

Lawyers Cricket World Cup

By Bruce Leech, Johannesburg Bar



The South African Team: Lawyers Cricket World Cup, Cambridge 2009. **Front:** Christopher Baird, Greg Amm, Paul Belger, Duncan Turner (playing captain), Rian Hancock **Seated:** Basil Joseph, Gys Rautenbach (manager), Altus Joubert, Bruce Leech (touring captain), Joel Krige, Gavin Doubell, Peter Combrinck **Standing:** Steven Bunn, Alan Boulle, Greg Wickins, Christopher Lee, Schalk Aucamp, Jonathan Partington

In January 2008, the inaugural Lawyers Cricket World Cup was played in Hyderabad, India.

The Cup aimed to unite lawyers from around the world in a game of friendship. This first tournament was won by the hosts. Such was its perceived success, it was decided to make it a regular event. And so South Africa was invited to send a team to the second Lawyers Cricket World Cup, played in Cambridge from 26 July to 4 August. There we lined up alongside teams from India, Pakistan, the West Indies, Sri Lanka, Australia and England, New Zealand and Ireland – twelve teams in total.

There were rules about who could play, legal qualifications, the exclusion of cricketers, and minimum and maximum age requirements. These rules were intended to ensure that lawyers who played cricket participated, rather than a premium being placed upon cricketers who had an association with the law.

South Africa adopted the view that we were colleagues off on a wonderful adventure. United in a common goal, we aimed to

do our best to win to win the Cup, but not at the expense of sportsmanship. In our first meeting, we all agreed that the values that drove us were respect for our teammates, our opponents, and the spirit and traditions of cricket. In addition, we were travelling as ambassadors for South Africa and our profession.

The average age of our team was a shady day short of forty years, with members of the Johannesburg Bar forming the mainstay – the majority from the Johannesburg Bar's Barristers Cricket Team.* Greg Amm, Schalk Aucamp, Paul Belger, Steven Bunn, Gavin Doubell, Rian Hancock, Basil Joseph, Bruce Leech, Jonathan Partington, Duncan Turner, Greg Wickins, and Altus Joubert SC all hailed from the Jo'burg Bar. Joel Krige from Cape Town, Alan Boulle and PJ Combrinck from the Durban Bar, and two attorneys, Christopher's Baird and Lee, made up the playing squad of seventeen. Gys Rautenbach attended in a support capacity.

The words 'winter' and 'cricket' have a

* There have been previous reports in *Advocate* of the Barristers XI's tours to Durban and the Eastern Cape.

bitter-sweet juxtaposition that cannot fully be appreciated until, on a cold highveld morning, your chafed hands make rude contact with the full weight of a cricket ball hit hard. A credit to the team, it persevered in its efforts to ensure that everyone was match fit and ready to take on the English summer.

Preparations culminated in a day's cricket at Inanda followed by afternoon tea, which was attended by families and members of the Johannesburg Bar. We were honoured to have Judge Heher cap the team members and Joubert SC presented each player with a team blazer.

A very generous donation from Juta's Publishers, an even more generous contribution from the Johannesburg Bar Council, and sponsorship from Glenrand MIB ensured that, when we finally arrived in Cambridge, the squad was properly kitted out.

After months of anticipation, everyone was relieved to finally be settled in at Churchill College in the extraordinarily beautiful City of Cambridge. The tournament was officially opened, on Sunday 26 July 2009, by the Lord Chief Justice. The first match, played on Sunday afternoon at Fenner's, was between

the Lord Chief Justice's XI, drawn from judges from England and the visiting countries, and a World XI with a representative of each of the participating teams.

South Africa was represented in the World XI by Joubert and, with the clarion call of the vuvuzela in the background, he did us all proud with both bat and ball. The Lord Chief Justice's XI made 151 in their allotted 20 overs for the loss of 8. The World XI managed only 100 in reply. Joubert took two wickets and, before he was run out by his captain, scored 20 runs.

The first scheduled match for the South African team was to be played on Monday 27 July against the Australians. The combined effects of the English rain and an absence of any covers at the ground prevented a single ball being bowled. 'No covers at an English Ground?', you ask in disbelief. You may well ask. Disbelief soon became frustration and then anger. Despite a few hours of glorious sunshine the game was eventually abandoned due to a waterlogged pitch.

Tuesday proved to be a more positive outing when, at Emmanuel College, South Africa played against the West Indies. The Windies were bowled out inside their allotted thirty-five overs: tight fielding display and superb line and length bowling saw them restricted to 101 runs. Five of the wickets came from run-outs; the remaining five were collected by Boule (7 overs, 17 runs and 1 wicket), Leech (7/18/2), and Combrinck (6/3/2). There were a number of catches taken, including a superb take by Doubell at slip. The fall of each wicket was greeted by the trumpeting vuvuzela.

Aucamp opened the batting and top-scored with 33. Turner made 29. Amm and Hancock, in that order and both not out, scored the winning runs. South Africa finished 103 for 3 to win the match by a comfortable margin.

In its second match, South Africa played Pakistan at Churchill College. Despite numerous rain interruptions, the day belonged to South Africa. Disciplined bowling and fielding restricted Pakistan to 173 for 9. Belger, in his first match, excelled with only eighteen coming off his seven overs, including two maidens, for three wickets.

In all, six bowlers were used with the two Christophers – Baird (5/31/2) and Lee (7/38/2) picking up two a piece. A run-out from each of Baird and Hancock disposed of two further Pakistan wickets. Needing 174 to win, the South African innings got off to a measured start against some very good bowling, but lost two quick wickets and found itself slipping behind the run rate. Doubell and Turner steadied the ship before Doubell was caught at slip trying to force the pace. Doubell's wicket brought Partington to the crease and a partnership of 98 runs ensued for the fourth wicket. It proved to be too much for Pakistan.

The partnership included a superb captain's knock of 65 from Turner and 54 from Partington. After an untimely downpour interrupted play in the 24th over, it was left to Lee and Amm to finish things off. South Africa reached the required 174 runs in 32 overs for the loss of six wickets.

After the abandonment of the Australia game, we had suggested that the game be rescheduled for the Thursday. The organisers took up our suggestion and on Thursday afternoon (after another twelve hours of rain from Wednesday evening through Thursday morning) we reconvened at Old Trinity. Upon our arrival at the ground we were delighted to see covers over the pitch. Our delight proved to be short-lived. The covers extended only from popping-crease to popping crease, with the remainder of the table, the run-ups and the gath-ers left completely exposed to the elements. Pools of standing water posed a treacherous risk to anyone running in to bowl.

After hours of tedious prevaricating, alleviated only by a touch rugby game at which we showed the Aussies a thing or two, the game was finally abandoned on the advice of the groundsman and by

agreement between the captains.

Further efforts to reschedule the game unfortunately came to naught.

South Africa's third match was against the England and Wales Barristers at Fitzwilliam College. A blisteringly fast spell of opening bowling from Partington collected him two wickets (5/13/2). A leaping catch at backward point by Baird off the bowling of Belger (7/35/1), saw the English slump to 27 for three inside the ninth. Another wicket from Leech (7/33/1) and the English were 53 for 4.

A superb partnership of 105 between the English captain and their sixth batsman, ensured there was a real game to be had. The English captain finally fell with the score on 158 and with five overs remaining. His wicket came off the bowling of Lee (7/32/2). The Barristers finished on 193 for 7 in 35.

It was never going to be enough! The day was carried by Bunn, 51 n.o and Turner, 78. Basil Joseph (26) opened the batting with Bunn and he kept the scoreboard ticking over while Bunn got his eye in. Combrinck added a few and Amm finished not-out on 9.

Victory for the South Africans and the maximum six points from six games.

South Africa's penultimate game was played against India B – a team drawn from five or six regulars and then an irregular contingent of whoever was available from India A, a few drawn from other teams, and still more drawn from club cricketers and friends.

Going into the match we were confident that our berth in the semi-final was secure. The rules of the competition provided that we enjoyed six points from three wins and a single point from the abandoned game against Australia. Seven points gave us an unassailable place in the semi-finals. Win, lose or draw, in terms of the Rules we were home, and we played the match in that spirit. The conclusions, if any, that are to be drawn from that confidence you can draw for yourself.

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Where it all began 800 years ago: Leech, Combrinck and Aucamp in front of King's College, Cambridge (Photo A. Boulle)

India batted first on a very wet and sticky wicket. The bowling was opened by Wickins – coming in off a much-shortened run-up in deference to his torn hamstring – and Hancock. When the first wicket fell in the eleventh over, India had nearly eighty runs on the board. Boulle and Leech pegged them back. Boulle,

in particular, bowled exceptionally well and, after two overs had 2 for two including one maiden. Alan ended with 3 wickets, Leech with 2.

Joubert bowled, Krige bowled, Hancock completed his seven.

India B finished on 136.

There are some things about which the less said the better. So it shall be.

Wickets were tossed away with abandon. The opposition got their tails up, and before you could say 'India who', the match was over.

South Africa was bowled out for an ignominious 28.


The gloomiest of English days would not have done justice to our mood; cruelly, blue skies had been the order of the day. Secure in our seven points, we were downcast but not distraught. That was before politics intervened. Sri Lanka had already withdrawn from the tournament in protest; the West Indies' boycott was averted only by the English Solicitors surrendering their place in the semi-finals to the islanders. Whatever the reason, in a bizarre morning of lobbying and deal-making, the South African point for the abandoned match was done away with and our place in the semi-finals was lost to Pakistan. We agreed with the English solicitors that it was only right that we played them in the final

play-offs, with both sides playing for nothing but bucketfuls of pride.

At Churchill College the Solicitors batted first and scored 157 all out. Partington (7/36/1), Belger (7/13/2), Boulle (4/21/1), Leech (6/35/1), Lee (7/17/1) all bowled, but the pick of the day was Hancock who finished with 3 wickets in four overs and took two catches. In reply, South Africa scored the winning runs with an over to spare – Belger top scoring with 55, Bunn 32, and Partington and Amm not out on 32 and 11 respectively.

We had played five matches and won four of them – a very successful tour indeed! Most importantly of all, we had met our goals and had at all times played in the spirit of the game. In the process we had an enormous lot of fun to boot.

In the result, the final was won by Australia, who beat India. In a Twenty/20 before the final, the two South African representatives again excelled: Turner scored 50 with the bat, Krige took a fine wicket.

It is an understatement to say that I am enormously proud of the South African team and I am honoured to have been associated with it. I have no doubt that our next team – to play in the third LCWC in August 2011 in Barbados – will go on to do even better and, just possibly, might have even more fun doing it! 

Message to the players by Hilton Epstein SC, chair of the Johannesburg Bar

At a dinner party hosted by a colleague, the guests were predominantly advocates accompanied by partners. As you can imagine, the advocates engaged in conduct for which we are notorious – the advocates spoke law, much to the chagrin of the non-lawyers. A colleague's spouse had had enough. Known to be a somewhat cantankerous - former headmistress, now of some age, she assumed her headmistress posture. With arms folded and peering over her spectacles, she bellowed 'You advocates really are one dimensional – you can't talk about anything except law. If you were not in your profession you would be jobless'.

I responded: 'There is very little we advocates cannot do – we just prefer not to.'

The IPL Twenty/20 cricket series had just come to an end in South Africa and, no doubt, this was on the mind of the headmistress. She said: 'It would be more interesting if you spoke even about cricket'.

I rose to the challenge. I told everyone about a recent divorce trial I had run for a wealthy businessman who had been bowled over by a maiden. He did not want to pay the large amount of maintenance his wife was seeking. However, they had enjoyed a lavish lifestyle and I told him he was on a sticky wicket. He insisted on testifying.

With bat in hand he took to the stand. It was spectacular to see how the judge hit him for a six. I then told the non-lawyers how after each trial day we advise clients on the state of play. I regaled them with stories, including how I had once stumped a difficult opponent. I explained what it meant to appeal and how his appeal was upheld much to the anger of the ten other members of my team.

I had by now attracted a large non-lawyer audience of guests. I was in my stride. I explained how judges are in fact umpires who must retire at 75. I also told them about Lord Denning and what a good innings he had. They enjoyed the anecdote about the advocate who tried to introduce a damaging document which had not been discovered. 'That's just not cricket', said the judge. And when there was a power outage and all the electricity failed in the Court, the judge announced 'bad light has stopped play.' Finally, when someone asked where I practised, I said at the Johannesburg Bar which had celebrated a century in 2002.

Rather chuffed now with my advocacy skills, I looked around for the headmistress. Alas, she had left. What a pity. I wanted to explain to her what an old bat is!

At the Johannesburg Bar we are delighted to have representatives playing in the world tournament. It is time to exchange bibs for boxes, remove robes and get runs; take off imaginary wigs and take wickets.

I wish all those participating in the Lawyers Cricket World Cup a thoroughly enjoyable tournament. Winning would be nice. But creating new contacts, developing friendships and future bonds is what makes it all worthwhile. 