



# KYPROS CRICKET

No 3  
2015 issue 1

The Newsletter of the Cyprus Cricket Association [www.cypruscricket.com](http://www.cypruscricket.com) [twitter.com/cypruscricket](https://twitter.com/cypruscricket)



A Perfect Sunday - Watching the Cricket at Happy Valley

## Starting a Club is Easy!

It really is easy to play cricket in Cyprus and we're lucky to have a climate where we can start playing in January and finish in November. The main requirement to playing cricket here is enthusiasm. In this issue we look at how clubs started in Cyprus.

## The Other MCC

Steve Carr looks back to the origins of Moufflons Cricket Club and the Cyprus Cricket Association.

In 1987 Mr G.H. Jones, a retired school teacher from South Wales, placed an advert in the Cyprus Weekly with the intention of forming a cricket team to play teams on the British Bases. In the 80s and 90s cricket was a very popular sport enjoyed by the British soldiers and airmen based in Cyprus. Soon, after its formation, Moufflons Cricket Club - known as the Cyprus MCC - were arranging friendly matches with

the many minor unit teams.

Until around the year 2003 Akrotiri, the WSBA and Episkopi had their own Minor Unit Leagues. Each League had up to 10 teams. In military jargon, "minor units" are the Police, Medical Staff, Fire Section, Signals, Motor Transport, Movements, Army Com-



Still going strong after 28 years; Moufflons in 2014 panies and so on.

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In the early years, the Moufflons' games were sociable affairs, played at weekends against one of the Minor Unit teams usually in the WSBA. The Moufflons were nomads, with no cricket ground of their own, so to reward our hosts and to encourage further games the MCC provided the post match BBQ together with cool boxes containing thirst quenching chilled beers. *Continued next page...*





Moufflons in the field and appealing (unsuccessfully) vs Episcopi at Happy Valley

Moufflons players were mainly from the UK, with a sprinkling of expats from other cricket playing nations. Although, most were employed by international companies in shipping, finance and IT, there were also a few retired players.

While the aim was to enjoy and have fun, Moufflons were competitive too and we usually gave a good account of ourselves. If we didn't then the long term Captain, Ralph Shirley, would try and motivate his team with a few choice words of encouragement.

Ralph was originally from near Swansea and was the Moufflons wicketkeeper and opening bat from the start and was ever present during the first 10 years.

Probably our best all round cricketer in the 1990s was Australian Darren Stubing. Despite his quiet manner he let his bat do the talking and could usually be relied upon to be a strong opening bat, scoring many 50s and more than the occasional ton. He was a skilful bowler too, taking vital wickets.

During the early 1990s the MCC were invited to compete in the Cyprus Major Unit League. We were then competing against the cream of British Forces cricketers. As there were only around five teams in this league it still meant there were some match free weekends which allowed time to play a few friendly games too.

The step up in standard required a strengthening of our squad and soon younger, and more talented players were recruited from Asian students and workers in Cyprus. Initially the new recruits came

mainly from Sri Lanka, later players were expats from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.

## The Cyprus Cricket Association

In 1998 the Cyprus MCC received an invitation from the European Cricket Council to meet and discuss Cyprus forming its own cricket association. At the time Steve Carr was the Moufflons' secretary and accepted the invitation. The meeting took place at the ECC office at Lord's Cricket Ground. Later on in 1998, Steve called a meeting to form the Cyprus Cricket Association.

The recently formed ECC was keen to recruit fledgling cricket playing countries in Europe. The ECC's aim was to develop cricket in European countries where traditionally little or no cricket was being played. To achieve this aim it was recognized that it had to start by encouraging children to play.

Highly motivated and with the gifts of two Kwik Cricket sets, Steve soon started to arrange children's cricket sessions at Akrotiri then later at Happy Valley. With assistance in the form of Junior Cricket Kit from ECC, some local sponsorship and volunteers from Cyprus based cricketers, Youth Cricket blossomed. By 2007 Cyprus under-15 cricket team were giving a good account of themselves by competing at La Manga in Spain in the European Youth Cricket Championship. Also during this period of development the Cyprus National Team were competing successfully in European Tournaments.

*Photos Andrew Pepper*

## North Cyprus Cricket Club

It's amazing how quickly a club can develop with enthusiastic members; a year ago North Cyprus Cricket Club didn't exist - now it's flourishing. **Nigel Holman** tells the story.

We can thank Richard Boxall, as without him there would be no cricket in the North side of the island. Following a cricket festival in Kyrenia during May 2014, he asked if there was interest in a team being formed to play in the Cyprus Cricket League, being held at the UN ground in the Buffer Zone.

As the club's Honorary Chairman I took up the challenge and with the enthusiastic encouragement from many within the British community, the team was born. We realized that to compete a multi-national side would be needed. The only problem being that people from non-EU member countries cannot enter Republic of Cyprus from the Northern side of the green line. I set about "attempting the impossible";

access to the Buffer Zone has been withdrawn by the UN, so the Club is restricted to only playing on the North side of the green line. Once again, Richard Boxall and I have refused to be beaten, turning a negative into a positive a new era has begun on Cyprus's Northern shores. Wanting to play at as high a level as possible and with the help of the CCA, a flicx artificial pitch has been obtained by the North Cyprus Cricket Club; leading to the start of CCA North Cyprus League involving the Moufflons CC and Nicosia CC as well as the local side. It is hoped that during 2015 this will grow to include more of the island's best teams. Further, a game between the two sides of the island is planned for May 2015 in Kyrenia to launch the league for developing local sides. The idea being to help Turkish Cypriots, inexperienced ex-pats, as well as the North's universities' Asians currently playing tennis ball cricket, to play the hard ball game.

In its first 6 months, the North Cyprus Cricket Club



North Cyprus Cricket Club vs Nicosia (UN) - *Photograph by Lynn Holman*

getting permission to enter the Buffer Zone from the North side of the green line via the mainland Turkish Army base which abuts the ground. No sports team had ever achieved it, let alone one containing foreign players and when the "authorities" were told much of the side were Pakistani, they laughed. Undeterred, an application was made by the Club and against all the odds, the Government in Ankara said yes.

Unfortunately, politics has now got in the way and

has seen amazing development, from communication officer Ian Fell's well-viewed website and Facebook presence to a major sponsorship deal with Creditwest bank. Some strong players have emerged, notably Sajjad Kamal an outstanding fast bowler, Ali Arshad medium quick, attacking batsman Rehmud Khattak and Craig Reece as the premier all-rounder. Danish Afridi since taking over the captaincy in July, has set a demanding level of commitment and playing standards, which bodes well for the future.

## A Brief History of Fellows

Fellows cricket team are now approaching their fifteenth anniversary; **Richard Steenhuis** tells us how it began.

Fellows cricket team was formed in 2000, along with the founding of Cyprus Cricket, by Bazeegh Zaka and Richard Steenhuis. It has encouraged new teams to form from Fellows members, three to date, while managing to hold together a strong core of key players.

Fellows ethos is to be true to its name and welcome all players from all nationalities living in Cyprus to play together. Its longevity has encouraged good players to come and play, and good players attract more good players to play with Fellows. Its current captain, Mike Kyriacou, is also captain of the national team, and that might help a little as well. So far Fellows has been the bridesmaid and never the bride, but this year is in the finals of the 40 over competition, so, fingers crossed, that will change. *Editor's note - it did indeed change; Fellows won the 2014 Autumn 40 Over competition.*



Christos Markides bowling for Fellows vs Moufflons

### Get Involved!

Are you interested in playing or watching cricket in Cyprus? If you're an adult have a look at the club links on the CCA website [www.cypruscricquet.com](http://www.cypruscricquet.com) - many have contact details.

If you have children who'd enjoy playing Kwik Cricket - played with plastic bats and a soft ball under adult supervision, the CCA organizes regular weekend courses - have a look at the youth page on CCA website for information about the upcoming courses.

If you are interested in helping Cyprus Cricket in other ways - sponsorship, administration or coaching, drop an email to us at [info@cypruscricquet.com](mailto:info@cypruscricquet.com).

## Looking Back at 2014

In what's become a tradition (ie it's happened twice), **Richard Boxall** looks back at last year's cricket in Cyprus.

Cyprus Cricket's three main competitions in 2014 were largely dominated by a newly formed team, Kazepis of Limassol, who won the Spring 40-over and Summer T20 leagues before being runners-up to Fellows in the Autumn competition.

At the start of the year Cyprus Cricket obtained the use of the cricket ground in the United Nations base at the old Nicosia airport. Whilst not being ideal, this did at least provide us with a regular venue for cricket, with a concrete strip which, when covered with our Notts Sport matting, offered a reliable surface for good cricket to be played.

As a result a lot of runs have been scored during the year, including many sixes over the shortish boundaries, but at the same time good bowling has brought its rewards, as the pitch does offer bounce and turn.

However, the need to rent the UN ground highlights

one of our biggest challenges – to locate and secure a ground which we can call our home, where we can develop Cyprus cricket to best effect.

### Spring 40-over league

The first event for men's teams in 2014 was the Spring 40-over league, contested by 5 teams, who played each other once. As it turned out, the last match was a title decider between Kazepis and Episkopi Lions. It was the military team who looked like being successful until Saqlain Shah, batting at number 9, rescued Kazepis with a rapid match-winning century, bringing his team success in their first tournament.

Individual awards for performances during the league went to Muhammad Husain (best batsman), Baljinder Singh (best bowler) and Andy Mulkern (player of the tournament).

### T20

For the Summer T20 competition there were 7 teams including one from north side of the green line initially known as RBL Kyrenia but later named North Cyprus Cricket Club, who acquitted themselves well



Epi Lions batting against Kazepis in the title decider for the Spring 40 over competition at Happy Valley

to finish in mid-table. This team originated from a tournament in Kyrenia organised by the Royal British Legion and played between four teams from both sides of the green line. Since then cricket in the north side of the green line has been flourishing under the determined guidance of Nigel Holman.

Much credit is due to Kazepis for overcoming the sudden loss of some of their better players in mid-tournament to regroup under new captain Sha-faqat Ali and win the league. In a strong all-round team, the batting of Shahid Ali stood out – 286 runs for only twice out!

Mustangs were runners-up and Fellows third. The individual awards were presented to Muhammad Husain (batting), Shoaib Muhammad (bowling), and Shahid Ali (player of the tournament).

### Autumn 40-over league

After the essential midsummer break, 8 teams entered the Autumn 40-over league, including a new Nicosia team comprising military personnel, and the re-appearance of a team from Dhekelia garrison. Unfortunately North Cyprus Cricket Club were unable to participate due to difficulties in accessing the ground. The tournament faced further setbacks when two teams failed to complete their fixtures, and a combination of bad weather and the need for ground maintenance work meant that the league was not completed until early in 2015.

On a more positive note, three centuries were scored – by Tony Papadopoulos, Andy Mulkern and Umair Liaqat.

Kazepis (playing under their sponsor's name of

Gennadios this time) met Fellows in the final, both teams having qualified by topping their group and progressing through the semi-final stage. Fellows had a strong team this season, but had never won a trophy despite always being among the contenders, so Kazepis perhaps went into the match as slight favourites after their wonderful year.

The match was keenly contested and could have gone either way at the innings break. But the Fellows bowlers gained a stranglehold on the Kazepis batting, with medium-pacer Niroshan to the fore, and eventually Fellows won comfortably to spark excited celebrations for their first success.



Fellows celebrate winning their first tournament

The awards went to Sonu for batting, Manan for bowling, and Niroshan as man of the match.

### North league

It was very encouraging to have interest from north side of the green line, so following the obstacles



Mustangs vs Gennadios (Kazepis) under overcast October skies - the game was completed the following year

which stopped them from competing in the autumn competition, a mini-league was swiftly set up, to be contested by North Cyprus Cricket Club, Nicosia and Moufflons, in order to provide some competitive cricket. The matches were played at Kyrenia, Bellapais and Nicosia and the event produced some fine performances, although it was also blighted by bad weather and other issues. The winners' trophy was deservedly taken by North Cyprus Cricket Club, and the player of the tournament award was won by all-rounder Ywal Williams (Nicosia).

### **Sussex Seniors**

A most welcome addition to our season was the visit for the second year running by the touring Sussex Seniors team, comprising players over the age of 50, and in many cases considerably over! The large touring party enjoyed their stay on the island and took part in some good-spirited games against local sides. Despite having been very successful in senior age-group cricket competitions in England, the Sussex boys were unable to win any of their matches in Cyprus, but left behind good memories of their abilities and friendship.

### **The coming season**

2015 will begin with a T20 league, with 8 teams all playing each other during the spring and early summer. Will Kazepis recover top spot? Are Fellows the

new power in Cyprus cricket? Or will another team come to the fore? Could we see any young players from our coaching programmes take the step up to make an impression in adult cricket?

We will also welcome two touring teams from the UK during the spring – Peshwa CC and Ram CC - and hope they will enjoy our brand of competitive but friendly cricket!

### **And finally...**

We wish to recognise the sterling work in support of our cricket by Phil Bell and his team of umpires and scorers, without whom the games would not run so smoothly.

### **And more finally...**

A note from photographer Andrew Pepper; the CCA recently acquired a video camera and video is being shot of some of the games. You can use the codes below for a couple of clips.



## You're The Umpire

Being umpire is one of the hardest jobs in cricket - they're on the field for longer than the players (much longer if I'm batting) and they never know what situation the game might throw up. **Phil Bell** poses some more questions (answers below).

Q1. A batsman hits the ball in the air, the fielder near the boundary line catches the ball and loses his balance and falls over the boundary line. What is the umpire's decision?

Not out and six runs

Not out and four runs

Out because he took the catch

Dead ball

Q2. A right hand off-spin bowler is bowling. In the middle of the over, he suddenly bowls left hand spin, the batsman is taken aback and is bowled. What is the umpire's decision?

Dead ball

Not out

Out - he is bowled

Not out and no ball

Q3. A batsman hits the ball, it then hits his leg and rolls towards the stump. He immediately stops the ball with his bat. An appeal is made by the fielding side; what does the umpire decide?

Not out

Out - handling the ball

Out - obstructing the field

Out - hitting the ball twice

Q4. The batsman hits the ball straight back and the non-striker sticks his hand out and catches the ball. The bowler in his follow through, snatches the ball from the non-striker's hand and appeals. What's your decision:

Out - the batsman is out caught

Out - the non-striker is out handled ball

Out - the batsman is out obstructing the field

Out - the non-striker is out obstructing the field

Q5. The Striker receives a fair delivery and in playing a forward defensive stroke, the ball becomes trapped between the Striker's pad and his bat. On seeing this, the fielder at silly mid-off dives in and retrieves the ball before it touches the ground and appeals for a



catch. How would you answer the Appeal?

Out - handled ball.

Out - caught.

Not out

Dead ball

Q6. A ball, fairly delivered, bounces three times before it reaches the popping crease at the Striker's end and then goes through to the wicket-keeper without having touched either the bat or person of the Striker. What action do you take?

None

Warn the bowler that it's unfair bowling

Call and signal "No ball"

Call and signal "Wide ball" as the batsman expects the ball to only bounce at most once

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## Answers

Q6. Call and signal "No ball"

Q5. Dead ball

Q4. The batsman is out obstructing the field

Q3. Not out

Q2. Not out and no ball

Q1. Not out and six runs

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