



KYPROΣ CRICKET

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There is a cricket ground in there somewhere! Tochni is overgrown after winter rains, but the wicket is down

How to build a cricket ground

Contents

How to build a cricket ground.....	1
CCA emerging player of the year	5
Men's Cricket in 2016.....	7
Which is better: batting or bowling?	11
Cricketers benefiting from EU funding.....	13

Over the last year, a stony field midway between Limassol and Larnaca has started to be transformed into a cricket ground. *Richard Steenhuis* tells the story of building a cricket ground in a cricketless country.

First find a good location. Back in 2013, Costa and I found an ideal spot in a small tourist village Tochni, ideal for access, midway between Limassol and Larnarca, close to the motorway. The field was about the right size, picturesque with rocky hills on all sides and the village cradled above us to the north.

We had a meeting with the village mayor, the *muchtari*, and a representative from the district municipality, where we gave our presentation, development costs, predicted footfall, the potential benefits to just about everyone. We left with a warm feeling that we were on our way...



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Three years later and nothing had happened. The large billboard that had been erected near the field advertising the new sports complex had long ago peeled and faded.

But now, by chance, Costa heard from a friend,

We were ready to cover the concrete strip with the artificial grass that had been saved for just this occasion since 2009 when Cyprus Cricket had hosted the div 4 championships (possibly Cyprus Cricket's finest hour, beating Austria to first place). Half of the grass was missing, crudely cut to line a golf driving



The wicket is laid

Criton, whose wife had a distant relative on the church council (the field belongs to the church) that the field was up for rent. We scribbled a proposal on a piece of paper on behalf of the Cyprus Cricket Association and it was accepted. A flurry of meetings between the church, the council and Cyprus Cricket, rental contracts were signed, and the land was ours for development for a cricket ground.

Janos brought in his heavy earthmover, to move trees, fill in the dips and remove the mounds on the field, Giorgou poured concrete into the 30 by 2 metre shallow excavation that was to become our cricket strip, Panayoti brought his grader to further level the field, and then brought his heavy roller to flatten it, and finally players turned up to remove the heavy stones left on the surface.

range, or to adorn poolside loungers and parasols.

So we had to look elsewhere. With minimal fuss Costas, Tim, Christos and I removed the artificial grass from one of the pitches that had hosted the 2009 tournament and that had never seen any cricket since, and took it to our concrete strip at Tochni.

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

The outfield raised lots of questions. Should it be grassed or left looking like a large flat clay schoolyard? What is a cricket field without a grass outfield? But in a country where every drop of water is precious, how much can we justifiably use just to grow grass?

The compromise was to grass just the inner circle, 30 yards around the pitch, with kikuyu grass, the only grass that can grow in such a dry climate.

First we had to find a source of water and that meant applying for permission to dig a borehole.



Update: we did get our water license and were able to dig our borehole

The church and local council applied to the ministry of agriculture. Letters went forth. Supplications made to the minister of agriculture (himself a distant relative of someone on the church council). We were given promises and we waited. Permission was imminent and then not so imminent. A letter was on its way and then it wasn't.

Finally, just short of a year later, the letter arrived, We had permission to dig a borehole. Mihalis, who digs boreholes, took us to the field with his water diviner to find the best spot, with the most abundant supply of water, to dig our borehole.

When the license was granted we found that our borehole was to be dug at silly mid-on! Water is a very sensitive subject, families fighting each other for traditional rights of access. The concerns of neighboring smallholdings that our borehole might disrupt their supply were unlikely to be realized as where it was positioned it would probably have no water in it.

So we made another application, this time for our borehole to be repositioned and we sat and waited.

We knew that if (once!) we got the borehole then the really hard work would begin; sowing the grass seed,

watering regularly and caring for it as it grows. And then, finally, five years after its inception, a year and a half after the first works on the field, we might play our first game of cricket.

And if, during or after that game, a player comes to complain of the slope or unevenness of the outfield I know a borehole where he can...

UPDATE! Approval for the new location for the borehole came through and a few days later the rig was set up and we were digging. We were paying by the foot. We passed 300 ft, an affordable depth, without a drop of water found. A nervous 400 ft and still dry. Folklore of fields pitted with deep dry and very expensive holes were beginning to make us feel very nervous. At 450 ft we hit a small stream and that was to be all we were going to find.

Now we have to connect to mains electricity to power the pump to draw the water from our small 450 ft deep stream. Once again we are knee deep in paperwork, applications, authorizations, surveys, all requiring multiple signatures. So here we sit again, waiting.

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Dino Michaelides is the CCA emerging player of the year



Dino receives his emerging player award from CCA Chairman Muhammad Husain

What's your first memory of cricket?

My first memory of cricket was in South Africa when I went to watch a live one day international at Centurion Park between SA vs India.

When did you start playing/being coached?

I started playing cricket when I was 4 years old in SA.

Where are you coached?

At present I am being coached in Cyprus Youth cricket by Mr Muhammad and Mr Andy.

What's your bowling style? And why did you choose that one?

My bowling style is leg spin as I like to try and spin the

ball in and ping the wicket.

Who's your cricketing hero?

My cricket hero is AB De Villiers.

What's your best moment on a cricket field? And your worst(!)?

My best moment was when I played my first mens cricket game for the Mouflons and I got 2 wickets. My worst moment was getting smacked for 3 sixes in my second match

What's your cricketing ambitions? Do you hope to play for Cyprus someday?

I wish to play professional cricket one day and also hope to play for Cyprus.



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80-over league winners - Sri Lankans CC made the best possible return to the Autumn League

Men's Cricket in 2016

Richard Boxall looks back at men's cricket in 2016: a new ground, new teams and historic draws! Editor's note: for non-Cypriot readers; we have two seasons in Cyprus - spring and autumn.

2016 saw a challenge to the old order by some ambitious new teams, and the trialling of a new format for our longer form of cricket in the autumn.

With the new ground at Tochni not yet ready for match play, the main venue was Happy Valley, though later in the year some matches were played at Lakatamia Stadium on the edge of Nicosia, which was convenient for the Nicosia-based teams, thanks to the efforts of Rudolph Crasto, the manager of Mustangs.

Spring T20 Competition

Rudolph had cause to celebrate at the end of the Spring T20 competition, which Mustangs won in some style. Having won the previous 40-over league in 2015, this made them double champions – although they had lost the All-Cyprus Final against Lefkosa Legends, the champions of North Cyprus, in December 2015.

The T20 featured 7 teams, including newcomers (or rather the return of) Sri Lankans CC, who had been a dominant force a few years ago before withdrawing from the league. Each team played all the others in a league format, with the second and third placed teams then playing off for the right to meet the top team in the final.

Kazepis and Fellows made a strong start as expected, but Mustangs were surprisingly hammered by Moufflons thanks to Muhammad's half century,



T20 Final Aftab Ahmad reaches



Even Moufflon's Babar Khan and Ghulam Murtaza (keeper) seem impressed by this shot by Menhag Ahmed

before themselves thrashing Kazepis, PWRR and Sri Lankans. After a narrow win over Epi Lions, Mustangs brushed past Fellows to ensure a play-off spot. Kazepis won all their remaining games to finish top by just 4 points, while Fellows were comfortably in third place.

In the play-off Mustangs again proved too strong for Fellows, winning with 7 overs to spare thanks to Happy's tight bowling and Rupinder's 99. The final brought the indisputably best two teams together, but the game was a disappointment. Kazepis as usual recovered from a disastrous start (Happy 3 for 8 in 4 overs), but still only totalled 117, which Mustangs knocked off in 12 overs for the loss of one wicket (Rupinder 75 not out).

There were clear winners of the individual awards: Rupinder won the batting with 429 runs at an average of 107, and Imran of Moufflons with 15 wickets (average 8) won the bowling.

The possibility of a draw was introduced, challenging teams to bowl out their opponents rather than just containing them.

The Autumn League

For the Autumn League the CCA decided, after consulting clubs, to alter the rules in an attempt to provide more incentive to weaker teams and to make the games more interesting. The possibility of a draw was introduced, challenging teams to bowl out their opponents rather than just containing them, and captains were now faced with some ticklish tactical decisions to make.

Two new teams joined the league – Akrotiri and Nicosia Tigers, the latter being largely drawn from the Bangladeshi community in the capital. Teams were arranged in two groups, with the first and second placed teams going through to the semi-finals and then the final.

In the Limassol-area group, Epi Lions got off to a flyer, winning their first two matches with Azan Baig and Richard Crossley to the fore, including a remarkable game against Moufflons where they recovered from 24 for 5 to reach their target of 165 without further loss in the 45th over – the first time a team used their opponents' unused overs as allowed by the new rules. However, group favourites Kazepis then beat Epi and, needing only to avoid defeat against Moufflons to reach the semi-final stage, recovered from a blistering opening spell by Babar to play out the draw and top the group ahead of Epi.

The Nicosia-area group threw up a few surprises, with the T20 champions Mustangs and Fellows both losing to new boys Nicosia Tigers and to Sri Lankans. The crucial game between the Tigers and Sri Lankans finished as a high-scoring draw, leaving Tigers needing all 20 points from their last game, away to PWRR, to finish top of the group. They duly won, but with only 18 points and had to be satisfied with second place.

In the semi-finals the two group winners won convincingly. Manan and Changaiz gave Kazepis enough runs, and despite the efforts of Tiwary with



Nauman Shafique just in in the 80 over final

ball and bat, Tigers fell short by 78 runs. In the other game, Epi's 126 all out briefly looked challenging as Richard Crossley got to work, but Mangala and Suja saw Sri Lankans home by 5 wickets.

The final at Lakatamia was another disappointment for Kazepis. For once they were unable to recover from a poor start, and managed only 110 all out. This was no problem for Sri Lankans' captain Mangala, who followed his 3 wickets with 46 not out to earn the Man of the Match award.

The individual awards for batting and bowling in the competition were both won by Neeraj Tiwari of Nicosia Tigers who in a remarkably consistent season, scored 211 runs and took 19 wickets.

North Cyprus

Meanwhile in North Cyprus cricket was also prospering, despite the lack of facilities. T20 leagues took place in both Spring and Autumn, with 7 teams participating.

Winners in Spring were Eastern Mediterranean University, and in Autumn, Gentlemen of Girne.

The North Cyprus champions, Gentlemen of Girne, were due to play against the Sri Lankans in the All Cyprus Final in December but the weather was the winner, and with winter upon us it was decided to hold back the match until grounds are playable again in the new year.

The long-awaited game eventually took place on 2 April 2017 at Catalkoy, near Kyrenia, with the ground still wet but playable. Sri Lankans were put in to bat and found the alien conditions difficult, succumbing to 79 all out. For the Gentlemen of Girne slow left-armed Shahzad Malik caused havoc with figures of 5 for 18. But Sri Lankans struck back well, reducing the Gents to 9 for 4 and in real danger of losing.

Fortunately for them, their captain Danish Afridi, who had opened the innings, was still there, playing sensibly without taking risks. Gradually he brought his team close to their target before being dismissed for an excellent 26. Ather Mir was able to play freely now, and his 33 not out saw the Gents home with 4 wickets in hand.

So the Creditwest All Cyprus Trophy remained in the north, after a well-contested game which reflected credit on Cyprus cricket in general.

Playing Forward...

In 2017 we look forward to plenty of competitive cricket, as well as a few planned visits by touring teams. We hope to be playing games on the Tochni ground at some point in the year.

New teams are always welcome. If you are interested in entering a team in the leagues, please contact us at info@cypruscricket.com



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Which is better: batting or bowling? There's only one way to find out!

Batting and bowling are such different skills that most players have to choose quite early on what to concentrate on. But there might be more to it than simply what you're best at. *Andrew Pepper* gives both sides of the argument.



Seam bowlers better get used to long, dusty runs in the sun

If you ask a bowler which is easiest, he'll say "batting", ask a batsman and he'll say "bowling". There must be a better way of choosing - lets start with why you should be a batter.

Five reasons it's better to be a batter than a bowler

1. Bowlers almost never get made captains. Think through the cricket captains you know; how many are bowlers? England's last bowling captain was Bob Willis – back in the 1980s. Conventional thinking is that in the field, a bowling captain will be reluctant to put himself on to bowl or (more likely) take himself off if he's being taken to the cleaners.
2. Bowlers have to bat. However bad, or terrified, you are, the laws say that all eleven players have to bat so all the bowlers have to face the opposition bowlers. Again, the reverse doesn't apply; think what a different game cricket would be if all the players had to bowl.
3. Batsmen will give bowlers unasked-for advice. As we've seen from number 1, if you're a bowler, you're likely to be captained by a batsman and the captain will happily tell you where and how to bowl, or if you've bowled badly, he'll point that out. However, the reverse never seems to happen: Sohail Khan never came onto the field with

However bad, or terrified, you are, all eleven players have to bat

some drinks to tell Misbah or Younis Khan how to bat (although I'd love to see that happen!).

4. If wickets fall quickly, that's "bad for the game" but if loads of runs are scored, that's fine. If 15 wickets fall on the first day of an English county game, the pitch inspectors will turn up next morning and the home county could have points docked from the game. But if the score after the first day is 380 for 2, no problem.
5. Batters can "run on the wicket", bowlers can't. On grass wickets, there's a danger area which "belongs" to the umpires – bowlers aren't allowed to tread in that area – if a bowler receives 2 warnings about running in the danger zone, the next time they'll get taken off and won't be allowed to bowl again in the innings. Batters, on the other hand, can run all over it, no problem. In a recent England vs Pakistan test match, Jimmy Anderson was taken off for running in the danger area – while the batsman, completely legally, ran over exactly the same area.

Five reasons it's better to be a bowler than a batter

1. Bowlers almost never get made captains. Captains will usually get the blame when the team loses. Even if you bowl badly and get whacked out of the park, you can blame the captain for not taking you off when you're obviously out of



One tiny mistake as a batter

form. So it's not your fault!

2. Although the adage is that "catches win matches", you can argue that bowlers win the game. Cricket matches are won by taking wickets and that's what you do. So you can win the game but if the team loses, it's not your fault (see 1).
3. Bowlers get to bat. Every team will have been 40 odd for 7; the top order - the batters - having collapsed and now the bowlers have to come out and try and recover the innings. As a bowler, you can't go wrong; if you're out then you can argue (correctly) that it's not your job to bat so it's not your fault if the batsman failed. If you score a match-saving 100 then you can dine out on that for years after showing the "proper" batsmen how its done.
4. Mistakes are not as bad as a bowler. Imagine you're Marvan Atapattu playing for Sri Lanka vs India in August 1997. You open the batting and after scoring 26, you make a tiny mistake and edge the ball to the keeper. You return to the pavilion and for the next two days, sit and

As a bowler, if you score a match saving 100 then you can dine out on that for years

watch numbers 1 and 3 put on 577 for the second wicket.

From time to time, you must rue that tiny mistake. Now imagine you're bowling, you make a tiny mistake and the batter whacks the ball for six. However, you know you'll be given the ball and can have another go - and if this time you clean bowl the batsman - it's actually *better* - you can claim you have out-thought the batsman.

5. You get to sledge the batsmen. It doesn't make sense for a batter to sledge a bowler (do you *really* want to annoy Curtley Ambrose before he bowls at you?), you still have to be careful; there was this exchange between Shane Warne and Daryll Cullinan. Cullinan had just come out to bat, and Warne said, "I've been waiting two years to bowl you out."

Cullinan looked at the slightly rotund Warne and replied; "Looks like you spent it eating"

Did you know Cyprus Cricket has its own Youtube channel that has video highlights of some of the game?

www.youtube.com/user/CyprusCricketTV

Cricketers benefiting from EU funding

Unknown to many (or at least to me) in the European Union, there is the Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. *Muhammad Husain* explains how the the fund, with the help of Lakatamia Municipality, gave the CCA access to a sports stadium.



Badsha and Sahin (keeper) appeal a close run-out

When you hear about a fund to help introduce aliens into society, your first thought might be a flying saucer landing area, but an EU fund for integrating third-country aliens *isn't* about ET and Cyprus Cricket has found ways to integrate third country “aliens” into Cypriot society through cricket with the help of Lakatamia Municipality.

The collaboration between the Lakatamia Municipality and Rudolph Crasto, who is known to most as the manager of Mustangs Cricket Club, has allowed Cyprus Cricket gain access to the Lakatamia Municipal Stadium, located in the outskirts of Nicosia.

The CCA first approached the Lakatamia Municipality in 2013 and made a visit to the stadium to evaluate whether it could be used for cricket. The stadium was built nearly a decade ago and was not accessible to the public. The big padlock on the main entrance gate was a reminder to the public to stay away.

Cyprus Cricket’s initial approach to gain access to the

stadium received a cold response and it looked like that the padlock was going to remain in place.

However, this all changed in 2016, when Nicosia Municipality partnered with the Municipalities of Agios Dometios, Lakatamia and Engkomi, the Nicosia Municipality Multifunctional Foundation, NKV Advent Consulting Ltd, and Losadeal Ltd and unveiled a joint programme aimed at integrating third country nationals into Cypriot society.

The program is funded through The European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and is one of the four funds that finances national, transnational and EU level actions that are intended to facilitate the integration of non-EU country nationals in the host countries.

A Grant Agreement between the European Funds Unit of the Ministry of Interior, as the Responsible Authority, and Nicosia Municipality, as the Final Beneficiary, was signed on Tuesday, January 12, 2016



Mali finding out the hard way why bats should have rubber on the handles; Lakatamia hosts men's and women's matches

for the project "Integration programmes by Local Authorities".

The project is co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the EU and by the Republic of Cyprus. The beneficiary of the project with a budget of €150,000 and a duration of 12 months was selected after a Call of Proposals was published in September 2015 under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the 2014-2020 new programming period.

Among the services the programme offers are counselling, seminars for adjustment, issuing a manual on key issues such as housing, transportation and communication, employment, health services, public administration and local authorities. The programme also funded activities such as culinary and music festivals, along with sporting events including cricket.

According to Nicosia mayor Constantinos Yiorkadjis "Social integration is a two-way street. Third country nationals should be able to blend into the local society but people also have to accept the new circumstances that arise from multiculturalism."

One of the side effects after the launch of this project is that local schools in Lakatamia got a taste of cricket. On Tuesday, September 20, 2016 during the 14

European Week of Sports, Cyprus Cricket played its part by working with Lakatamia Municipality to introduce cricket to local school children. Nearly a dozen schools participated on the day and hundreds of boys and girls tried their hand at batting and fielding, as well as taking part in games of Kwik cricket.

Since then, Rudolph Crasto has acquired the key of the padlock and the ground has become accessible to cricketers. Lakatamia Municipality successfully organized a cricket competition in the 2016 Autumn, which was competed between 5 teams and won by Nicosia Tigers – a team of Bangladeshi nationals. The Cyprus Cricket Men's Autumn League final and group matches also took place at the stadium. Women's league games were also held at the stadium in 2016.

Despite the fact, that the outfield lacks grass, the venue is popular with the Nicosia teams. The stadium is used regularly for the training sessions and social games. The stadium contains facilities like toilets, kitchen, showers and seating. and is next to the municipal swimming pool. However, the floodlights make the venue even more exciting for the softball cricketers, although they claim it's simply to see the ball, it might really be a signal to ET in to the wee hours of the morning.

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