



KYRIOS CRICKET

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Photo: European Cricket Network

Punjab Lions; Pride of Cyprus

Nicosia based Punjab Lions produced some excellent performances in the Bet2Ball European Cricket League held in Malaga, Spain in March 2022.

The tournament pitted the top teams of 29 European nations against each other. Punjab Lions qualified as winners of the Cyprus T20 league and found themselves in a strong group with teams from Holland, Jersey, Spain, Portugal and Greece.

The games were played using the relatively new format of T10. We've been playing T10 in the Cypriot summers, so Punjab Lions had some experience of the shortest format, where there are 10 overs per innings. Other Cypriot teams will have painful

memories of captain Gurpartap (Guri) Singh's batting in T10s and he carried this into the tournament with 85 from 32 balls against the Farmers CC from Jersey.

Other stand-out performances included Scott Austin's 28 from 17 balls against GEK of Corfu and 3 for 11 for Neeraj Tijwari against Malo of Portugal. Neeraj also took 3 for 11 against Craeyenhout of Holland.

For the whole team, the fielding was also outstanding, with very few dropped catches or missed run-out opportunities.

One bizarre event was Chamal Sadun taking a catch; he started celebrating, then realised the catch didn't count as it was from a no-ball free hit

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- Chamal recovered to produce a perfect throw to the keeper to

Punjab Lions pride of Cyprus.
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run-out the batter! This was in a game against one of the pre-tournament favourites, Spanish champions Pak I Care (PIC) which the Lions went on to win by 6 and book their place in the final of their group.

That final had the Lions playing PIC again. Unfortunately, the tournament's luck with the weather finally ended: PIC scored 93-9 - which was probably about par. That's when the rain hit and the adjusted target had the Lions needing 33 from 3 overs - this needed a flying start and wickets fell under the pressure and they could only muster 18-5. This meant they were out of the tournament and returning to Cyprus.

But the Punjab Lions can return with their heads held high. They were up against some of the strongest clubs in Europe. As the commentators said; this was considered one of the best groups and along with group winners PIC, teams such as Farmers CC from Jersey and GEK from Corfu would have expected to finish in the top three. The fact that the Lions reached the final is a huge achievement.

Player's Perspective - Andrew Pepper chatted with Scott Austin about his experience in Spain

AP: How long have you been with PLN?

SA: I have played with the players from the Punjab Lions in the National team for Cyprus, but this was the first time playing alongside them in their club.

Was this your first "tour"?

This has been my first tour outside of Cyprus for cricket.

How different were the conditions in Spain from Cyprus?

The conditions to play in Spain were very different, mostly due to the set up of the ECL; they did a



A familiar sight for many Cypriot bowlers; Punjab Lions' skipper, Guri Singh hits a boundary.

fantastic job in making it feel more professional. The outfield was very flat and had consistent bounce, making it easier to field on. The pitch itself, I can not really say too much about the differences, aside from the flatness of the AstroTurf. I prefer to play on grass wickets myself so I can not really comment too much on this aspect.

For several years now, PLN have been one of the strongest teams in Cyprus – how do you keep such high standards?

From my experience of the team and the leaders they have, the team's standards are kept by being as disciplined as possible, ensuring that there is no "silliness" being had, and if there is, it is off the training field/ games.

I watched quite a few games on the streaming service and one thing that stood out was the fielding –there were very few missed opportunities – has that been something the team has worked on?

Whilst training the team certainly maintains a high standard of fielding, as it is considered as one of the most important parts of the game, as everyone is

included for every ball. If one player is not concentrating, a dropped catch could cause a devastating turn of events for the team. Therefore, maintaining fielding levels at the highest standard is a high priority. One other reason for why we fielded so well in Spain, was due to the fact that the grounds are much flatter there and this made everything very easy for the team when ground fielding or anticipating the ball when bouncing, or even running across the ground to take catches.

What was a standout moment in the tournament?

In my opinion the standout moment of the tournament was the win against HBS, the Netherlands team, on Wednesday, which put us in the running to be in the final, provided we played very well the next morning against the champions of Spain.

Is there a standout game for you?

The standout game for me personally was the game against GEK Corfu, the Greek team, as we had a stunning day in the field, with no dropped catches and ultimately finishing the game off in style with the batting.

The team standards are kept by ensuring there is no "silliness" being had!

2021 - Cyprus Cricket Recovers

After the severe disruption caused by the COVID pandemic, Cyprus Cricket made a strong recovery in 2021. **Richard Boxall** sums up the year.

→
No longer bridesmaids; after 34 years, Moufflons CC won a CCA title.



After suffering serious disruption due to the Covid-19 situation, cricket in Cyprus made a strong recovery in 2021. A record seventeen teams took part in the T20 league which ran from June to November, while five teams played a 40-over competition on Saturdays in the summer months.

The year was memorable for the domination of Punjab Lions, whose victory in the T20 league qualified them for the European Cricket League in Spain in 2022, and the blossoming, at last, of Moufflons into a leading team after so many years of effort - their victory in the 40-over league was their first ever triumph, and finishing as runners-up in the T20 was a very creditable performance.

The season's cricket took place in an atmosphere of great excitement. Players were

delighted to be playing again, with restrictions gradually being lifted. New teams were formed to accommodate the growing number of players keen to be involved.



A classical bowling action from Kamal Raiz of Sri Lankan Lions

And for eligible players there was the added incentive of aiming for selection for the Cyprus national team to play international T20 matches against Isle of Man and Estonia in October.

The two groups in the 2021 #BAOFINANCIAL T20 Cup were quite different. Group 1 was a procession, with Cyprus Moufflons (the "Cyprus" part was added to distinguish them from their second team, Limassol Moufflons) winning all the games they played to top the group.

The main focus of interest was in who would claim the other semi-final spot by finishing second, and Sri Lankan Lions narrowly pipped Limassol Qalandars and Cyprus Eagles CTL, to claim that position.

Group 2 was much more evenly contested, with all the teams winning and losing at least

two games. Punjab Lions had a nasty shock, losing two of their first three games, but won the rest to finish in a three-way tie at the top with Black Caps and Riyaan. The positions were decided on net run rate, and Riyaan were the unlucky team to miss out on the top two places.

Kulwinder Singh's 87 ensured that Punjab Lions would get past Sri Lankan Lions in the first semi-final, while in the other, Mehran Khan's unbeaten century and Lakhwinder Singh's 5 for 16 helped Moufflons defeat Black Caps.

Moufflons dominated the individual awards - best batsman, best bowler and best fielder.



Punjab Lions - winners of the T20 Cup

In the final Moufflons restricted Punjab Lions to 187-9 and seemed well set for victory at 140-2, before losing six quick wickets to lose by just 14 runs. Punjab Lions had confirmed themselves as the strongest team in Cyprus - but only just.

Moufflons had the consolation of picking up most of the individual awards - best batsman (Mehran Khan - 477 runs), best bowler (Gursewak Singh - 17 wickets) and best fielder (Zeeshan Sarwar - 14 victims), while the most valuable player award went to Mangala Gunasekara of Sri Lankan CC.

Mangala also won the MVP award for the 2021 #BAOFINANCIAL 40-Over Cup presented by Abbeygate Insurance, a competition in which his team finished as runners-up to Cyprus Moufflons, who won the final by 73 runs, thanks to fifties by Mehran Khan and Minhas Khan and Gurdeep Sharma's 5 for 29.

Moufflons again dominated the other individual awards - best batsman (Mehran Khan - 280



Limassol Thunders bat vs Sri Lankan Lions at Ypsonas

runs), best bowler (Murtaza Yamin - 14 wickets) and best fielder (Zeeshan Sarwar - 4 victims).

A further competition held during the year was the Summer T10 Cup, which was won by Cyprus Moufflons ahead of the runners-up, Limassol Thunder.

All in all a very successful year for Cyprus cricket, with so many teams participating and almost all matches being completed. Here's to continued success in 2022!

T20i Comes to Cyprus

In 2019, T20i status was extended beyond the Test playing nations and the CCA hosted its first T20i tournament in 2021. National team coach, Richard Cox tells us more.



Estonia, Cyprus and Isle of Man squads for the trilateral T20i

The **2021 Cyprus T20i Cup** was a T20 International cricket tournament that took place in Cyprus in October 2021. The participating teams were Cyprus, along with Estonia and Isle of Man (IoM). On 5 October, Cyprus and Estonia played a two-match bilateral series, which was the first official T20i match for both sides, before the tri-nation Cyprus T20i Cup began on 6 October. The venue for the matches was Happy Valley in Episkopi.

Cyprus defeated Estonia 2–0 in their bilateral series, before the Isle of Man won the tri-nation tournament with a 100% record.

Individual awards were won by Adam McAuley (IoM, batting), Waqar Ali (Cyprus, bowling), Carl Hartmann (IoM, fielding), Ali Masood (Estonia, most valuable player).

It was a successful trip for the Manxmen, who sailed through all four of their matches in the double round-robin undefeated. Cyprus and Estonia, meanwhile, got off the mark in T20i, with both making their official debuts in the format with two matches on the 5th.

That day, Tuesday, saw Cyprus win both matches comfortably. In the morning game, seamer Tejwinder Singh scalped 3/11 in his 4 overs, to restrict Estonia to

102/8, before skipper Michalis Kyriacou led the hosts to a 4 wicket win with 11 balls remaining, as he anchored the chase with 44* from 47 balls. In the afternoon match, both teams lifted their batting efforts, with Estonia posting 130/6, before Cyprus thrashed their way to the target in 14.1 overs, Gurpartap Singh's 54 (25) providing much of the impetus.

The tri-series began the next day on Wednesday, with IoM claiming victory against both of the newcomers. In the morning game, it was a Burrows brothers double act, with Joseph's left-arm orthodox wrecking the hosts' top order with 4/10, before George hit 33 (27) to carry the tourists past the Cyprus total of 92 with 8 wickets and 8 overs to spare.

The afternoon game was another successful chase for IoM, as seamer Conor Smith's 3/15 kept Estonia to 118/7 from 20, then Carl Hartmann steered the response with 34* (28) to reach victory in the 16th over, with 6 wickets to spare.

In the second day's play on Thursday, Cyprus pushed IoM close in a tense match. Led by Zeeshan Sarwar's 46 (25), the hosts posted a competitive 149/7 in their allotment (Matthew Ansell's 2/16 off 4 was the best of the Manx bowling efforts). The hosts struggled for early penetration, and with the score on 107/1 in the 12th over (opener

Adam McAuley top-scored with 45 off 32), the result looked certain. But a collapse of 6/29 brought Cyprus back into the game, thanks to Gurpartap Singh and Waqar Ali taking 2/26 and 3/22 in their respective allotments.

It was down to number six Edward Beard's 14* (13) to guide the nervy chase home with just 3 balls to spare.

The afternoon game on was one-way traffic, however, with Cyprus thrashing Estonia by 79 runs. Roman Mazumder led the way with 53 (38), as the hosts racked up 187/8 in their 20 overs, before Waqar Ali's 4/14 bundled out Estonia for just 108.

Friday's morning game went much the same way, with Zeeshan Sarwar's 61 (39) taking the hosts to 160/9 in their allotment; Timothy Filer was the only bowler with a measure of control as he took 3/18 in 4 overs. Estonia's chase was a little better, as Habib Khan's 50 (40) took them to 121/6, but they were never in contention.

The last match was a rout by the IoM, ensuring that Estonia will have to wait for their first T20i victory. Young seamer Jacob Butler's 4/12 led a dominant bowling display as Estonia were skittled for just 71, then the Manx batters polished off the target inside 9 overs with 8 wickets to spare.

Looking Ahead

There's more to come in T20i for the National Squad. Richard Cox has the details.

Looking ahead, the CCA now has the task of forming the squad for the upcoming T20i Regional World

Cup Qualifier matches in Finland, commencing with an Easter training camp for 4 days at Happy Valley ground followed by the National Team warm up matches in the season and then the lead in to the tournament in July.

The July tournament in Finland will see Cyprus take on Romania, Isle of Man, Turkey, Serbia in Group 2 of the event which takes place from 10th July – 20th July 2022 including play offs.

2020 - The Year of Covid

Richard Boxall and Andrew Pepper look back to the year everything changed and try to make sense of a season greatly affected by the COVID lockdown.



A rare image - cricket in August 2020. Abdul Manan batting for Nicosia Tigers vs Sri Lanka Lions at Ypsonas. Sachithra Nalin is the keeper

At the Cyprus Cricket Association AGM at end of 2019, there was cause for optimism; the number of people wanting to play was at a high; the venerable Moufflons Cricket Club actually had enough players available to form three teams - 2 men's and 1 women's. There was also an exciting programme with plans for a stand for cameras and Internet access to allow streaming of games. So, 2020 was going to be a very different for players.

The CCA were also preparing for

Two Seasons Curtailed?
Cyprus operates a two season year, we have Spring and Autumn tournaments and rarely play in the hottest months. As a result of the government restrictions to sports events, Cyprus lost the Autumn season of 2020 and caused the postponement of the 2021 Spring season.

the national team to compete in the World T20 Qualifiers in Finland. The main problem facing the CCA seemed to be one of squeezing all the cricket

matches into the 2020 seasons!

Keep with us for the following summary of what happened in 2020. After the first impact of the corona virus, the start of the Spring T20 was put back to the start of June. The 10 teams were divided into two groups, with the top two in each group advancing to the semi-final stage.

As mentioned, a major change was the introduction of live streaming of matches, which was provided through an arrangement with the European Cricket Network (ECN). This created great interest, and allowed the players to showcase their skills to a worldwide audience.

This did require a lot of hard work in upgrading the ground, and thanks are due to CCA Chairman, Muhammad Husain, and his band of helpers for their hard work in completing the changes in quick time.

Highlights from the first round of matches included a treasured win for Sri Lanka Lions of Limassol over their countrymen Sri Lankans CC from Nicosia; and the amazing bowling figures of 6 for 8 by Moufflons' left arm spinner Ravi Kumar against Nicosia Fighters.

The following week saw an even greater performance by Rehman of Riyaan, who hit a scarcely believable 251 not out against Gladiators, which was a record score in a T20 match in Cyprus (beaten only by Vinay's 303 not out for Amdocs in a 40-over match at Dhekelia in 2013).



Atta Ulla Rehman after scoring 251 not out

to victory over Sri Lanka Lions.

Gurpartap Singh hit 87 as Punjab scored 179-7 in the final, a score which Riyaan might have chased if they did not lose two early wickets to Gurpartap, and were eventually bowled out for 143. Punjab Lions' captain Neeraj Tiwari was presented with the trophy by Nayan Agarwal – Managing Director of BAO Financial Group, the title sponsors of the Cyprus Cricket T20

From an early stage it was clear that Riyaan and Punjab Lions were going to be the teams to beat, and the next week they emphasised this by gaining convincing wins over Moufflons and Sri Lankans respectively – two teams that might have been expected to present the toughest challenge to them.

Moufflons recovered to win an exciting high scoring game against CTL Eurocollege, thanks to a century by the excellent Mehran Khan. Punjab Lions were given a scare by Kamal Raiz's 5 for 24 before securing a 13-run win over Sri Lanka Lions.

Another century by Mehran and six wickets for Ravi kept Moufflons' season on track against Gladiators, and Riyaan needed a late flourish with the bat by Tayyab Bashir to fend off CTL.

The league was then paused to allow a new venture to take place – a 10-overs competition organised and broadcast by ECN called the European Cricket Series, which was totally dominated by Punjab Lions, and in particular their opening batsmen Gurpartap Singh and the on-loan Mangala Gunasekara, who hit more than 600 runs between them. The

mayor of Limassol, Nicos Nicolaides, watched the final and kindly presented the trophies to the winners.

A similar version of this tournament held a few weeks later was won by Riyaan, beating CTL in the final.

After a delay, due to extreme heat and corona virus restrictions, the Spring league resumed in late September.

Rehman continued his high scoring with an unbeaten 170 against Nicosia

Fighters, who battled bravely. Next week they topped 200 for the second time in a row, and this time it brought their first victory.

A century by Kumara sealed Sri Lanka Lions' place in the semi-finals, where they were joined by Moufflons as well as the favourites, Punjab Lions and Riyaan.

Zeeshan Mehmood's 79 helped Punjab Lions overcome Moufflons in the first semi-final. In the other Tayyab Bashir, with 48 runs at number 8, followed by three wickets, propelled Riyaan

Cup.

Man of the match was Gurpartap, while the most valuable player of the tournament and best batsman awards went to Rehman, with the best bowler award going to Ravi of Moufflons.

The Autumn T20 league began immediately, with a new high of 16 teams competing, but unfortunately was only partly completed when a longer corona

virus lockdown put an end to any organised sport. Only two games were played in division 1.

Rehman of Riyaan hit a scarcely believable 251 not out against Gladiators

In division 2, most of the games were played, and it was most unfortunate for two new teams – Black Caps and Everest – who won all their games, when the competition had to be abandoned as it was clear that no further cricket could be played until well into 2021.

One 2019 prediction came true, 2020 was a very different year. As we've seen, 2021 was a year of cautious recovery and 2022 has already had a great start with Punjab Lions' successful tour to Spain.

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Catching On - Women's Cricket in Cyprus

To say that women's cricket has undergone a worldwide surge in interest would be an understatement, Our island is no exception and women's coaching sessions have been well attended despite taking place in the heat of a Cypriot summer. Andrew Pepper chatted with **Alexandra Taylor** who joined the sessions in June.



Class of Summer 2021 - during a coaching break at Ypsonas ground - Alex Taylor is second along in the front row

I met Alex on the first day of the coaching sessions in June, I gathered she'd been at Edinburgh university and after explaining that she hadn't bowled for months and was probably very rusty, demonstrated a classically smooth bowling action! I had to find out more:

AP: *Although the coaching sessions are suitable for beginners, you've (obviously!) had some coaching before; where did your interest in cricket start?*

Alex: My best friend, James Gutteridge, captains the Murrayfield DAFs 3s in Edinburgh. After going to a few of his games and poking fun at the sport and him "hitting the ball and doing a bit of a run", he decided I should have a go to see what it's like. He explained how to hold a bat and how to hit a cover drive, and then lightly under-armed the ball to me. I smashed it back at his head.



*The joy of a quick single!
Coaching always finishes with a game*

Thankfully, he has great reflexes! Hitting the ball for the first time like that felt amazing, and I was hooked.

AP: Tell me about your time at university

Alex: I studied at the University of Edinburgh, graduating with my MA in 2019 and with my MSc in 2020. In my 4th year, I joined the Edinburgh University Cricket Club (EUCC). The team was super welcoming and supportive and I learned quickly. I then decided to do a Master's; a decision which may or may not have been influenced by the chance to play more cricket!

AP: What kind of cricketing setup is run in Scottish universities?

The academic year starts with the T20 Varsity Game against St Andrews. Only the Universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews have full women's sides at the moment.

The Wee Bash is a 6-a-side, softball, indoor, T6 tournament held in Scotland which is aimed at women who are new to the sport. Teams compete in a number of games at each tournament event, hosted in different Scottish cities, leading up to the finals.

We could also compete in friendly games against other local teams which are usually T20s.

The 2020-2021 academic year saw the first official Scottish

Student Sport (SSS) women's game. The best female players from all the Scottish universities, even those without

dedicated coach, Rex Hugill. When I played with Carlton CC we were coached by Caleb Whiteford. I was actually given some advice by Scotland International Mark Watt once!

AP: What's your career highlight so far?

Alex: Taking a catch in our Varsity Game against St Andrews in September 2019. I was standing at midwicket and the ball was hit up into the air. It was pretty stressful, because I wasn't really confident in taking high catches, but I caught it!



Alex has a beautifully smooth bowling action

full teams, got to play against high quality opponents. Five women from the University of Edinburgh were picked for the squad, which beat Scotland's Performance Academy!

AP: Your bowling action is really smooth; is that from the coaching at university?

Alex: I have been coached by a lot of different people, so I think my bowling action is a combination of different bits of advice. In the 4th year of my undergrad, EUCC Ladies were coached by Joe Kinghorn Gray, assisted by various Men's players such as Paddy Bruell. During my Master's we had a

AP: Of course, I have to follow that by asking for a career lowlight?

Breaking my right thumb while fielding in the 3rd over of our first BUCS game, which was also the first proper game I ever played. I still fielded for the full 50 overs and bowled for 2 of them, but I didn't get a 2019 summer season.

AP: Thanks Alex! And good luck for the Autumn season.

Have you Been Inspired?

The Cyprus Cricket Association has started a Women's Cricket Programme. Whether you're an expert or a complete beginner, we're looking for more players to join our training sessions.

For more information please contact info@cypruscricet.com or call. 70002742.

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I fought the law!

Cricket is a game which players try and make as simple as possible governed by a complicated set of Laws. Andrew Pepper asked players and officials; if you could change a Law of cricket; what would it be?

Although cricket sometimes feels timeless - anyone who remembers Geoffrey Boycott batting would attest to that - it's actually a game that changes regularly. Cricket is played according to *laws*; the laws are managed by the MCC - it's one of its most important roles in the game and there are regular updates; most recently in 2021.

The laws are updated for several reasons; often it is to clarify things. For example, in 2019 a definition of "the waist" was included so umpires could judge a legal delivery more easily. For many cricketers "the waist" is quite a broad area.

In 2017 there was a major revision of the laws; one way of getting out (handled ball) was removed completely - for trivia fans, Michael Vaughan was the last Test player to be given out "handled ball".

I'd thought I'd ask some Cypriot cricketers and officials about any laws they'd like to see changed.

Muhammad Husain: "Bring back timeless tests!"

Muhammad Husain: "Cricket should be more result orientated. Test matches should bring a result - if there's no result at the end of the last day, we should have a mechanism to get a result - perhaps extend it to another day - or bring back timeless tests!"

Andrew Pepper: "Get rid of Mankading" Since the year dot in cricket (around 1861) this has been a controversial way of dismissing the non-striking



If all else fails; beg! Could law changes make umpires' lives easier?

batsman. The bowler notices that the non-striker is leaving his crease before the ball is released. The bowler takes advantage of this and runs out the non-striker by breaking the stumps at the non-striker's end instead of bowling the ball.

It happens rarely and there is a "convention" that the bowler warns the batsman if he sees him leaving his crease as the bowler runs in before actually running him out.

My proposal is that for a run to count, the non-striker must be in his crease as the ball is released. If the non-striker has left his crease before the ball is released and runs to the striker's end, the umpire signals a short run and the batters return to their original positions. This rule means that there is no incentive for the non-striker to try and leave the crease early - the run won't count and he can't "steal" the strike. So, no more Mankading.

Richard Boxall The one thing that really bugs me about cricket - as a spectator,

umpire, and occasionally still as a player - is excessively slow play.

Bowlers and captains taking forever to change the field, and then changing it again every few balls. Batsmen not being ready to face the bowling, changing gloves every few overs, not being padded up to come in at the fall of a wicket. Twelfth men running onto the pitch every couple of overs for no good reason. Spectators cheated of a full day's play because of slow over rates.

Before I was born, teams used to bowl 20 overs an hour even in first class cricket. When I started playing, 20 per hour was still the norm in club cricket. When they first brought in the rule for minimum overs to be bowled in the last hour of a game, it was 20 overs. Now it is 15. In Test matches teams are required to get through 90 overs in a full day, but often struggle to do it. Even fines of part of their match fee do not seem to motivate players to get on with it.

In Cyprus Cricket we have tried penalty points and penalty runs, but nothing seems to work. We are only requiring 15 overs per hour, and OK it's hot here, but really, there is no excuse.

The solution I think is for umpires to feel confident to apply the rules strictly, and the authorities to back them up. A few games lost because of penalty runs for time wasting might make teams pull their socks up and get the game played. Then we can get to the pub quicker!

Mike Kyriacou - Fellow of Cyprus Cricket



Mike Kyriacou who captained Cyprus to win the ICC Division 4 tournament in 2009 and is a stalwart of Cypriot Cricket. Mike chatted with Andrew Pepper

For as long as I can remember, you've played for Fellows, tell me about your early days; was that in South Africa?

"I was born and raised in South Africa and went to King Edward High school which was like a sports school. We came to Cyprus when I was 17. In Cyprus I did learn a lot as well and had to adapt to the local conditions as I was used to playing on grass pitches in South Africa."

How did you come to join Fellows?

"I first started out with the Springboks team which consisted primarily of South African ex-pats. We played a few seasons and then joined the Fellows team."

2009 must be a highlight year; you captained Cyprus to win the ICC Division 4 tournament in Cyprus, what are your memories of that?

"It certainly was a great year and I remember playing some of the best cricket during that year. The tournament was highly competitive with the likes of Switzerland, who we just managed to beat thanks to Anil [Nair]'s century."

Against Finland we were playing to win the tournament and I remember we had to win by a margin - which we did.

The whole team really played their hearts out in this match. I distinctly remember that last

catch from Dilepa to dismiss their last batsman, he took a blinder at short mid-off in my last over. I personally had a great game; taking three wickets and running out their key batsman when I was fielding at gully.

Austria was our bad game; we lost to Austria, but still managed to keep our composure to win the tournament.

I do remember during that tournament we had this great confidence as a team and the team spirit was as if we had been playing together for years.

I also remember having Kapila [Wickramathanthrigie] and Manju [Kandage] in the batting order who were both amazingly destructive batsmen. I don't have any scorecards so don't remember other individual performances."

My favourite game has to be





did my batting improve as it helped a lot with the hand/eye coordination. I have to admit that as I am getting older, I am enjoying batting even more as it does not put as much physical strain on the body as bowling does.

Finally, are Fellows looking for players?

“Yes!”

Editor’s notes:

Mike may not have the scorecards from 2009, but they are available (at time of writing) online at <https://www.cricketeurope.com/CRICKETEUROPE/TOURNAMENTS/2009EUROPEANDIVISION4/index.shtml>.

the Finland game as it was do or die and we were all just so pumped and so happy after the win.”

You’re an all-rounder, so you’re always in the game. Do you have a favourite discipline?

“Yes, bowling has always been my favourite discipline. In my earlier days I was a no 11 bat, only after I started playing a lot of golf and tennis

CRICKETEUROPE/TOURNAMENTS/2009EUROPEANDIVISION4/index.shtml.

Mike’s memories of the Finland game are accurate; having scored 193 all out, Cyprus had to restrict Finland to 135 to win the tournament on net run-rate.

The bowlers - including Mike - delivered; bowling out Finland for 99 to win the game by 94. Kapila Wickramathanthrigie also had a great tournament, ending with an average of 99.66.



The triple threat of someone who can bat, bowl and field - any team would love to have Mike as a player



Coming in next...



A product of the Cyprus Cricket youth system, **Ahil Malik** spoke to Muhammad Husain.

MH: Where do you get your interest in cricket?

AM: I got my interest in cricket from my Dad; it really got me wondering what joy people get from hitting a ball the idea seemed silly to me when I was 4 but I am madly in love with the sport now.

When did you started playing cricket?

The first time I ever picked a bat and hit a ball was when I was probably about 4 I wasn't Virat Kohli but it was still fun

Do you get coaching in Cyprus?

Yes indeed, My coach's name is Mr Muhammad and he is a brilliant coach.

Do you support a particular team and/or player?

I absolutely do I support my home country India and my favourite player the living legend MS Dhoni.

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

I definitely prefer batting, mainly because I think I am better at it, but also an idea which seemed silly to me 10 years ago is probably one of the main reason why I love the sport now, ironic isn't it?

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

I would probably say I have been playing hard ball cricket for about two or three months and I really like it.

What's your best moment on a cricket pitch?

My best moment on a pitch is probably when I hit a boundary or pick up a difficult wicket.

Do you hope to continue playing cricket as an adult?

I do indeed I hope even maybe one day I can play professional cricket.

What are your recommendations for Cyprus



Ahil photographed by ace photographer Deeba Malik (his Mum!)

Cricket? How can Cyprus Cricket improve youth cricket?

I am pretty new to the Cyprus Cricket but I will say that they should introduce hard ball cricket at a younger age and host more international matches.



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