



KYΠΡΟΣ CRICKET

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The Newsletter of the Cyprus Cricket Association www.cypruscricket.com twitter.com/cypruscricket

Cyprus to Have Purpose Built Ground at Tochni!

In December 2015, the CCA announced the signing of a long term lease agreement with the Church of Saint Constantine and Helen (Αγίων Κωνσταντίνου και Ελένης) for cricket facility development at Tochni, Cyprus.

Cyprus Cricket believes that it is an ideal arrangement to further establish the game on the island and the facility can be used as national training base and also to play games on regular basis.

The CCA has made obtaining a permanent ground a high priority in recent years and they are confident that by investing in this facility it will retain and attract new participants. As well as hosting matches, the ground will be available to schools and touring teams - opening up cricket on the island. Having the facility accessible to the youth will be key to sustaining participation in grass roots cricket over the coming years.



The field at Tochni before work started - as you can see, the ground is reasonably flat

Like to Help?

Any support for the Tochni ground would be greatly appreciated by the CCA and all cricket lovers in Cyprus.

Since cricket started on the island, the only purpose built grounds have been on Defence Infrastructure Organization (DIO) land. Of course, cricket on Cyprus has greatly benefited from the availability of the grounds but access to the DIO grounds is occasionally difficult to arrange. The Tochni ground changes that and will also re-affirm the CCA's commitment about developing the game in the Republic of Cyprus.

Did you know Cyprus Cricket has it's own Youtube channel?

www.youtube.com/user/CyprusCricketTV

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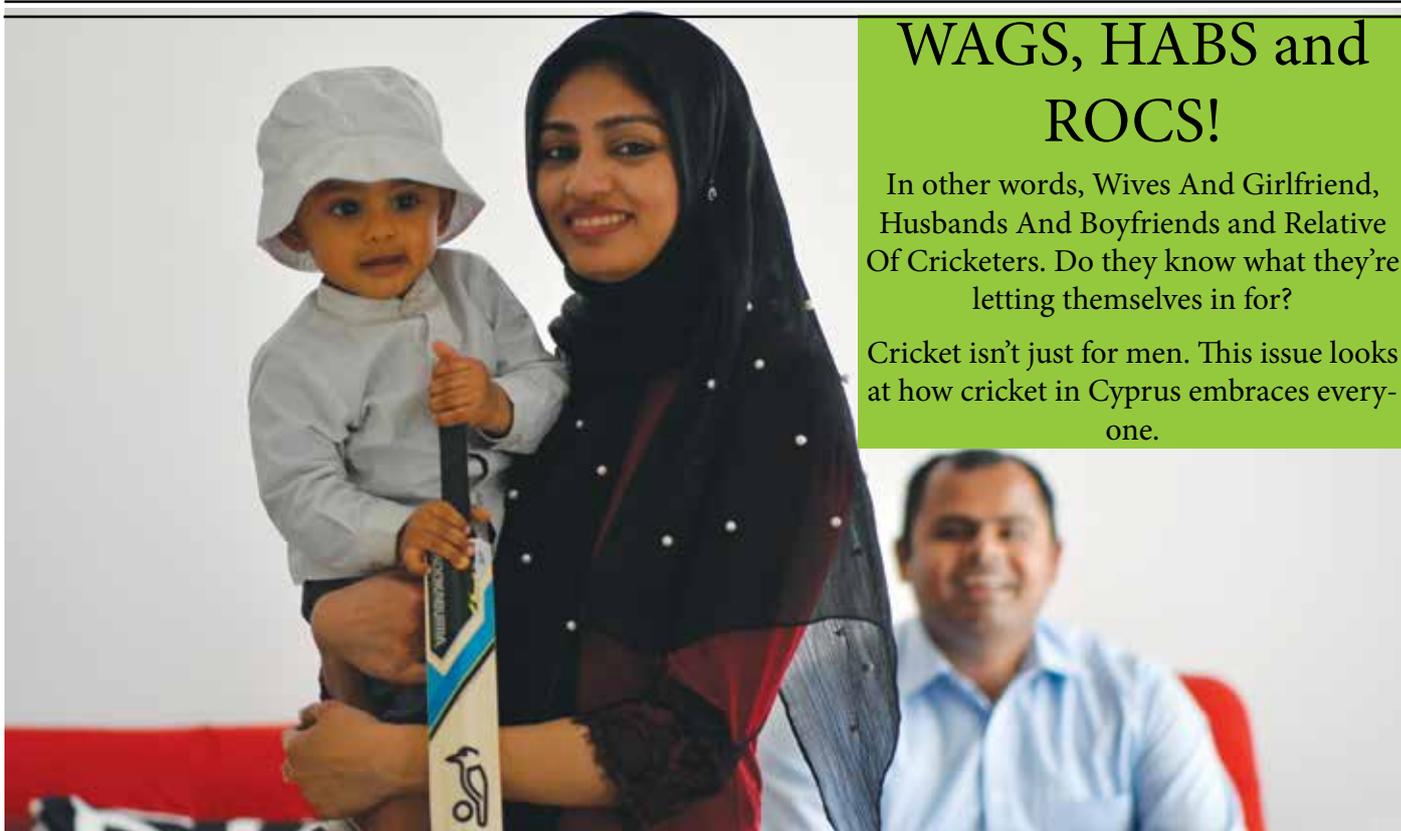


The work started on the playing area in December 2015 for the facility to be utilized for domestic league games in the 2016 season.

The first phase of the work on the ground is to move some of the trees, levelling the playing area and laying 2 concrete wickets - one for the actual pitch and the other for nets. This was completed early in 2016. Richard Steenhuis explained that the layout of the ground will be much like Happy Valley's ground, with nets in the corner of the ground.

It's looking more like a cricket ground as the concrete wickets are now down.

Because of fund limitations, the first year's work will be clearing the ground and laying down the two concrete areas. The following year's plan is to grass the outfield with a drought resistant variety. As time goes by, more facilities will be added to the ground.



WAGS, HABS and ROCS!

In other words, Wives And Girlfriend, Husbands And Boyfriends and Relative Of Cricketers. Do they know what they're letting themselves in for?

Cricket isn't just for men. This issue looks at how cricket in Cyprus embraces everyone.

Masooma with Mahad and Muhammad

Masooma Husain

As well as having a 2 year old toddler, Masooma also has to contend with being married to Muhammad Husain - chairman of the CCA and captain of Moufflons. I visited Masooma & Muhammad and asked Masooma about living with a cricketer.

I know your and Muhammad's families have known each other for a long time; did you know about Muhammad's keen - one might say "fanatical" - interest

CRICKET TOURS TO CYPRUS!

We're so lucky in Cyprus; we can play cricket from March until December.

If your cricket club is interested in a cricketing holiday, the CCA can arrange transport, venues and opposition. Contact info@cypruscricket.com for more information.



Mahad can't keep his eyes off Mum, despite the photographer's best efforts

[in cricket before you met?](#)

I knew Muhammad played cricket for Cyprus national team but never knew, as you said, he'll be so fanatically, deeply involved. I don't mind though.

[Are you a cricket fan? - do you watch cricket on TV? Do you follow a particular team? Have you a favourite player - other than Muhammad!?](#)

No, I don't have a favourite cricketer (other than the one you mentioned of course). I watch cricket on TV only if Pakistan is playing and winning.

[Have you watched Muhammad play? If so, are you nervous on his behalf?](#)

Of course. I have been on field with him several times and I am always very nervous while he is playing and when he is done he answers my never ending cricket related questions.

[Have you played cricket yourself; if so, what type?](#)

I have never played cricket properly. We used to play in a park when I was 13-14 years old. It used to be all girls soft ball cricket but it used to be just for fun.

As you know cricket is very popular in Pakistan so every little kid knows the basic rules; bat, ball, crease, hit, run, bowled, catch out, four, six, wide, no

ball and such.

[Might you be playing for one of the women's teams that are starting up in Cyprus?](#)

I might be playing but can't say for sure. although I keep telling him to arrange a match and that there should be a Cyprus women's team!

[You & Muhammad have a 2 year old son; is it true that the first gift he received was a miniature cricket bat?](#)

Well yes. it was one of the gifts that he first received. Thanks to Andrew & Hazel Crook who sent it all the way from Gloucester.

[It seems inevitable that Mahad will be introduced to cricket as he grows older, do you think you'll be able to watch him play without getting too nervous?](#)

Well it will be his choice first, second he has already been introduced - it was inevitable. If I am watching cricket its just because it's Pakistan or Muhammad or it might be Mahad, in future.

So you see I ought to be nervous on behalf of all three of them, every time I watch them in action.

Thanks to Masooma and Muhammad and, of course, Mahad for their hospitality.

The ROCS

ROCS, or Relatives Of Cricketers, often have a big part in the development of young cricketers. Two young cricketers, Marko Savvas and Tom Pollington, have started playing in Cyprus - we spoke to their parents and then to the players themselves.

Marko Savvas plays for the Cyprus development team and is an all rounder. We spoke to Marko's mother, Lanie

Where does Marko get his interest in cricket?

Marko always loved watching cricket with his dad and grandfather and then later playing it at school.

When did he start playing?

He was 5 years old.

Does he get coaching in Cyprus?

Yes at Silverline private school in Limassol he gets coaching on a Saturday. He also helps with coaching for the primary school on a Wednesday at his school American Academy Larnaka. He plays matches every Sunday.

Now Marko's turn

Do you support a particular team and/or player?

Proteas, AB de Villiers.

I know you're an all-rounder, do you prefer batting or bowling?

I prefer bowling over batting.

How long have you been playing "hard ball" cricket?

Since I was 9 years old.

What's your best moment on a cricket pitch?

When I took two catches while playing for Cyprus Development Team.

And your most embarrassing?

I was batting against a very bad bowler and was over confident and acted very arrogantly. I was caught out on my 1st ball, I learned my lesson never to underestimate a bowler!



Marko Savvas with his parents Lanie and Savva

Tom Pollington is a batsman and the son of Seb Pollington; Seb plays for Nicosia and we start with Seb:

Where did Tom get his interest in cricket?

Tom follows his father (who played for the school, university and the Army), grandfather (a member of the Oxford University Authentics) and others in the family in his passion for cricket.

When did he start playing?

He started young; in the garden, on the beach and playing school matches at 7 years old.

Do you feel nervous on Tom's behalf when he's playing?

Always when he's batting. I think this is true of most parents.

Does he get any coaching in Cyprus?

Not formally. But he is coached exceptionally well at Tonbridge School, a great cricketing beacon, during term time.

Continued next page...

Tom's Turn:

Do you support a particular team? And/or player?

Yes; I support Surrey and in particular I like to follow Zafar Ansari. I watched him for three seasons batting and bowling for Cambridge MCCU as a student before he joined Surrey two years ago. He could gain an England place.

Do you prefer batting over bowling?

I prefer batting. I normally open the innings so it's what I focus on in training. I used to bat and bowl but I decided to fully focus on my batting as I knew it would get me further. However I don't mind turning my arm over once in a while!

What's your best moment on a cricket pitch so far?

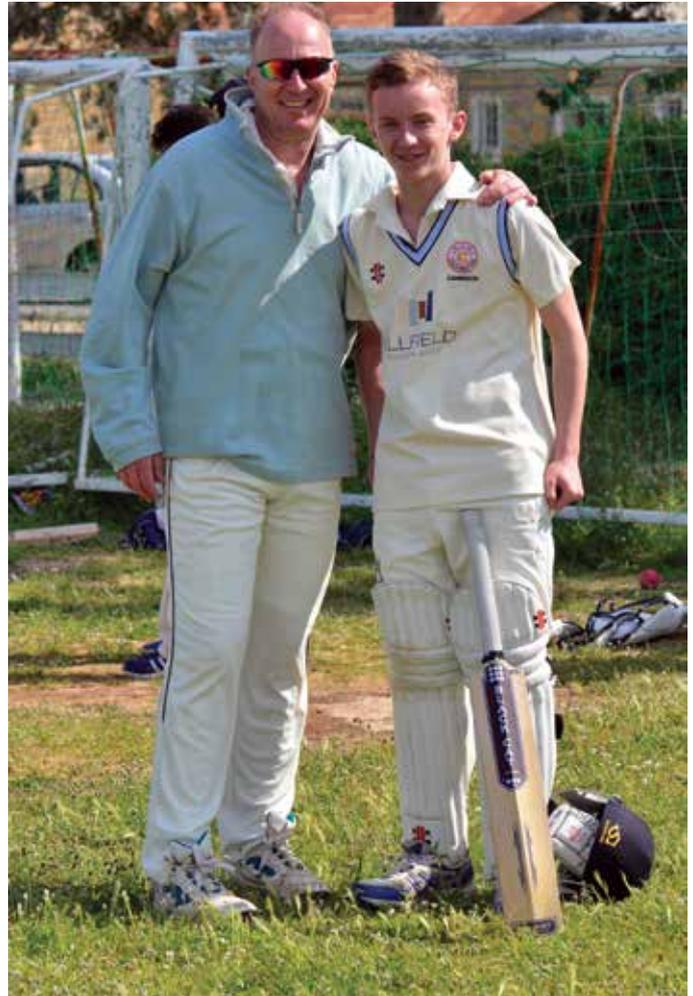
Probably scoring a 50 in an adult game. I was batting at number 5 and went in with 15 overs left. I was thrilled to score so well in an adult game up against some tough bowling. The shot that took me to 50 was the second last ball of the innings too, so I was very happy to have made it!

And your most embarrassing?

Undoubtedly missing what was no more than a simple run out.

Do you hope to continue playing cricket as an adult?

Yes, of course. I'm happy to play anywhere really, so if I could get some regular cricket as an adult and keep up my skills I would be thrilled.



Tom Pollington with his father Seb

Want to be a ROC?

Cyprus Cricket offers strong support for youth cricket, including free equipment for schools, introductory coaching and organising inter-school competitions. The CCA can also teach the teachers - offering coaching courses leading to qualifications as cricket coaches for teachers.

Players are coming through the system who started with soft ball Kwik Cricket now to play for Cyprus Development. If you're a parent or teacher and want to get involved, email info@cypruscricket.com or check the website www.cypruscricket.com for more details.

Below; how to throw the ball - coaching at Silverline School, Limassol on a Saturday morning



Women's Cricket

The first game!

Women have played cricket for years on Cyprus, but the first “official” game took place in May between a North Cyprus team and a Sri Lankan team from Nicosia. Nigel Holman was there. Lynn Holman took the pictures.

Following an invitation from the Sri Lankan Welfare Association, a Ladies team was organised to play in a ladies 6-a-side tennis ball tournament at the Cyprus University in Nicosia.

Until the evening before, when the team put together by manager Lynn Holman, first met, none of the ladies had ever played cricket and half hadn't even seen a game. An intense hour of bowling coaching with Mike Roberts and batting by Nigel Holman and the team began to see what they had let themselves in for.

The big day arrived sooner than the North Cyprus players wanted, with all of them regretting having agreed to give it a go and several admitting to feeling sick with worry.

Another hour's coaching in a car park and the ladies were as ready for action as they ever were going to be, having had almost no time to practice.

In Nicosia, ladies cricket is very popular amongst the Indian sub-continent migrants, with regular competitions. All the neutrals at the packed ground shouted for the north Cyprus team, but their players and supporters knew it would be extremely tough.

Hale Silifkeli was appointed captain and set about organising the bowling and batting orders by asking the nervous players who was brave enough to give it a try.

The North Cyprus side were first drawn to play a very fit Super Six. Winning the toss Hale asked the Super Six to bat and they reached 32 runs in their 5 overs. Val Maskell's accuracy resulted in the only bowling success and she went wild when she took the North's first ladies' wicket in history.

In reply, with little understanding of running between the wickets and against all the odds they hit 22 without loss, Cecily Waddington scoring 6 and Damla Akmandor a brilliant 12. Coach Lynn Holman was thrilled; she 6



Damla Akmando of North Cyprus on her way to an excellent 12



The valiant North Cypriot Ladies

L-R, Hale Silifkeli (Capt), Damla Akmando, Amy Hurn, Nurdan Atamtürk, Cecily Waddington, Val Maskell, admitted that she had envisaged them being skittled for under 10.

The second match in the team's cricketing career saw them pitched against a slightly older but much stronger side called Super Hit. Super Hit batted first and this time rattled up an impressive 52 runs in five overs.

Despite the total scored against them, coach Holman said thanks to Mike Robert's previous evening's work coaching the women, their bowling was much straighter than she'd expected. This time it was Amy Hearn who hit the stumps for the only wicket of the innings.

The target was daunting and with the inning being only five overs, attack from the first ball was the instruction. Hale Silifkeli rapidly got 3, then aggressive hitting from Amy Hearne 14 and Nurdan Atamtürk 6, set up an unlikely last over with 16 needed and Cecily Waddington and Val Maskell at the crease. The Super Hit's best bowler pinned them down, Cecily and Val tried everything, but only 2 each was scored and on the last ball Damla Akmando came in and dramatically hit her own wicket leaving the North Cyprus Ladies 11 runs short.

With smiles from everyone and endless requests for photographs from Nicosia players, the team headed back North, very happy and promising to have another game soon.



Amy Hurn bats for North Cyprus

Women's Coaching

Feeling inspired? Women's coaching started in September 2015 at Heritage School, Limassol. When *Andrew Pepper* went along to watch, the enthusiasm and enjoyment were obvious.

Watching the women coaching at Heritage School on a Saturday morning, the two things that came across were enthusiasm and enjoyment - everyone played with great energy and a smile on their face.

Muhamad Husain was the coach and he was introducing batting with a plastic bat and tennis ball; runs were scored in the conventional way but also from catches and run-outs.

The batters quickly learnt that hitting the ball hard doesn't always get a run - it reaches the fielders more quickly or ends in a catch; hitting the ball into a gap was the key - safe and a guaranteed one or two. There were also some good reflex catches taken off well struck balls.

Each player batted for one over so everyone had a chance to field, keep wicket and bat and although only a practise game, the final over was tense as the scores were close.

After the session I spoke to some of the ladies; all were enjoying the coaching - some were mothers of children who attended Heritage School and had found out that the CCA offered coaching for women as well as children. Puja has two children at the school and had played cricket with her brothers in the garden as a girl.



(L to R) Rachel, Puja and Kirstin are three of the women who've joined the coaching scheme

"But they would never let me bat!", she complained, "Now I have been taught how to hold the bat properly; I can hold a rolling pin, now I can hold a cricket bat.

Best of all, my husband is at home cooking, while I'm here playing cricket!"

Other women agreed enthusiastically; "I can catch now; I was doing it wrong up until the coaching."

The number women attending the coaching looks set to increase and the first women's tournament took place in November.

Watch the video of the first women's tournament at

<https://goo.gl/e4LJ7U>



The First Women's Tournament

Following on from the first women's game, the first women's tournament between three teams took place in Kyrenia on 22nd November 2015. *Muhammad Husain* reports.



Moufflons Ladies, Nicosia Ladies and North Cyprus Ladies participated in the first women's cricket festival to be held in Cyprus. The games were 6 a side, played with a soft ball and plastic bats.

In the first game, Moufflons batted first and scored an impressive 134 runs which included generous contribution of extras from the opposing North Cyprus ladies. In reply, the North Cyprus ladies could only manage 106 runs and consequently Moufflons ladies registered first win in their debut game.

The second game between Sri Lankan Nicosia ladies and North Cyprus ladies was again a one sided affair, as Sri Lankan ladies gave a cricketing lesson to the North Cyprus ladies with a convincing 33 runs win. Sri Lankan ladies batted first and posted a daunting total of 122 runs. However, the North Cyprus ladies fell well short of the target as they could only muster 89 runs in reply.

In the final game of the competition, Moufflons ladies knew that they have to play their best game and apply the techniques learned over the last 8 weeks under the tutelage of experienced Richard Cox (Level 4 cricket coach), Chris Wood, Muhammad Husain, and Andrew Mulkern (All Level 2 Coaches).

The Moufflons ladies after winning the toss, decided to bat first and countered the opposition bowling with serene calmness and such steadfastness that would make any coach proud, let alone Andrew Mulkern. The final score of 121 runs without any loss looked challenging but not beyond the approach of the Sri Lankan ladies.

Led by the energetic Garima Aggarwal, the Moufflons ladies put together a stirring performance in the field. A disciplined bowling performance meant only 5 extra runs (3 wides and 2 no balls) were conceded in the entire innings. The towering presence of close-in fielders Puja Negi and Kirstin van der Laan starved the batters of quick singles. The resulting rash shots were grabbed gleefully by the fielders and the Moufflons suffocated the Sri Lankan ladies in to collapsing.

Some amazing fielding by Ama van Bussel and solid work behind the stumps by Charlotte Scargill kept the Sri Lankan ladies always behind the required run rate. The final act was performed by Masooma Husain, who accounted for two wickets in the last over to help Moufflons Ladies record a 18 runs win over the Sri Lankan ladies.

A well deserving win for the Moufflons ladies who received strong support from the large contingent of travelling fans.

Looking back at 2015 Men's Cricket

With the acquisition of a new ground, the first women's match and tournament, 2015 was a busy year - yet there was also time for 3 men's tournaments and some touring teams. *Richard Boxall* looks back on the 2015 men's cricket.

Three league competitions took place during 2015, as well as a one day event and matches against three touring teams.

Spring

The first action of the year, however, was the completion of the 2014 40-over league, which had to be held over from the autumn. The match was played in February between Fellows and Kazepis (then known as Gennadios) and resulted in a 63-run win for Fellows, who secured their first ever trophy.

Prior to the spring league, a one day 6-a-side tournament gave the teams a chance to warm up. It certainly worked for Shahid of Kazepis who scored 88, 84 and 58, all not out, in his three innings, with 22 sixes. He also held 3 great catches and when he came on to bowl he took a hat trick! As a result, unsurprisingly, Kazepis comfortably won all their matches and took the Moneygram trophy as Six-



A sight feared by all batsmen!
Richard Boxall adjudges an LBW



Kazepis vs Mustangs, 5 April 2015 - everyone holds their breath as Nero takes a catch

a-Side winners. Shahid won the individual awards for best batsman, most sixes and most valuable player. His captain, Shafaqat Ali, took the award for best bowler.

The main competition in the spring was the T20 league, contested by 8 teams, with two games per day played at the UN ground in Nicosia, plus matches at Dhekelia for PWRR. The first weekend produced a feast of runs with 793 scored in the two games at the UN, including a century by Murtaza of Moufflons.

After a visit by touring team Peshwa from England, T20 resumed with Muhammad in fine form, compiling his third successive half-century at Dhekelia. The following week saw an important win for Fellows over Kazepis, with Mike taking 4 wickets and Happy and Shoaib each taking two wickets and scoring fifties. In the second game of the day Cyprus Development XI made 200, with Muhammad failing with only 45 and Shahid hitting his second fifty of the day. But a 134-run partnership between Rehman and Jassi enabled Mustangs to reach the target.

Next came another crunch game between Mustangs and Kazepis. Mustangs bowled exceptionally well to restrict the free-scoring Kazepis batsmen to 136. Afridi followed his 2 for 17 with a fifty and, despite a mid-innings collapse, Mustangs scraped through for a two-wicket win.

In another low-scoring game Amdocs made just 108 but still managed to beat PWRR by 8 runs. The same weekend another touring team from England, Ram CC, enjoyed a couple of games at Happy Valley.

The next week PWRR gained their first victory, beating Mustangs off the very last ball, thanks to a good bowling display and a vital last over six by Sully. PWRR also made life hard for Kazepis, but Shahid's fifty was enough to see them off. Kazepis were also given a scare by Nicosia, for whom Clements starred with bat and ball, but Jameel's 3 wickets helped them to a 14-run victory.

In another low-scoring match, Amdocs made only 99 but reduced Fellows to 51 for 4 before Sonu and Usman calmly saw them home. In an all-military battle, Orr's all-round skills helped PWRR to a win in a keenly contested game against Nicosia.

31 May was the decisive day in the competition. Fellows secured the title with a game left, by beating Nicosia. The match was a personal triumph for stand-in captain Shoaib, who scored an unbeaten 144 out of a massive total of 230 for 6, before bowling a wicket maiden and taking a sharp catch to help Fellows to an 88-run win. Nicosia at least made a fight of it, with Singh hitting 71. The same day, not to be out-done, Mustangs' Rehman hit 150 not out to help his team beat Amdocs by 122 runs to secure the runners-up position.

In the final match of the season Fellows suffered a bit of a hangover, losing for the first time against Cyprus



Mustangs vs Kazepis, 12 April; Kazepis' Tayyab Maqsood going for it!

Development XI, for whom the bowling of Shafaqat and Clements, and the batting of Murtaza and Rehman were decisive.

After the match trophies and medals were presented to the league winners, Fellows, and runners-up Mustangs, who narrowly beat Kazepis for second place.

Individual awards went to Rehman of Mustangs for batting, Shafaqat Ali of Kazepis for bowling, and Fellows' Shoaib Ahmad as player of the tournament.

Autumn

After the summer break we gained the use of the Happy Valley ground at Episkopi, but lost the UN ground at Nicosia. We were hoping for the same 8 teams to participate in the 40-over league, but one dropped out at the start and another part way through, so to provide enough cricket for teams that wanted to play we ran a 30-over league in parallel, making use also of the second pitch at Happy Valley.



Moufflons vs Kazepis, 18 October - Moufflons celebrate a wicket

We were able to provide better records and statistical information on our

website thanks to the CRICHQ system which we subscribed to. Scorecards, league tables and individual statistics are all updated at the touch of a keypad – provided the information is supplied correctly by the teams!

The 40-over league was played in two groups. In the North/East group Mustangs proved to be the strongest team, beating PWRR by 40 and Fellows by 6 wickets. In a close encounter for second place, Fellows just held on to overcome PWRR by 10 runs.

In the South group Amdocs caused an upset by winning their first two games, with Shiv Prakash in dominant form hitting 172 out of 379-5 against Epi Lions, for whom Andy Spring also hit a century. Then Nakul and Pradeep playing starring roles in a one-wicket win against Kazepis. The only team to beat Amdocs was Moufflons, Shiv's 61 being surpassed by Muhammad's 113 not out and Murtaza's 83, but they spoiled their good work in losing by 2 wickets to Kazepis, who secured second place in the group.

The first semi-final was perhaps the best game of cricket of the season. Kazepis recovered from their usual horror start (4 down in the first 6 overs) through good batting by Usman and Shahid (both 45) to reach 160. Shafaqat and Baber bowled with passion and Mustangs struggled until a sensible knock from Aftab, and a dramatic over when Fahad struck 4 sixes, swung the game Mustangs' way.

In the other semi Fellows beat Moufflons, playing in place of Amdocs who were no longer able to raise a team. Shoaib's innings of 200 out of a total of 322 -9 was the decisive factor.

Meanwhile in the 30-over league PWRR were faring better. With two very convincing wins over Epi Lions and Moufflons they were proving hard to beat on their own patch, and finished at the top of the group. Kazepis beat Moufflons to take second place, in a match where they again struggled early on, being reduced to 7 for 4 before recovering to 153 all out, with Baber starring with the bat and Shafaqat and Usman with the ball.

Finals day at the end of November provided a fitting climax to the season, with both matches being played simultaneously on adjacent pitches at Happy Valley, followed by presentations.



30 Over Winners Kazepis



and Mustangs; the 40 Over Winners

The 30-over final was between Kazepis and PWRR, the latter being depleted by work commitments but nevertheless travelling from Dhekelia and having a go. Kazepis scored a challenging 200-9, and although PWRR briefly looked as if they might get close, once the key wickets of Blagrove and Sully were lost they subsided to 80 all out.

In the 40-over final Fellows posted what seemed a reasonable score of 172, but were swept aside as Mustangs won with 18 overs and 6 wickets in hand. In the first innings Rauf took 5 for 24 while Happy was very economical, conceding just 23 runs from his 8 overs. Rupinder was Mustangs' top scorer with 53 as they coasted to the title.

Trophies were presented to:

40-overs: Winners – Mustangs; Best batsman – Shoaib (Fellows); Best bowler – Manan (Kazepis); Final man of match – Rupinder (Mustangs).

30-overs: Winners – Kazepis; Best batsman – Blagrove (PWRR); Best bowler – R Crossley (Epi Lions); Final man of match - Manan (Kazepis)

That was not quite the end. The following week a touring team from Switzerland – SGCC Allstars – came to play three games and proved to be a useful side. After thrashing a combined Epi Lions / Moufflons side in a T20 on the Friday, they took on the Cyprus national team on Saturday and demonstrated good batting and bowling skills to win a high-scoring game by 29 runs. That Cyprus got so close was due to fine batting by Muhammad (83) and Andy Mulkern (57), but the game ended disappointingly when the light deteriorated rapidly late in the afternoon.



The Swiss Allstars with Mustangs after being beaten in the final game of the year - it was the 6th December!

Next day the Swiss took on our champions Mustangs, and suffered their first defeat – by 89 runs – thanks to an imperious innings of 121 by Rupinder.

A fine end to a successful autumn season of cricket. Now we look forward to the 2016 season when we hope to see cricket on our own new ground at Tochni.

10 Unusual things about cricket

Cricket really is different from other sports. How different? Andrew Pepper has 10 things that only cricket does and which makes it such a compelling game for fans.

1. You can't tell who's winning

In football one glance at the score and you know who's in the lead. With cricket you can't tell; you can speculate, but a big over or a wicket changes the game completely. A recent innovation for televised matches is a computerised "who's in the lead" feature; personally I'm sceptical - the "feature" is fed on similar past situations; one of the beauties of the game is that surprising things happen.

2. It lasts a long time

Other sports last an hour or two and are a bit like reading a magazine. A Test match is more like reading a book, with sudden twists, surprises and revelations. The best Test matches can build to a tense climax on the last day with three possible results - win, lose or draw hanging on the last ball or two. In this situation bizarre things happen - dot balls receive huge cheers from the crowd. In the 2005 Ashes, fans cheered the rain!



Games within the game; Leicester hadn't won a first class game for over two years when they found themselves on top against Essex; you can see the concentration in the fielders as they close on the win

3. Despite the length of a game, a lot end in a draw but ties are very rare

There have been over 2000 Test Matches, of those over 30% have been drawn. Ties, are rare; a tied game is one where both teams have scored the same number of runs over two innings. Only two test matches have been tied.

4. Bad batters and fielders have to bat and field

Not everyone has to bowl, but everyone has to bat and field. One of the enjoyable aspects (for spectators) is watching someone who really has no ability trying to bat. Pankaj Singh and Monty Panasar only bat because the rules say all 11 have to - one of my memories is watching Monty whack Murali for six - I'd swear he had his eyes closed.

5. Games within games

Although cricket is a team game, there are often games within the game - a top batsman facing a good bowler becomes a separate battle within the game. In England, Leicester had a terrible run of form - when they played Essex in May 2015, they hadn't won a game since 2012 - as they neared their first win in nearly three

years, the result attracted far more attention in the crick-eting world than the result of a second division game between two low ranking teams would usually get.

6. Things wearing out affect the game

In first class cricket, each innings starts with a new ball and a new ball is made available every 80 overs. If you think about it, that's really odd; in lawn tennis, new balls do get issued - but that's the same for both players, in cricket the bowling side usually prefer a new ball - although batsman can also

score faster against a new ball. The new ball is such an important thing in professional cricket that players become specialised there are "new ball" bowlers and the main job of opening batters is to "see off the new ball". It's not just the ball; professional games are usually played on grass wickets which wear out during the game; captains have to consider the bowling strength of the opposition; if they have good spinners, they may chose to bat first so they don't have bat during the final innings on a worn out wicket.



Jessie Ryder of Essex plays a forward defensive - for some of the game, "not getting out" is an achievement which can get the crowd cheering.

7. A wide range of physical types can be successful

Cricketers come in all shapes and sizes; Don Bradman was quite short at 1.7m tall, Joel Garner is 2.03m. There's advantages in being a short batsman, but there's also advantages in being a big, strong batsman. The 1970s Test batter Colin Milburn did not look a natural sportsman (and that's being generous!) but he had "the strength of a lumberjack and the courage of a lion" to go with great hand-eye coordination and zest for the game. In England's current test team, heights range between James Taylor at 1.67m and Stephen Finn at 1.98m - when they're batting together, it looks like Finn's brought his son along.

8. Armchair experts love the game

Who should play? Who should bowl? How should the batter play? Where should the fielders be? Cricket is played at the right pace to discuss all these questions - and more - during the game.

9. Internationals are played all the time

For most team sports, international games are rare, for top international cricketers, domestic games are the exception; Alistair Cook will play far more for England than Essex. With so much international cricket, it's not surprising that top players say mental strength is the key to Test cricket.

10. Fair play is built into the game

In the preamble to the laws of cricket is the statement: *Cricket is a game that owes much of its unique appeal to the fact that it should be played not only within its Laws but also within the Spirit of the Game. Any action which is seen to abuse this spirit causes injury to the game itself. The major responsibility for ensuring the spirit of fair play rests with the captains.*

The spirit of cricket has been part of the way the game is played for many years. We play and watch to enjoy ourselves; that's the point of the game.

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