



# KYPROΣ CRICKET

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*by Muhammad Husain*

2019 marks the 20th anniversary of Cyprus gaining the International Cricket Council (ICC) membership.

It's the continued development of Cyprus Cricket Association over the years that has ensured people feel a sense of togetherness.

We take this opportunity to offer our gratitude to various volunteers, players, schools, parents, and sponsors who made a significant contribution towards the development of cricket on the island.

Although, it would not be possible to name all the individuals who have helped grow the game on the island, however, there are few names worth mentioning;

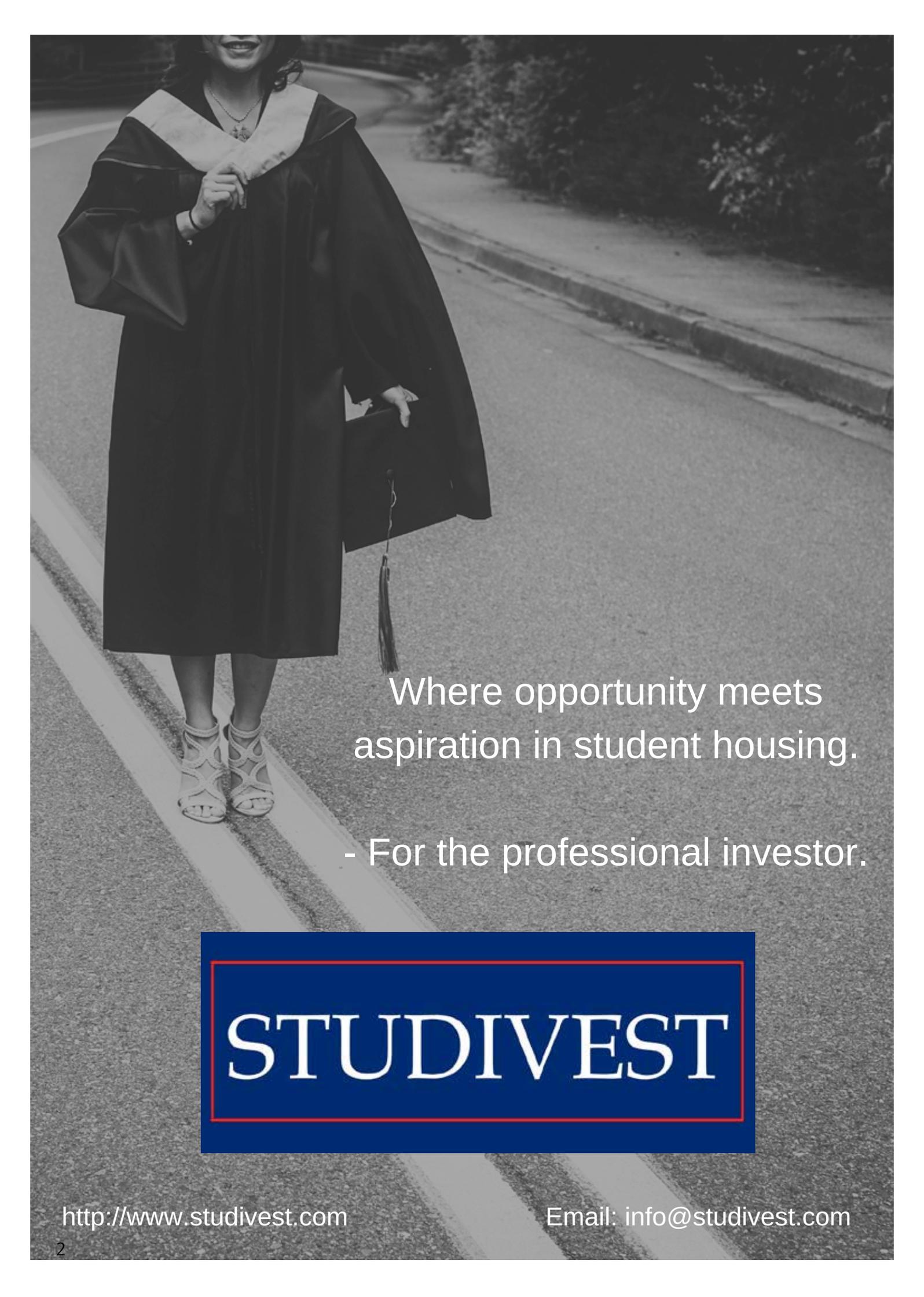
Andrew Pepper, Barry Allison, Cherry Klein, Costas Markides, Geoff Turner, Kevin Klein, Mike Kyriacou, Muhammad Hussain, Nigel Homan, Philip Bell, Richard Boxall, Richard Steenhuis, Rudolph Crasto, Steve Carr.

As we enter our third decade, we do so with great excitement as we anticipate what lies ahead. Thank you for being part of this journey



Cyprus Captain Mike Kyriacou with the 2009 ICC Division 4 Shield

and we hope that you will continue to support the growth of cricket on the island.



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# The 2018 Seasons in Review

by Richard Boxall

2018 saw two excellent league competitions, with 12 teams contesting the Spring T20 League, and 10 taking part in the Autumn 40-Over League. Mustangs had a great year, winning the T20 and being runners-up in the 40-Overs, which was won by Sri Lankans, returning to their former glories!

68 matches were scheduled in the Spring T20, as all 12 teams played against each other in the league stage, and although a few games were not played for various reasons, most were successfully completed. Six different grounds were used – Lakatameia, Tochni, Dheryneia, Akrotiri, Dhekelia and Happy Valley.

New entrants Punjab Lions had a remarkable season, losing their first two games but then winning the remaining nine to finish at the top of the standings. Their winning run included a comprehensive victory over Mustangs, with captain Satnam Singh to the fore with 36\* and one for 7 off his 4 overs.

A major surprise was the demise of former powerhouse Nicosia Thunder, who lost four matches and only finished in 7th place. On the other hand, Moufflons and Amdocs showed improvement to reach 4th and 6th places respectively.

2018 40 over Winning Captain Chandana



In the semi-finals Moufflons were thrashed by 9 wickets by Punjab Lions, while Mustangs also had a comfortable win over Sri Lankans. The final was a much closer affair, as Jeewan's 57 helped Mustangs to 156 for 9. Punjab Lions, led by Tiwary's 52, made a great effort to chase this total down, but finished 9 runs short on 147 all out from 19.3 overs.

As for individual performances, the leading batsman by far was Mehran Khan of Moufflons who scored well over 600 runs, with three centuries. Others to score heavily were Jeewan, Mangala (Sri Lankans) and Tiwary. Satnam was the top wicket-taker with 24, followed by Dilan (Sri Lankans), Sharma (Moufflons) and Mangala, who won the Most Valuable Player award. Top fielder was Wellage of Sri Lankans with 10 catches, 5 stumpings and 3 run-outs.

For the Autumn 40-Over League the teams were divided into two groups based on previous finishing positions, and games were played at Lakatameia, Tochni and Dhekelia.

Sri Lankans showed their intentions by scoring over 300 in both their first two games, and finished comfortably top of their group, with Nicosia Tigers second. The other group was much

tighter, with the top three all beating each other. Mustangs won the final match against Moufflons to ensure top place, but Moufflons gained enough bonus points to pip Nicosia Thunder for second place.



2018 T20 Winning Captain Rauf Zaman

The semi-finals were again one-sided affairs. Jeewan's century helped Mustangs beat Nicosia Tigers by 9 wickets, despite a fine century in reply by Roman Mazumder. In the other semi-final Malka's century and Rayan's 72 enabled Sri Lankans to recover from a very poor start to reach a challenging total of 287-7, which proved to be more than enough to beat Moufflons who subsided to 115 all out.

The final turned out to be the match of the year. Sri Lankans chose to bat first and had to work hard against good bowling to reach a total of 224, thanks to captain Chandana's 60, ably supported by Wellage and Dilan. Mustangs appeared to be on their way to a comfortable victory while Jeewan and Bimal were putting on a century stand in fine style. However, a good catch by Wellage and even better run-out of Jeewan by Chandana and Wellage turned the game on its head. Suddenly the bowling of Suresh and Dilan looked unplayable, and panic started to set in among the batting side. As



An improved Amdocs team caused some upsets in their comeback season

the score got closer to the target the tension mounted and the large crowd of mainly Sri Lankan supporters became more and more excited. The last Mustangs wicket fell with the score on 222 – leaving Sri Lankans the winners by just two runs amid jubilant scenes.

The winners of the individual awards were all well ahead of their rivals – Jeewan, who batted with great style as well as scoring heavily; Suresh, who may have surprised a few by coming to the fore with his deceptive bowling; and Wellage again with the gloves. Chandana won the man of the match award in the final, as well as the season's MVP award.

Congratulations to all the winners; and well done to all the teams and players that took part.

Sadly, I have to finish this report on a less cheerful note. There were a few disciplinary / behavioural problems during the year, and we must call on all teams, and in particular the captains, to ensure

that these do not happen again. Also, I have to remind teams to submit fully and correctly completed scoresheets after matches. If you want accurate team and individual statistics, it is up to you all to supply the information to me promptly.



Nicosia Thunders paid dearly for their complacency

# Fantasy Elevens

## *Fantastic Cricket!*

As I write this during one of the wetter Cyprus winters, we need to remind ourselves that “rain stopped play” is a rare occurrence in Cypriot cricket. What isn't rare is cricket chat – when cricketers meet, they talk cricket. If the conversation flags, an old standby is a fantasy eleven. Traditionally, this is the “best” 11 – where I'm from, we occasionally play the best “Essex 11” (Gooch G. and Cook A. as openers!)

But I think we should move the fantasy 11 into a more formal off-season game. So, I'm proposing a set of laws for Fantasy Elevens.

To start, a title is proposed by one of the players. If that title is agreed, then each player writes out an eleven. When everyone's finished, each team sheet is scored based on the names: Current Test players score 4 points, past Test player 3 points, first class player, 2 points, club player 1 point. If the name is judged inappropriate, then lose a point. So the highest possible score is 44 – 11 current Test players.

For example, Ollie Pope's recent call to the England team prompted me to wonder about a “Religious Eleven”. A few minutes work on the ICC website and I came up with:

Pope G (Eng), Angel J (Aus), Gabriel S (WI), Chappell G (Aus), Chappell I (Aus), Priest M (NZ), Bishop I (WI), Imam-ul-Haq (Pak), Vickers H (Suffolk Women), Pope O\*+ (Eng), Cardinal C (KZN).

Like many fantasy elevens, it's easy to think of the first few, but I struggled towards the end – saved by Suffolk cricketer Hannah Vickers! I scored this

thus; 2 current Test players, 7 past, 2 club players, deduct 2 points because of all the repeated names yields 29. Beat that!

I had to use the Internet, but hard-core supporters

might be able to come up with an eleven from memory. What does it say about me, when I looked at the “Innuendo 11”, I did all but one from memory? Pant R+ (India), Pant R (India), Sidebottom R (Eng), Sidebottom A (Eng), Bumrah J (India), Holding M\* (WI), Willey P (Eng), Willey D (Eng), Pollock P (SA), Pollock G (SA), Pollock S (SA). Dickwella N (SL), Butt S (Pak) - this scores 32 – I deducted 2 points because there were a lot of Pollocks.

However, my favourite 11 (so

far!) is a “Confuse the Opposition 11”:

Smith D (Derby), Smith D (Glouc), Smith D (Surrey), Smith D (Warcs), Smith D (Warcs), Smith D (Lancs), Smith D (Sussex), Smith D (Cumberland), Smith D (Derby), Smith D (Sussex), Smith D (Somerset). Twelfth man Smith J (Derby), substitute Smith J (Sheffield). Chairman of selectors Ed Smith

It doesn't score that high, because “only” five D Smiths played Test cricket.

That's my efforts, but if you've got a spare 10 minutes or so, why not have a try at these:

Commentating legend, Henry Blofeld, had a real problem saying “Mullally” – without fail, he'd call him “Milady”, that prompted me to wonder about a “Commentators' nightmare eleven” – eleven players with unpronounceable names; can you come up with eleven “difficult” names?

“Annoying Eleven” – this is a common game for pro-cricketers; for the all-time eleven, Nassar Hussain is often captain.





“Chattering Eleven” – this might overlap with the annoying eleven! Some players love to chat – can you come up with eleven? Graeme Swann is probably captain.

Finally, I’ll leave you with my “Rabbits Eleven” – one of the best things about cricket is that people with no batting ability are obliged to bat, these are eleven of the “best”:

Ambrose C (WI), Dillon M (WI), Panesar M (Eng), Edwards F (WI), Malcolm D (Eng), Kaneria D (Pak),

Tufnell P (Eng), McGrath G (Aus), Chandrasekhar B (Ind), Walsh C (WI), Martin C (NZ).

Chris Martin was one of the last Test cricketers to completely disregard one side of the game. The story is that as he went to cricket practise on his bike, he couldn’t carry his cricket bag so he never learnt to bat.

Now, the rabbits eleven might not score many – most of them average under 10 – but what a bowling attack!



### #WorldwideWickets

Fans around the globe are to be given a chance to experience the excitement of the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup 2019 through the ICC’s brand new #WorldwideWickets campaign that will celebrate the different ways we all play cricket.

The best ten #WorldwideWickets posts will be shortlisted by CWC19 Ambassadors and then fans will vote for an overall winner who will be rewarded with a grand prize of tickets and travel for two to the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup 2019 Final at Lord’s on July 14.

The campaign will run from 21 February until the final stages of the tournament in July 2019. A winning photo or video will be selected approximately every 2 weeks leading up to the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup 2019 Final with each winner receiving a limited-edition ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup ball.

#### *What you have to do*

1. Find a photo of you, your friends, your kids, your extended family playing social cricket.
2. Upload this photo to your personal Instagram or Twitter and use the hashtag #WorldwideWickets
3. Feel free to add a bit of context in the description

#### *More info;*

<https://www.cricketworldcup.com/worldwidewickets>



# Cyprus Cricket Team



Cyprus Team

Cyprus National Cricket Team toured the Netherlands in August/September 2018 to take part in ICC World T20 Qualifiers. Team captain Muhammad Husain shares his experience and thoughts.

## ***What was your average day like during the tournament?***

On the game days we were usually getting up quite early and we were one of the first teams to get done with the breakfast. This allowed us to go back to our rooms and get changed for the warm ups so that we don't waste any time after arriving at the ground. Usually, the bus ride to the ground was only 10 minutes, except on the first day when it was nearly an hour-long bus ride. Once at the ground, the team Head Coach, Richard Cox was making sure that we get down to business quickly and in no time, He was setting up the warm up drills. The warm ups and stretching exercises were usually taking 45

minutes and we used to get done with it before the toss. The toss takes place half an hour before the game and we had enough time between the start of the game and the toss to get changed for the game and have a team talk.

After the game, once we were done with the warm down exercises, we use to pack our bags and vacate the changing rooms before heading to the players and officials area for the lunch. After the lunch we were getting picked up by the bus for the ride back to the hotel. Once back to the hotel we had enough time to have some rest before going to the town centre which was 20 minutes' walk from the hotel for the evening meal.



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by Muhammad Husain



**Which game did you feel as a team was the hardest and why? Strongest opponent, weather conditions etc**

I believe the first game against Germany was the hardest considering the weather conditions. Germany was one of the teams that was favourites in our group to qualify for the next round and they had a quality squad with ex-Afghanistan International fast bowler Izatullah Dawlatzai amongst their ranks. The fielders found it difficult because of the overnight rain.

The bowlers had trouble gripping the ball and during our batting innings we had a rain break – at the time of break both teams were tied on DLS method – however, after the rain break, we were given an improbable target to achieve in alien conditions and we found it difficult to achieve and eventually lost by 46 runs (DLS method).

**What was it like for some of the newer players to be at the tournament?**

We had a near complete squad overhaul with captain (Muhammad Husain) and vice-captain



All joys as Abdul Manan takes a crucial catch

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Azan Baig is mobbed

(Mike Kyriacou) the only survivors from the previous assignment in 2012. The players were excited to be part of the tournament and they were even more excited to play on grass / turf pitches, as we play on artificial surface in Cyprus. However, the excitement soon turned in to desperation for positive results once we found the going tough against Germany and Denmark in the opening two games. However, the team stayed focused throughout. The squad showed great unity and were understanding of the situation and the team management was satisfied with the overall discipline of the squad.

***What do you think were the main things to take away from the experience?***

The players have realised that playing domestic cricket in Cyprus is far different than playing in alien conditions against unknown players. However, if we look at our performance against Austria who were one of the better teams in our group and only missed out qualification to the next round on net run rate, we should feel confident that the players have the potential and they can play much better cricket. Perhaps,

the pressure of the big moment and the burden of the expectations was a bit difficult to handle for some players. Nevertheless, we know that we are doing right things at the moment. We have gained valuable experience in our approach to the game. We looked at various ways how other teams approached the game, we looked at other teams' strategies in countering various oppositions and how to use various tactics when going gets tough. Perhaps, the experience will allow us to have clearer mindset in future tournaments and hopefully will allow team to play its normal game under pressure.

***After the result, what are the next steps for the Cyprus team?***

Cyprus intends to participate in the ICC European championships again in 2020. The team gathered last October and had a talk about it. The team will be assembling again in March 2019 and will be provided with a training program for 2019 and 2020 leading up to the tournament. There are quite a few areas that require attention and the onus will be on players to work on those areas and improve their game. We are looking forward

to involve new players in the pool and hopefully that will have a positive impact. The next event in 2020 holds significance as the matches will hold the T20I status. Until Dec 31, 2018 there were only 18 ICC member countries with T20I status. All the matches involving remaining members were classified as 'Other T20' and didn't hold the International status. However, from January 1, 2019 all 104 ICC member countries now hold the T20I status. It's a major move from ICC to spread the game globally and it brings a lot of excitement for the players vying for a place in the Cyprus Cricket National team.

***What are the future developments for Cyprus cricket (domestic), in general over the next 12 months?***

In the past 20 years of organized cricket in Cyprus - with only 4 teams in the league in 1999 when

Cyprus was granted the ICC membership to more than two dozen adult men cricket teams on the island in 2019 - we have come a long way in developing the game on the island. We are working hard in having appropriate facilities available for the growth of the game. We always took the tournament as a step towards targeting the indigenous audience and we should focus on the youth and women cricket development where we have a lot of potential to grow. Men's cricket is quite stable at present with regular league cricket taking place throughout the year. Also, we have regular softball events taking place every month in various towns in Cyprus. Cyprus Cricket is a private sports organization and we are working towards government recognition and once we will have the government support, we believe we can make real progress in further growing the game in the Republic of Cyprus.



Shoaib during his match winning innings against Austria

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