



Notchers' News

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My cricket musings

BY ARUN KUMAR MANICKAVASAGAM

From being very naive and innocent, having not heard of the term "scorers" back in Chennai (then Madras), Tamil Nadu, India and having heavily played street cricket with a tennis ball in which I once played out the full 8 overs scoring a run led to the disappointment of both my team-mates and the opposition team not understanding why would I play in such a manner. I enjoyed bowling leg-spin (inspired by chinaman bowler "Brad Hogg") but it's another matter that the ball wouldn't turn, but I loved giving it a good flight and deceiving the batsman in the air. But the aspect I enjoyed the most was fielding at mid-wicket or short-cover wanting the ball to come to me so I could have a shy at the stumps or stare at the striker with the ball in my hand so he wouldn't step outside his crease. Out of the three departments, my street cricket captain realized I either played too slow or went for a lot of runs with my flight sometimes being juicy for the batsmen to hit and decided to pick me primarily to make up the team as a fielder. But my argument was my bowling needed to be hit so it could create wicket-taking chances. Nonetheless, I was asked to field for both teams sometimes when the other team was short of a fielder.

Realizing I didn't have the potential to play the game at a higher level, I turned my attention to see what other aspects of the game appealed to me. I enjoyed listening to the likes of Tony Greig, Geoffrey Boycott and Harsha Bhogle.

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Me (OPTA scorer) with Rahul Dravid (current India coach) during U-19 CWC semi-final between India and Pakistan, Hagley Oval, Christchurch

I mindlessly tried imitating some, recorded my own voice and gave post-match presentations in front of a mirror. Having hit another dead end, I turned my attention to cricket-writing and felt it was not going anywhere either and simply decided to be a fan and enjoyed watching the game on TV only to be told by some that I was wasting time watching cricket.

I'd like you to picture a boy born in a middleclass family. I was that boy. I have a younger brother who is an active badminton player but who has also picked up cricket scoring from me, my mother who is a pharmacist and my late father (also a pharmacist) who has always backed me to chase my dreams and to never fear failure. One needed to have connections or attend a certain class of school that plays cricket to get to the higher echelons of sport in India. Despite my keenness I have never played a competitive game of cricket let alone a social one on a grass pitch with scorers. However, things took turn for the better when a scholarship to pursue my PhD combined with a passion for cricket made me gravitate to Christchurch, New Zealand. But I had no idea of the opportunities in the cricketing world here. A friend of mine forwarded me an e-mail with a cricket club looking for a scorer. Initially, I thought it meant putting numbers on the board but it was a bit more than that, and for me it was a way to stay in touch with the game in some capacity. I have never looked back since then and have had many special moments in my scoring journey (even met Richie McCaw a former All Black (rugby) captain) which I intend to share in the forthcoming editions of Notchers' News.

I am a regular scorer for the Premier men's team at Burnside West Christchurch University Cricket Club (voted club of the year in 2019), the home club of Graham Dowling (former BLACKCAP) who has played Tests in India, Brian Hastings who has played 31 Tests for New Zealand and also includes current BLACKCAPs Tom Latham & Will Young. For some reason I cannot explain, I was asked to score for Canterbury, my home province. I also did 30+ games as a media scorer at the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup, 2018 and currently one of the contracted scorers with New Zealand Cricket (NZC) while also being a member of the New Zealand Professional Cricket Match Officials Association (NZPCMOA).

Like you, I have been following Notchers' News with great interest, but was disheartened to notice that an issue had not been produced for over a year. That's when I got in touch with Cathy who was more than happy to offer me full support to continue as the new Editor-in-Chief. I was delighted to hear the news and consider it an honour and a privilege to take charge as the new Editor. I offer my heartfelt gratitude to Cathy.

With your continued support and interest, I intend to continue towards a century thus connecting and strengthening the cricket scoring community around the globe. Please send your contributions to notchersnewsnz@gmail.com

Manick
Editor-in-Chief

Scoring cricket during COVID-19

BY JOHN DAVIES

On Saturday the 7th March 2020 I embarked on a Qatar Airways flight from Cardiff Wales Airport bound for Cape Town for the Over 50's World Cup where I was to be the scorer for the Wales team. We arrived in Cape Town on the Sunday morning and were transported to our base at the Lagoon Beach Hotel.

While the team had net sessions booked on the Monday & Tuesday, I had two days of leisure before our first match against the hosts South Africa on the Wednesday. With all matches starting at 10am it was an early start for breakfast and then off on the coach to the ground. While the players warmed up I set up my laptop ready for the start of the match.

Prior to the start it was time for the National Anthems of both countries, and this was followed by a cap presentation to the Wales players. You can imagine my surprise when I was told to get to the back of the queue and when it came to my turn, I was presented with my cap by the South Africa team coach and former Springbok pace bowler Allan Donald.



The game itself didn't go well for Wales as a very strong South Africa side rattled up 254-5 from their 45 overs with Wales being bowled out for 60. The Wales squad was made up of club cricketers while the hosts included a few players with test and ODI experience. Thursday was a rest day, before Wales took on Namibia in their second match on the Friday. Batting first Namibia scored 161-8 from their 45 overs and Wales knocked off the runs for the loss of just 2 wickets with opener Iwan Rees scoring 94no. Another rest day on the Saturday saw all the teams attending a beach party.

Wales took on Pakistan in their third match on the Sunday. Pakistan batted first and amassed a huge total of 321-2 from their 45 overs. During the innings a rumour started circulating that the tournament was going to be cancelled and sadly during the interval the competition organisers informed the teams that the competition was being abandoned with immediate effect due to the COVID-19 outbreak which was spreading worldwide. Teams were told that they were to leave the country as soon as possible.

We eventually got flights home on Thursday 19th March arriving back in Cardiff as the country was being put into lockdown. We all now know what that meant for everyone and the 2020 cricket season looked as if it would not take place.

Thankfully things improved and in Wales cricket was given the go ahead and I was able to score 18 matches for Wales Over 50's and Wales Women in the period between 19th July and the 17th September after which we went back into lockdown again. The matches I scored included three Over 50 one day internationals between Wales & England and two matches between Wales Over 50's and India (UK).

With cases of COVID high over the winter chances of the 2021 season starting on time looked slim but in April we were given the go ahead to start at the end of the month. Wales Women had to reverse their first fixture against Birmingham Bears to the Edgbaston Foundation Ground as they couldn't yet play in Wales. After that the season went well and I scored a total of 47 matches between my club, Wales Over 50's, Wales Women and a couple of Wales Girls. The highlight of the season was scoring a Over 50's tournament at Marlborough College in July involving England, England Lions, Wales and India (UK), scoring three 45 over and two T20 matches over 4 days. In September I had the honour of scoring two one day internationals between Wales Over 50's and Masters Cricket USA Over 50's who were on a whistle-stop tour of the UK. They also played one match against India (UK) and two matches against England.

So despite COVID -19 and the disappointments of having the World Cup in Cape Town cancelled I have managed to score many matches over the last 18 months. I look forward to a full and COVID free season in 2022.

Scoring The Hundred

BY MIKE TURNER

This year I was delighted to be appointed to score in the inaugural Hundred competition. The same pair of scorers were appointed to both games of the double header at each venue, and I was allocated three of those double headers: two in Cardiff, and one at Lord's. I also got a day at Southampton scoring two warm-up games.

This was always going to be fascinating to score: a brand-new format of cricket, with some subtle and not so subtle variations on cricket law. Some trepidation when I heard what those changes were, but then I thought to myself, indoor cricket is hardly authentic and I love scoring that, so I was up for the challenge.

That said, traditional scoring methods were not going to cut the mustard. PCS Pro is the scoring software used throughout the professional game in England and Wales, and that was very much geared towards overs of 6 balls, then a new bowler for the other end. Even when I learned that it had been adapted for use in The Hundred, I was sceptical: could it really be fit for use from the start of a high profile, fast-paced competition? The answer was a big yes: the software was for me one of the highlights of the experience, so huge credit to the developers and testers who put in so much effort before we got our hands on it. No way was I going to trust it completely from the word go, but over time I gained confidence I could let it do its thing whilst concentrating on other aspects of the job.

So my attention turned to the written back-up. I attended a pilot event at Edgbaston where I soon discovered the limitations of my usual linear sheet when scoring The Hundred: I was spending too long with my head down focused on trying to “make it work” for a format of the game it wasn’t designed for, rather than watching the action on the field. Sue Drinkwater, also there that day, soon produced a scoresheet designed around the traditional “top and bottom” style of county scoring, and with space for just the 100 balls (plus wides and no balls): I tried this out and found it much better, and made some changes of my own. I gave some thought as to what I actually used a linear back-up for in this form of the game: most obviously, so I could use it if the software packed up; but also, as a form of self-check and cross-check: did I put in a dot there? Have I got the right batter on strike? If the other scorer wants to check what has happened in the last over, can I reply immediately whilst carrying on using the software? With everything extraneous removed, I was back in control of the written back-up instead of it controlling me.

As for the changes to the laws themselves, how easy was it to adapt to them? 5 ball overs very quickly felt completely natural. (For a long time the Cheltenham & District Challenge Cup was played with 8 ball overs, and switching between 6 and 8 was second nature, so this shouldn’t have come as a surprise to me.) Having two overs bowled from each end consecutively felt much more alien: sometimes the bowler was changed between these two overs, sometimes they weren’t, and sometimes they bowled consecutive overs but from different ends. The concept of a conventional bowling change at one end became an irrelevance; instead it was “right, who’s bowling the next 5 balls?” The bowler’s end umpire held up a card between the two overs bowled from the same end, which was very handy when the bowler didn’t change. A large part of my difficulty was with the traditional scoring sheet, and the reason I had to use something different, was that after each over I was mentally swapping the batter on strike: half of the overs they did swap, half they didn’t, and I kept writing the deliveries against the wrong batter.

I keep using the word “over” here, but the scoring software and scoreboard didn’t at all: everything is concerned with how many balls have gone – or are left. Since the 5 times table is easy to work with, I soon got over the initial unfamiliarity: I found it helped to put overs out of my mind, and just buy into the hundred ball concept.

The law change that really worked in the scorers’ favour was that following a catch, the new batter always replaced the outgoing striker at the original end, whether or not the batters crossed. So instead of watching the new batter carefully to check which end they were going to, I could fully focus on recording the dismissal: much easier.

Another thing that turned out to be trouble-free was that there was no real necessity to strain our eyes to identify the incoming batter – they would come through an archway which had their name and number plastered all over it, as well as on the boards all around the ground, and the name was announced loudly over the PA: clearly this information was known ahead of the new batter coming in – at least I soon came to accept it was never incorrect, and a brief confirmatory glance was all that was needed.

One thing that did take some getting used to was the scoreboard, and checking that what I recorded matched what was displayed to the spectators. Unusually at county grounds the same scoreboard format was used at each venue, which helped. But actually finding the total on it could be challenging, particularly in the 2nd innings, when the focus was on the number of runs required to win. The PCS Pro “scoreboard” really helped here, as it shows total, runs to win, balls bowled and balls remaining, so whether I was checking my written record or the ground scoreboard, all the information was to hand.

At Cardiff my colleague (Andrew Hignell, Glamorgan 1st XI scorer) was also providing the feed from PCS Pro to the ground scoreboards, and since I was his back-up if anything went wrong, I had to ensure I also recorded all scoreboard information such as DRS reviews remaining, and changes to the cut-off time – of which there were many, radio-ed to us from the 4th umpire.

There was no denying the grounds were noisy, with music and chat over the PA! Fortunately, this wasn't new to me – thanks in no small part to running the scoreboard for T20 matches at the Cheltenham festival – and with constant communication between the scorers it didn't become a problem: to my surprise I even started to enjoy the music, and the extra time it took up did give me a bit of a breather at change of ends. No small part of the enjoyment is the feeling of being part of a bigger scoring team – with OPTA analyst and DLS Match Manager at both venues, and scoreboard operators at Lord's, you are far from alone if anything goes wrong, and everyone is keen to help each other out. And I got fed some superb food too – a very welcome change from taking my own tea to club matches this year. Hopefully next season there will be more opportunities in The Hundred for local scorers: if you get a chance, my advice is don't pass it up. It's an experience not to miss.

Christmas Challenge 2021

Once again The Notchers have challenged The Scratchers to a fireside fixture this Christmas. Readers are invited to accept the Challenge by completing the scorecard and giving the result of the following match.

Please send your entry (limited to one per reader, please) to The Third Umpire, 60 The Lawns, Rolleston-on-Dove, Staffordshire, DE13 9DB to arrive not later than **31st January 2022** (or email johnmbrown60@gmail.com): please mark your entry NN. All entries will be examined and the names of all those whose entries are correct will be put into the Umpire's hat, from which the winner of the prize will be drawn at random.

You are invited to solve the clues in order to discover how many runs each player scores. You should record all these scores in batting order, and complete your solution by giving the result of the match.

Normal Laws of Cricket (2017 Code - updated) apply (no special regulations). There are no trick questions; all relevant information is provided in the clues, and you should assume that the umpire gives appropriate signals.

Notchers XI (batting first)

1. Team A scored 158 for 3 declared; Team B have reached 158 for 7 when a No Ball is hit for a boundary four. What is Team B's final score?
2. A fairly-delivered ball hits silly mid-on who is standing off the pitch on the shoulder and the striker hits the rebound to the boundary – how many runs should be added to the total?
3. The batsmen run two runs and both umpires signal Short Run. How many runs should be added to the batting side's score?
4. How many methods of dismissal are the responsibility of the striker's end umpire?
5. The striker plays a second shot at a ball in an attempt to protect his wicket, but in doing so, interferes with the wicket-keeper's attempt to catch the ball. There is an appeal, What should the decision be? Out – 10 or Not Out – 20?
6. If the start of a match is delayed after the toss, what is the maximum number of minutes that the pitch may be rolled?
7. In a four-day match Team A score 220 on the first day. There is no play on days two and three. How many runs must Team B score to avoid the possibility of being asked to follow-on?
8. In his delivery stride a bowler breaks the wicket with his arm; the ball goes on to hit the striker's wicket and then runs over the boundary at third man. How many runs should be added to the total?
9. ... and how many of those runs should be debited to the bowler?
10. The striker hits a fairly-delivered ball to square-leg where it hits the umpire on the shoulder. The ball is caught by the mid-wicket fielder. On appeal is the striker Out – 15 or Not Out – 25?
11. A fielder is waiting to return to the field on the long-on boundary. From the third ball of the over the ball is hit in his direction; the fielder comes on to the field and picks up the ball just before the batsmen have crossed on their second run. How many runs should be added to the total?
Extras: ... and how many balls remain to be bowled in the over?

Scratchers XI

1. In a four-day match there is no play on days one and two: Team A are all out for 220. How many runs must Team B score to avoid the possibility of being asked to follow-on?
 2. For how many methods of dismissal does the bowler get the credit and concede runs to the opposition?
 3. The batsmen have just crossed on their fifth run when the ball crosses the boundary. How many runs should be added to the total?
 4. Team A were all out for 179; Team B have reached 179 for nine and one ball remains to be bowled in the last over. In playing at that ball the striker is injured and has to be carried from the field. What is the result of the match?
Team A win – 5; Team B win – 10; Match Drawn – 15; Match Tied – 20?
 5. How many official signals (Law 2.13.1-4) require the use of at least two limbs?
 6. When a wicket falls what is the maximum number of minutes which may elapse before a batsman is ready to receive the next ball?
 7. The striker glances a fairly-delivered ball to fine-leg; the batsmen have crossed on their second run when the return throw hits the helmet lying on the ground and is then deflected to the boundary. How many runs should be added to the total?
 8. In how many minutes must the captain winning the toss make his decision whether to bat or field first?
 9. The time for a 45-minute lunch interval has been agreed as 13.00. The tenth wicket falls at 12.54. At how many minutes after one o'clock should the next ball be bowled?
 10. The batsmen run three, but the umpire decides that the last run was run short deliberately. How many runs should be credited to the batting side?
 11. ... and how many, if any, should be credited to the fielding side?
- Extras: A match is due to start at 11.40; how many minutes after 11 o'clock is the latest time the toss may be made?

Result:

Share your cricket scoring experiences and scoring questions with readers. Photos are welcomed and add interest to the newsletter. Send your contributions to notchersnewsnz@gmail.com

Your questions, news and views are welcomed for use in future issues