, and will hopefully have more in house friendlies.

We have footballing principles that we feel are successful to win the York league and will be implemented next season. We can't be second guessed or doubted, as happened on occasion last season so we really need you all to listen to both Matt and myself and do your best to carry out our wishes.

There will be a task sheet circulated to all players this summer outlining what we expect of you as players which hopefully you will heed.

We have a lot of hope for next season – the players already at the club are more than capable of regaining the title – it just needs a little more commitment, better preparation (drink all you like from 5pm Saturday – just not Fridays!!) and a touch of luck. Together we can have so much more success.

We will have younger players around the club next season so we would appreciate you all trying to be good role models – these lads will look up to you but like all young lads, they soon sniff out the players that don't deserve their respect.

Remember – we came 3<sup>rd</sup> without breaking sweat – if we all pull together next year imagine the success we can have.

Make this club your own because there aren't many better places to be a member than this place.

See you all soon!!!!!!!!!!

## Player ratings

Steve Myers – 7.5 – Need to keep him fit as missed too many games last season

Tom Hewer – 6 – Stood in and provided good cover but needs to concentrate more to improve.

Nick Fenton – 7.5 – Came on well last season. I expect improvement to continue next season.

Sam Marshall – 7.5 – Great addition to first team and provided defence with stability – and lightning pace. Next season is a big year for him.

Mark Smythe – 9 – Fantastic season from our defensive leader.

Pete Laidlaw – 8.5 – In best position and instrumental in our best wins. Can still improve and get better. Fitness is key for Pete – I imagine when fully fit there won't be a better midfielder at any other club in York.

Kev Martin – 8 – Responsible for kick starting our season at Wilberfoss and consistently good anywhere along the back line.

Gaz Mitchinson - 9 – One of our most consistent players. Great season and hopefully even better next year. Goal of the season as well.

Lee Jackson - 8 – Mr Reliable, always willing to play and dependable. No one likes playing against him.

Chris Dyson – 8.5 – Promises any team goals and always looks likely to score. Good season which will be bettered next year at HRFC.

Wayne Scaife – 7.5 – Showed great potential towards end of season as a striker. Needs to get a run of games without injury and we could have a gem.

Gary Newton – 7.5 – Set such high standards over previous years but didn't quite match them this season through missing games. Would walk into any team when on form and I hope he gets back to his best next season.

Dave Newton – 7 – Similar to brother. Could be a superb addition to any team but other commitments meant he never really got started. Best left foot I've seen for a while. Could be a hit season next year if available and fit.

Danny Franks – 7.5 – Came to us late on and showed amazing potential. Real football brain and good all round footballing ability. I look forward to see how well he does next season.

Jonno – 7 – Didn't play enough games for us last season. If he had we may well have had a more successful season.

Fishy – 7 – Young grafter came in and did the club proud. Amazing work rate which rubbed off on more senior players. Improvement expected next season

Ali Bell – 7 – Came on in leaps from December. Another with a good footballing brain but must get physically fitter and stronger. Pre season could determine how well he does next season.

Gaz Hirst – 7 – Another young lad who did really well when called upon. Again, needs to be fitter and stronger to compete.

Jordan McGuigan – 7 – Young player with bags of ability. Needs to keep improving whilst at Uni. Neat and tidy player, never gives the ball away but needs to learn how to play a killer ball or two. Will only get better.

Neil Cadywold – 7.5 - Experienced player who did amazingly well at Kartiers. The club needs him to lend experience and support to the younger players coming through.

Paul Harrison – 7 – Great example to all our players (me included) – fit as a fiddle, prepares for Saturdays in the correct manner, and helped out when we were short. Jack Wilson (Club Legend)- Club stalwart Jack was playing with his usual 100% commitment before deciding to transfer to his home club Strensall. Jack was and will be missed by the club and will be remembered for his never say die attitude - Thanks Jack

Ben Pears - 7 - Ben came back to us and struggled to reach the form he had in our title winning campaign of 2006-7. Injury and work commitments held him back and again thanks to him for trying.

Macca - 7 - Always willing to help out with playing and a great example to all at the club. Did well when called upon.

Matt Ward – 8.5 - Amazing commitment from the manager. Does more for the club than some players realise. Needs same commitment he shows from all the players to have a chance of winning Manager of the Year next season!!