



Midlands Club Cricket Conference Winter Newsletter 2008/9 –Happy New Year!

December 2008 No.47



"I intend to make them grovel"



"Controversy bedevils Twenty20 cricket tycoon Sir Allen Stanford"

Special points of interest:

- MCCC Dinner March 6 will be a cracker
- ECB Overseas Player policy—Back Page
- Fixture Bureau - use it now for 2009
- New style MCCC ties available now—only £10



Inside this issue:

Stirring up controversy	2/3
St Lucia tour report	2
Fixture Bureau & Play-cricket.com	3
MCCC Award Winners 2008	3
Midlands Cricket Officials—John Nash & Bill Tansell	4
ECB & the law on migration & of bats	4

Controversial Issue

Cricket & controversy seem to go hand-in-hand en route to being compatible if argumentative bedfellows.

We have secured the services of a qualified controversialist to act as devil's advocate on a range of controversies. As you will see you get what you pay for & our 'expert' came free.....

Tony Greig was not the first controversial cricketer but he is a great example. He matched his words (e.g. vilified comment about the Windies team above) with his actions ('unfair' run out & Kerry Packer breakaway)

Today Tony is a little more measured which is a pity given his job-for-life platform with Packer's Channel 9. We have to make do with new change agents

like Sir Allen Stanford who brings a Texan billionaire's quality to the game & his dealings with the WAGs.

Several types of raging controversy need to be dealt with head-on. First is the way the media manipulates the game. Second is money of course, who provides it & who gets it. Third is performance, what drives it & how it can be better.

What happens when a professional cricketer retires to a media job? All the terminology & playing anecdotes are intact but the learning goes out of the window. So knowing that the game is a lottery at which the most capable still normally prevail the pundit rushes to

judgement on 1 'failure'.

TV money flows into the food chain where players with no alternative job 'earn' £1m+, hangers-on & overseas qualifiers have priority over grassroots.

Is performance improved?



Mo Sheikh—MCCC Cricketer of the Year Walsall CC star all rounder & evergreen coaching contributor

AGM, Dinner, Yearbook & Matches

Our AGM was held on 6 January 2009. We are honoured that John Elliott (ex Worcestershire player & Chairman) is our 2009 President.

[Our Dinner](#) promises to be another cracking do again at the Tally-Ho, Edgabston on Friday 6 March. Top comedian is joined by droll cricket wit Mike Hendrick. Why not buy a new MCCC tie for the event?

Our 2009 Yearbook will be

published in the Spring. Will Members please submit their reports to the Editor, Andrew Jackson andrew@amijackson.co.uk

The indispensable Club Directory needs to be accurate - email details to secretary@mccc.co.uk or download a form at mccc.co.uk

To play for MCCC teams against the likes of MCC, Oxford & Cambridge contact Alan Neal

s.alanneal@hotmail.com or 0121 744 6656.

April 29 at Solihull School is ideal for starting as a Conference player.

To play a midweek anniversary celebration game v MCCC contact Howard Clay cricket-clay@aol.com 0121 477 3686. Wythall 100th, Hagley 175th, Barnards Green 75th & Kibworth 150th are planned.



Beefy, Bumble, Bob & Boycs

These cricket commentators are all-round top blokes & not the target of the allegations in this piece of cynical controversialism (not a real word kids).

'Will Someone Please Think of the Children?' - Controversial Thoughts

We Controversialists like this 'Maudlin' quotation.

Adults tend to forget how much they take for granted & how hard it is to grasp new ideas as a child. One such problem is resolving jargon & conflicting advice. Especially when it comes in the form of muddle & myth, flying in the face of common-sense.

So good coaches must put themselves in the position of their pupils & ensure sense prevails.

This is not easy when our

cricket pundits are too certain of their instant analyses. A favourite way to describe almost any shot is 'he hit through the line of the ball with his hands'. A child may not realise that is applied to all shots because the hands are connected to the bat. Originally it was confined to the proper concept of 'playing a straight bat' but it was soon corrupted.

A grain of truth that muddles the minds of our youngsters is 'the ball is not coming on to the bat'. Does this mean that a top

batsman requires the ball to arrive at soon as he/she can hit? In which case they will be a sucker for the slower ball. What is the difference (1st Class wickets) in the time of arrival of the ball? Minimal & very often a 'slow' track is forgotten once a bat who can time it gets in.

If a player is cheered for a shot or ball but then vilified for the same thing if it doesn't work, that confuses kids.

What is 'heavy ball' & why doesn't physics apply?

Cricket Credit Crunch?

International cricketers now open their account with a fat cheque not a short single & hope not to be run out before the gravy. Sadly, it is not controversial to say that the days of helicoptering in \$20m may be over.

However, India has cash flow & needs someone to play for it — provided secure venues exist. Now sponsors are hard to find the ECB may have to trim its sails & allow players a longer 'Passage to India'.

Hopefully there will be continued funding of grass roots cricket which increasingly means the club game.

In between roots & Sky the problem has been put out to grass. Points based immigration will not stem the numbers of overseas qualifiers at Counties. It will put off some Clubs. The cash drain from overall ECB revenues granted to Counties to employ people who keep out local Club talent will continue. Mike Atherton believes TV

money is spread over too many Counties. Another controversial proposal would be to ring-fence that money for employing staff from Premier Clubs. The 1st Class Counties guard their privileges fiercely but that means they agree to Sky-high central contracts & support staff costs in exchange.

The Club game needs to get itself represented! Mike Gatting please note & then **follow the money**'.



MCCC 'Play & Party' Tour of St Lucia

Our tourists braved sun, sea, sand, spin & Sandals. Rooms 5 paces from the beach were no match for hot cricket action.

Tour Manager John Canning of Exhall & Wixford CC reports that Dave Banks's boys did well winning 3 & losing 2.

Beausejour World Cup stadium was first up Vs.

Gros Islet. MCCC won by 44 runs with Dave Banks leading from the front with 36no & 4 for 6.

Mindoo Philip Park another international venue saw a 101 run victory over the local Police. Mahmood & Robinson scored & Gough took 4 wickets.

After boating & fishing the cricket moved to the

east coast for 2 20/20 games against Denner—honours even after a long day.

Walking on 'Zip Wires' in the forest canopy did not prove a suitable warm up against a stronger Gros Islet team who won by 3 wickets.

Watching England lose \$20m did not dampen the party spirits at all.





Is Performance Improving?

Older enthusiasts may see a pattern emerging from England cricket over the decades. How often has the breakthrough been heralded but has not fulfilled its promise? Do we have the occasional on-year whilst Aussies have the occasional off-year?

Academies & central contracts have provided the environment that players need. This has been at great expense so we have to hope that performance is improving from the bottom-up,

The controversial point of view is that 'national trait' factors beyond normal

control are at work.

Aussies grow up believing in the 'Aussie Battler' persona & try to live up to it. England produces many top individuals but typically suffers from more self-doubt.

When looking for break-out performance it is better to lead than follow. Australia started (or stumbled on) the tactic of increased run-rates in Tests. Copying this without the necessary subtle conviction has caused some lame outcomes.

Given the particular problems in the Windies & Pakistan the clear big winner has been India. Increases in

wealth have combined with the true 'National Sport' status & a huge population. A positive attitude is rooted in becoming the largest entity in the game.

South Africa is stuck in the middle—cricket is not popular for the bulk of the population but signs are emerging talent (Prince Amla Duminy as he is known) has lots of 'bottle'.

Overall performance improvement is based on recognising talent with the right mental strength & having a unclouded vision based on probability not myth. Oh & ensur-



Fixture Bureau at Play-cricket.com

MCCC provides a '24/7' Fixture Bureau for Members. To anyone familiar with Play-cricket.com (free ECB website available to all Clubs) this is plain sailing to operate. However we appreciate that many on the fixtures side are not up to speed yet. The basics are simple:

- Look for fixtures at mccc.play-cricket.com
- Enter a fixture Vs. the

Midlands Club Cricket Conference Fixture Bureau Team with Ground/contact details

- Change the fixture when the opponent is known

This facility can be used in the off-season to show other clubs the friendly fixtures you need.

Use of this facility is growing but needs your support. For more advice &

training email secretary@mccc.co.uk

We also need everyone who takes advantage of our daytime telephone fixtures service to add their requirement to the website so that you get maximum response at all hours.



Andy Smith captain, Kibworth (MCCC Member) lifts the Cockspur Cup—a five wicket win over Malden Wanderers

MCCC Awards for the 2008 Season

ALEC HASTILOW TROPHY - the most promising young cricketer under 16 awarded to **Sam Kelsall (Moddershall)**

HALESOWEN TROPHY Organisers that have made an outstanding contribution to the development of youth cricket. Awarded to **John Goodwin (Lullington Park)**

MCCC Cricketer of the Year, Mo Sheikh

Walsall CC.

Cricketers of the Year (Playing), J. Levitt, Bromsgrove, D. Catterall, Ombersley L. Irish, Water Orton, W. Pardoe, Belbroughton, B.Khan, Olton & WW

'Esmond Lewis' Wicket-Keeper I.Yousaf, Smethwick

Bill Jones Award for consistent achievement on or off the field. **Mark Ryan,**

Leamington

Leslie Jones Secretary Trophy, Steve Daniels, Feckenham

Tiny Wildsmith Clubperson, Joe Brandrick, Himley

Norman Sharp Administrator, Phil Budd, Olton & West Warwick

Cricketers of the Year (Administrative), Nigel Goodger, Shirley. Barry Macey, Bronze.

Greg Shakeshaft – MCCC (10 years Dinner organiser).

Congratulations to all the above for continuing the great tradition of MCCC awards & recognition. Awards are only made where the high standard has been reached.

As a footnote on the theme of recognition Old Hill recently gave a dinner in celebration of our Chairman **Alan Neal** on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Alan wants a 70+ playing trophy! But seriously there will be an Under 21 Playing Trophy in 2009.



**Midlands
Cricket Club
Conference**

Please let us know what Midlands cricket services you would like to see.

Phone: 0121 288 6594

E-mail:
Secretary@mccc.co.uk



Visit
mccc.co.uk
& for
fixtures
mccc.play-cricket.com



Cricket Officials

John Nash (0121 694 7263) is the Umpires representative at MCCC. John reports on a lively off-season for Midland Counties Cricket Umpires & Scorers Associations. The Wolverhampton Branch of the Staffordshire Association holds monthly meetings on the 3rd Monday at Old Wulfs. They will be holding another course early in the new year at Wednesbury CC & their Dinner will be in late April. Worcestershire Association meets on the 3rd Thursday at Kidderminster CC from January to April. They hold Scorers & Umpires courses so why not sharpen your coloured pens with them? They also have entertaining speakers—**Michael & Robert Hawk** of Hawk Cricket & Leisure, Belbroughton are next up. With a Dinner on 30 January & a presentation evening on 16 April this is certainly a busy Association. Finally Warwickshire hold their meetings on the 3rd Tuesday starting on the 20 January with their AGM & feature topical speakers (like Ashley Giles who spoke on the day he became Coach). **John Jameson** (johnjameson@240talktalk.net) will run 2 of his legendary courses at Edgbaston for 10 weeks on Saturdays & Mondays from 24/26 January. Spin legend, the Zero Rev. **John Bates** (john.bates7@ntlworld.com) will run a 'starter' umpiring seminar on 13 January. There is also a 3 week refresher course from 27 January—contact **Peter Cox** (cox-peter2@sky.com).

Bill Tansell, as a great servant of the MCCC & its members, has been awarded the Bill Jones Memorial Trophy by the Worcestershire Cricket Board. Bill umpired the Npower Village KO Final at Lords in 2007 & was invited back there for the 2009 OSCAs. These were 2 brilliant days to highlight a lifetime in cricket for which Bill is thankful to family & many friends.

ECB Hopes to Win on Points, MCC 'Bats'



Mike Timms (left), MCCC President, presents an award to Phil Budd at an Olton & WW event



Under the government's new Points Based Managed Migration system, cricket clubs need a UK Borders Agency sponsor licence for cricketers & coaches from outside the EU.

Clubs must obtain an ECB Governing Body Endorsement **BOTH** for their sponsor licence & for individual players & coaches (£25 ECB fee).

Tier 5 of the system applies to clubs with at least Clubmark & is for established people at the highest level or who will make a significant contribution to cricket development & operation.

He/she must have played a minimum of 5 first class matches in the last 24 months AND have the relevant coaching qualification.

Apart taking on onerous responsibility of sponsorship under UK Immigration law, obtaining a licence does not guarantee a Visa. See <http://www.ecb.co.uk/ecb/publications/directives-guidelines/sponsor-license.1664.BP.html>

MCC has changed laws on Bats. Umpires will **not** be expected to check 10 criteria related

to construction or composition but **will** be responsible for 6 items relating to dimensions, covering & correct type of bat for the match (no turning up for your fantasy England debut with that old cloth covering). Amateur games are exempt but bat makers will have to comply.

Controversially there is no change regarding the slip-dazzling reflection of the sun off back-of-bat mirror style stickers. See <http://www.lords.org/laws-and-spirit/>