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NZ CRICKET PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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- you are worried about? Y N
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WELCOME

What a fantastic summer of cricket we had in New Zealand this year. The performance of the New Zealand team has been outstanding with series wins across all formats against the West Indies and India which gives everyone great hope for the year ahead as the team builds to the Cricket World Cup here in New Zealand. It has been particularly exciting to see so many players achieve personal milestones or have successful introductions to international cricket, a sign that our domestic competitions are producing players that can compete on the international stage. It would be remiss not to save special mention for Brendon McCullum and his achievement of scoring New Zealand's highest individual total in tests of 302 against India at the Basin Reserve. It was a wonderful moment in the history of cricket in our country, coming as it did in a gutsy second innings' fight back.

As the international programme has captured the imagination of the public, it has also been a very competitive and exciting year in the domestic competitions and congratulations must go to Daniel Flynn and the ND Knights in taking out this year's HRV Cup and winning the right to represent us all at the Champions League later in the year. The Plunket Shield has been well fought as always with Canterbury securing the prestigious trophy with an unattainable advantage over their rivals as the competition heads into the final round. The Ford Trophy will be the final competition of the year and will no doubt be tightly contested again as players look to prove their worth in 50 over cricket with the World Cup around the corner.

The White Ferns have had a mixed year to date but are buoyant as the

team heads into an important series against the West Indies at home as final preparation for the T20 World Cup in Bangladesh in March. We wish them and the Blackcaps all the best in this prominent and important World event.

It has been a busy start to the year in our events programme and we look forward to the upcoming annual Players Golf Day as we look to raise critical funds for The Cricketers Hardship Trust for past players who have fallen on hard times. There is a growing need to provide more support in this area and we really appreciate the support of current playing members to assist in the work of the Trust and all commercial partners who help with this event. The events team is also working hard to ensure our final Masters events for the year go well and provide a good opportunity for past playing members to connect back with the game.

This year has also seen some interesting developments at the ICC Board table which have been well documented in the media and communications we have had with members. We have been concerned about the governance and decision making at ICC level for some time – as has a number of cricket stakeholders around the world. The process that has been followed to make the current changes around ICC Events, the touring programme and introduction of a new committee has been poor to say the least and highlighting that point is our focus when discussing this issue with New Zealand Cricket and other stakeholders in the game. Whilst some may say there is no other way cricket can operate at this level, it is important people continue to raise questions about governance and the way decisions are made in the game by the people charged with running it internationally, as hard as that may seem. The current process

that has unfolded can't give anyone confidence in how decisions will be made about any issue in the future and should be a concern for everyone.

Finally, all the best to all current playing members as we head into the last stages of the playing summer and I hope to catch up with as many members as possible in our end of season team meetings and remaining past player events.

Regards
 Heath Mills



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Sian Ruck: more than cricket

By Margot Butcher



If Sian Ruck ever needed a jolt of reality, it came in late January when she found herself as one of a clutch of experienced players left out of the White Ferns' squad to play against the touring West Indies this month.

The 30-year-old left-arm opening bowler has never been under any illusions that, for her, playing cricket was “kind of a prolonged adolescence — a dream job” that brought with it rich opportunities to see the world and have some great experiences with good mates. Only in women's cricket, of course, “job” is a misnomer. Even with this season's landmark introduction of contracts for four top players (including Sian) — the first of any kind in New Zealand women's cricket since Debbie Hockley was contracted for a season to keep her in play for the 2000 Cricket World Cup, women's cricket remains a bastion of the old-fashioned amateur sports ethos.

So while Sian and her fellow recipients (Suzie Bates, Sophie Devine and Sara McGlashan) appreciate the significance of the memorandum of understanding between New Zealand Cricket and the CPA that led to their inaugural contracts,

the reality is they differ somewhat from professional contracts in men's cricket. As part of their contracts, the players work three days a week year-round on women's cricket development programmes, with 16 hours' weekly paid training time built in for themselves, too, so that she can stay on top of gym and bowling loads. But, says Sian, the bottom line is they still have to work to make ends meet — which is why she's still filling in casually for her old employer New Zealand Post, walking up to 25 kilometres around Wellington of a morning delivering mail.

Out in all winds and weather, it's brilliant for an outdoorsy sportsperson's fitness. “I love being a postie,” says Sian, “I've done it for six or seven years, but I don't want to do it forever.”

So, in conjunction with the CPA and the Australia Cricket Association, Sian has taken some new steps into sorting herself out with a life after cricket.

Having played two seasons across the Tasman for ACT, she was already a member of the ACA and first found out about career development options for women players there, where the women's game is significantly more professionalised. “Even Australia's State sides are fully professional now,” notes Sian. “Everyone else, from the West Indies to India, Pakistan, England, has gone professional at the international level and the gap is widening. I like to think of us, the White Ferns, as the world's top amateur side, but ideally we need to get back onto that even footing. It's getting harder and harder to keep up.”

Anyway, we digress — Sian's introduction to the ACA led her to investigate her career development options further back home in New Zealand with the CPA. After availing herself of services such as professional psychometric testing to find out what kind of work might be an ideal fit, the two organisations worked together to organise a placement recently in Melbourne media agency Traffik.

“The psych testing was really interesting to me in that it identified account management or brand management, which wasn't something I had really thought of — even though I had done a degree in psychology and media studies when I was younger that has a lot of crossover with brands and representations.

“Traffik is a ‘Live and Digital experiences’ agency which means they are all about interactive marketing with the public, rather than passive print campaigns. So after getting to know the office and the day to day life of an account manager, I was out doing what they call ‘activations’ with the public.”

As Traffik works extensively within the sports sponsorship area, it could mean anything from handing out goodies in a supermarket or on the street to serving an audience of 20,000 at World Masters Golf. For someone who had been dedicating herself to the insular, coalface side of sport for the best part of a decade, the opportunity to step out was invaluable. “Traffik was a great starting point in figuring out where I want to end up. One of the things I realised was that I would find full-time office-based work more stressful than perhaps other people, because I'm so used to working outdoors and I would miss that physical activity. So that was informative.

“But in the space of a week I had worked across a number of different projects, doing everything from manual tasks right at the bottom to joining account managers working with major clients. I even went into building consent meetings and staff training for people who would be on the ground doing activations, so I came out with a better idea of what it would be like to work in an industry like that, plus I met people and made great connections.”

Only thing is, she's not quite done with cricket. There's nothing like being left out of a team to fire you up. Sian: “I guess my immediate plans there are up in the air now, but I don't want to be out of the team for long. My cricket plans will be determined by what my work-ons turn out to be: should I play overseas to work my way back into the team? Either way, it's good knowing that I have some other options now as well.”

Devcich tops T20 Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP ranking



He may have missed the first four games while on duty with the BLACKCAPS but Anton Devcich wasted few opportunities upon his return to the Northern Knights – ending the Domestic T20 season as the competitions Fujitsu Heat Pumps Most Valuable Player.

“It’s such a great feeling to have won the HRV T20 title with the Knights - and to be recognized as the MVP is another thing to celebrate with my team mates” said Devcich

Another typically consistent performance in the HRV Final saw Devcich earn the coveted Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP award with 102.40 points, just 5.43 points clear of second placed Colin de Grandhomme (Auckland Aces), but with a leading MVP point average of 12.80 per game.

Multi skill cricketers are incredibly important in the fast paced Twenty20 format and Devcich showed his value to the championship-winning Knights

throughout the competition, not only opening the bowling with his miserly orthodox spin, but also assuming the role of aggressor at the top of the order.

Still, one swallow doesn’t make a summer and neither does the MVP crown necessarily translate into a championship title. Last year Jesse Ryder was the key figure in the Firebirds’ campaign and the clear MVP of the competition, yet it was the Volts – with eight players in the MVP Top 20 – who carried off the silverware.

A similar parallel could be drawn at the end of the recently-completed season; the Knights ending with eight players within the Top 20.

A quick analysis of the Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP table demonstrates why the Knights were the strongest team this season.

- 8 Knights players finished inside of the top 20 on the Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP table
- 4 Knights players featured in the MVP top 10 batting table, with Daniel Flynn, Daniel Harris and Daryl Mitchell occupying the top 3 spots.
- 4 Knights players finished inside the MVP top 10 bowling table, including Jono Boulton who was in the top spot.

Domestic Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP roundup

One round remains in the Plunket Shield with Colin de Grandhomme, Mark Gillespie and Michael Papps battling out for recognition as the Most Valuable Player in First Class cricket.

Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP Top 5 (Plunket Shield – after 9 rounds)

1. Colin de Grandhomme (Aces)	215.43
2. Mark Gillespie (Firebirds)	190.47
3. Michael Papps (Firebirds)	183.27
4. Andrew Ellis (Wizards)	169.35
5. Daniel Flynn (Knights)	161.06



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Leading Batsman

Michael Papps (167.27 points, 783 runs)
Daniel Flynn (156.06 points, 724 runs)

Leading Bowler

Mark Gillespie (144.35 points, 35 wickets)
Andy McKay (134.52 points, 32 wickets)

Aces all-rounder Colin de Grandhomme is a renowned power hitter, but in contrast to his free spirited nature it has been his consistency with bat and ball that has earned him the top spot on the overall MVP table.

With such a healthy lead the ride to MVP glory could be reminiscent of the coast down the ‘champs elysees’, especially as de Grandhomme is a short form natural. However, unlike the yellow jersey tribute James Franklin, Flynn and Papps will pounce at the lead if given half a chance.

So the fight for MVP glory is well and truly on and the action is bound to heat up in the quest for the Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP title and the \$1000 prize.

Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP Top 5 (Overall)

1. Colin de Grandhomme (Aces)	312.40
2. James Franklin (Firebirds)	252.82
3. Daniel Flynn (Knights)	249.91
4. Michael Papps (Firebirds)	235.39
5. Andrew Ellis (Wizards)	234.54

**for details on how MVP points are accumulated, please refer to www.pprcricket.co.nz*

Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP Top 5 (HRV T20)				
	MVP Points	Batting	Bowling	Ave/Game*
1. Anton Devcich	102.40	47.71 (11)	45.69 (10)	12.80 (1)
2. Colin de Grandhomme	96.97	55.54 (7)	25.43 (19)	9.70 (7)
3. Ryan ten Doeschate	93.72	52.33 (5)	31.39 (13)	11.72 (3)
4. James Franklin	92.26	60.66 (4)	21.60 (23)	11.53 (4)

Final ranking place shown in brackets

*Ave. Points per game placing is based upon a minimum of 5 games.

Taylor earns international MVP honour



Ross Taylor has been a run scoring and catching machine throughout the past year and has now been rewarded for that consistency by winning the International Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP rankings this year.

Taylor has been recognised as the Blackcaps best batsman for some time, but now the 29 year old can reflect on being acknowledged as the Blackcaps Most Valuable Player for the past year.

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"Wow, I am really happy to be named as the MVP - there have been some awesome performances from the other guys this year, so this is pretty amazing" said Taylor

"Getting personal recognition is nice, but cricket is ultimately about how the team is performing. I am really happy about how the team has played, especially this summer at home".

Taylor played 31 matches for the Blackcaps since the May tour to England - the most by any player which is a testament to his fitness - and finished with a total of 365.44 MVP points. Taylor's recognition as the Most Valuable Player this year is even more impressive given that players who perform multiple skills tend to migrate to the top of the MVP table (such is the worth of a good allrounder to a team), as evidenced with Tim Southee, Corey Anderson and Kane Williamson following Taylor at the top of the MVP table.

Taylor is thankful to Fujitsu Heat Pumps and acknowledged their support of the NZCPA. "I would like to thank Fujitsu for this MVP award and their support of cricketers through the MVP ranking".

The Blackcaps look to Taylor for runs in all three formats, and while he was not in the top of the MVP table in any - he was ranked 3rd on the Test and ODI and 7th in T20I - he was the leading MVP batsman in Test and ODI's). It is testament to Taylor's form that despite missing the final Test against India for the birth of his second child, the match that included two-time and defending international MVP, Brendon McCullum's historic triple century, he was still 96.23 MVP points clear of McCullum in the overall batting rankings.

Tim Southee has lead the attack well in the past 12 months and he finished second on the overall Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP table for the second year in a row with 322.09 points. Corey Anderson was third with 301.70 points, a whisker ahead of Kane Williamson's 300.10, with Brendon McCullum rounding out the top 5 with 282.29.

Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP – International Overall Top 10

Rank	International - Overall	MVP Points
1	Ross Taylor	365.44
2	Tim Southee	322.09
3	Corey Anderson	301.70
4	Kane Williamson	300.10
5	Brendon McCullum	282.29
6	Nathan McCullum	215.49
7	Trent Boult	196.95
8	Mitchell McClenaghan	187.92
9	Martin Guptill	184.46
10	Neil Wagner	154.46



Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP – International Overall Category Top 5

Rank	Batting	Points	Bowling	Points
1	Ross Taylor	322.94	Tim Southee	243.96
2	Brendon McCullum	226.29	Trent Boult	169.79
3	Kane Williamson	200.85	Mitchell McClenaghan	168.14
4	Martin Guptill	150.93	Corey Anderson	142.83
5	Corey Anderson	142.83	Neil Wagner	124.28

Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP – Test Match Top 5

Rank	Overall	Points	Batting	Points	Bowling	Points
1	Tim Southee	220.48	Ross Taylor	153.33	Tim Southee	171.10
2	Trent Boult	196.95	Brendon McCullum	134.60	Trent Boult	169.79
3	Ross Taylor	171.83	Kane Williamson	103.44	Neil Wagner	124.28
4	Neil Wagner	154.46	BJ Watling	68.63	Corey Anderson	53.51
5	Brendon McCullum	153.60	Hamish Rutherford	58.35	Kane Williamson	31.70

Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP – ODI Top 5

Rank	Overall	Points	Batting	Points	Bowling	Points
1	Corey Anderson	174.52	Ross Taylor	150.60	Mitchell McClenaghan	145.73
2	Martin Guptill	168.71	Martin Guptill	143.36	Kyle Mills	94.01
3	Ross Taylor	167.60	Kane Williamson	97.41	Nathan McCullum	80.76
4	Nathan McCullum	165.08	Corey Anderson	91.02	Corey Anderson	76.50
5	Mitchell McClenaghan	161.51	Brendon McCullum	59.60	Tim Southee	62.71

Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP – ODI Top 5

Rank	Overall	Points	Batting	Points	Bowling	Points
1	Nathan McCullum	50.39	Luke Ronchi	32.36	Nathan McCullum	35.96
2	Luke Ronchi	40.36	Brendon McCullum	32.09	Adam Milne	23.08
3	Brendon McCullum	39.09	Colin Munro	25.95	Mitchell McClenaghan	22.41

*for details on how MVP points are accumulated, please refer to www.procricket.co.nz

White Hot in Bangladesh

Be prepared for a White Ferns backlash as our best will take on the world at the ICC World Twenty20 in Bangladesh during March.

The White Ferns will be quietly seeking redemption at the tournament after the disappointment of the team's early elimination from the Twenty20 Tri-Series in Barbados late last year.

England has benefited from a huge increase in resource over recent years and was expected to make the Tri-Series final,

but it was the West Indies who shocked the former World Champion White Ferns with an impressive display on home turf.

Shock performances do not sit well with this team and they expect to be able to regularly compete with the best. The domestic season has allowed the players to brush up their skills and will be ready to prove a point to the West Indies women when they tour New Zealand in the lead up to the ICC event.

The White Ferns head to the World Twenty20 tournament in Bangladesh and will contest Group A, starting with trans-Tasman rivals Australia on March 23, before taking on Ireland, Pakistan and South Africa. The ICC World T20 women's final will be held on 6 April.



Women Domestic Cricket

Suzie Bates led the Otago Sparks to victory with an MVP performance in the 50-Over domestic competition. Bates took 3 for 40 off her nine overs and followed this up with a stylish 99 in a dominating personal performance. Bates' wickets were not just any 3 wickets, but they were all part of a Hat-Trick, which took the sting out of the Auckland Hearts push for runs at the end of their innings.

Hat-Tricks are a rare achievement, but this summer saw two in the women's game with ND Spirit's Brooke Kirkbride matching the feat against the Bates led Sparks. On that occasion Kirkbride

decimated the Sparks top order in the 22nd over, capturing four wickets in the space of five deliveries (including the Hat-Trick in the last three).

The Auckland Hearts were victorious in the T20 competition with an emphatic victory over the Canterbury Magicians. Paula Gruber was the MVP in the final with 3 for 24 off four overs, and she was well complemented by Sara McGlashan who powered her way to 62 off 41 deliveries.



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Domestic Women Fujitsu Heat Pumps MVP

Overall MVP	Suzie Bates
MVP Batsman	Suzie Bates
MVP Bowler	Georgia Guy
Twenty20 MVP	Sara McGlashan
50-Over MVP	Suzie Bates

All round Reflections By Margot Butcher



Amid many other reasons to celebrate the 2013/14 New Zealand cricket season, it's clear that the magic Kiwi recipe for finding genuine allrounders continues. How Australia must hate us on that front — struggling away to find just one Shane Watson, while we seamlessly interchange one generation of do-it-all for the next. Corey Anderson: first full home season, world record ODI century. Jimmy Neesham, test debut, big unbeaten hundred. Boom!

For those handing over the baton, too, it has brought a certain level of comfort to see the great tradition smoothing along. Jacob Oram's decision to step back from a New Zealand contract opened the door to the likes of Corey and Jimmy, and while he remained available to play if asked, he doesn't regret it. "I don't know why we have this knack of turning out allrounders, but it's a bloody good thing, we're certainly blessed," says Jake. "And I think the way they have done well almost straightaway says a lot for our first-class level and something about our culture," says Jake. "It's better than perhaps many people think."

He's on the line from Palmerston North where he's gone right back to his roots — coaching the Palmerston North First XI and other school teams that he used to play for long ago, having made himself unavailable to play the Ford Trophy for CD as he hasn't bowled a ball since a brief appearance in the HRV Twenty20.

"I haven't retired, I'm just drifting off! But I do want to stay involved in the game and would love to get into coaching, so this is where I'm starting, until the end of the season, working right down to the Year 10s."

Jake had been thinking about stepping

back from top flight cricket for six months before he approached New Zealand Cricket about terminating his Blackcaps contract. "The four months I was away with the Sri Lanka Premier League followed by Champions League and then back to Sri Lanka with the Blackcaps: I was home for only three days, with my son Patrick (four) running round and my wife due shortly with our second at that time. I just thought, 'You know what, I've had fun for 12 years. It's time' My mind and body had had enough — and now I kinda wished I'd done it 12 months earlier. Life is transformed for me now. But it's the best thing I did for New Zealand Cricket because look at these young all rounders go."

Drawing ever closer to the big 4-0, Scott Styris has already been down that path — but is hopeful he has one last County season left in him before donning the pink threads of the SKYCITY Northern Knights at the Champions League. Scott is somewhat self-effacing in terming himself "someone who could contribute a bit" rather than putting himself in the Cairns/Oram full-stripes allrounder bracket, but that might be selling himself a little short as a durable competitor with both bat and ball — it was his canny bowling that helped the Knights clinch it at business end of the HRV. Anyways, he too has been sitting back enjoying the show.

"With Corey it's been great on two fronts in that I've been able to watch him develop over the last two seasons with ND, while I played one season with Neesham when he was just 20. I honestly believe we're just scratching the surface of what Corey and Jimmy can achieve and it's great to see them both having this early success."

Commentating for SKY during the brilliant Basin Reserve test against India was icing on the cake. "I enjoyed the way Jimmy went about his first innings actually (Neesham made a brisk 33), I thought he took to that level really quickly, looked in control and was unlucky to get out. But the second innings — it will be overshadowed by Brendon's achievement, but it was an incredible performance in its own right."

New Zealand's most prodigious freelance pro cricketer envies the new generation one thing. "These guys hit their straps earlier because they can train full-time, with the contracts now. I was talking to Craig Cumming in the comm box who's

the same age as me, we played age-group together, and he was recalling how he used to go from work to evening training with Canterbury twice a week — so playing for Canterbury was like club training! The simple fact is the game is infinitely more professional now than when I started."

And for allrounders (including wicketkeepers) that luxury of time is doubly important. "Even if you're a 'bowling allrounder', you can't just have a token bat," says Scotty. Besides, you can never quite tell from their early career whether someone is going to blossom into a bowling allrounder (is that Neesham perhaps?) or batting allrounder (Anderson?). "But what we can say is they aren't easy to find, yet we have so many. India at one point couldn't find a single test quality allrounder out of all their millions of players. England is excited having Ben Stokes — well, he's a Kiwi as well!"

Like Oram, he confesses to being over spending up to 10 months away from home now that his family is growing up — he and Nicky have put down roots with a new house in Auckland, although he confesses the tomato-growing and home handyman gene may have bypassed him. Oram, meanwhile, is trying to muscle through the last papers he needs to complete the business studies degree he started way back in 1996 before his credits expire. "I guess that's cricket for you, but looking back there were six years there that I should have used more productively," says Jake. He'll also be on the lookout for employment come the end of summer, "but the pieces of the jigsaw are starting to fit into place and now that Patrick is a bit older, I'm enjoying that. I took him to the Basin during the West Indies series for his first test match — he had no idea why people were clapping and we didn't stay long, but he enjoys running around with a bat and ball."

Needless to say he picked the wrong test. "And when you see that on TV — yeah, that's when you really miss it. Celebrations are the reason you play and you miss out on that champagne flowing. The boys have done well this season, but all the trainings, the travel, the meetings — that is what I had had enough of: all the work that you do that leads up to those successes. So well done to them all and I'll carry on enjoying this new era from a distance."

Personal Development: Public Speaking

By Margot Butcher

Does the thought of speaking in front of a group of people frighten you? Would you like to address a group of people and feel comfortable, confident and not feel so nervous?

Recently a group of Auckland players took part in a four session public speaking course run by Adam Daly. Adam has been a member of Toastmasters for the last 7 years including being president of the club. He also has run a number of other speech courses for sporting teams such as the Blues, the Chiefs and the Warriors and enjoys the challenge of working with professional sportspeople in NZ.

Over the four sessions the participants practiced their public speaking by delivering a number of prepared and impromptu speeches on a wide range of topics and subjects. Everytime someone did a speech they were provided with feedback as to what they did well and if there were any areas that they could improve to add greater impact and emphasis to their speeches.

Over the weeks the participants learnt

about various speaking skills including, the use of voice, gestures, stance, movement, eye contact and pauses to enhance their speeches and to get their messages across. The participants also learnt how to deliver constructive feedback using a very simple method, which can be used not just for speeches but in all aspects of their lives where feedback needs to be provided, including the cricket field. The course covered the following topics:

- Table topics/Impromptu speaking
- Ice Breaker speech
- How to structure a speech
- Inspirational speech
- How to evaluate a speech

One of the biggest things about becoming more of an effective communicator is; sure the participants speaking skills improve, but more often it is the boost in confidence that can be seen, which can flow on to all aspects and areas of their lives including the cricket field.

Out of the 5 participants 3 completed the course, Kyle Mills, James Fuller and

Michael Bates, with two others to deliver their final speech in the coming days (Colin Munro and Jeet Raval).

Feedback received from all players have been very positive and the NZCPA would like to offer this course to all MA teams and any other interested CPA members, including past players. If you are interested in attending a public speaking course please contact Sanj Silva on 021 455 677 or email sanj.silva@nzcpa.co.nz

Separate dialogue box for player feedback:

- Gaining confidence with getting up and delivering a speech in front of people - Michael Bates
- Thoroughly enjoyed it and I found it a huge help. I now have lot more confidence - Kyle Mills
- I feel like the course has given me the confidence to stand up and talk in front of a group of people and feel like I can deliver a compelling speech - James Fuller
- Make it compulsory for everyone - James Fuller

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The Outsider: The ACC

We collared Beige Brigade co-founder Paul Ford and asked him to give us the run-down on the aural pleasure that emerged from the crew involved in *The Alternative Commentary Collective* this summer.

What is The ACC?

It's a simple idea: The Alternative Commentary Collective is an alternative commentary for the cricket streamed live over the internet and delivered by a bunch of blokes who like cricket (plus Leigh Hart). It was crew of excellent blokes with a genuine love of the game, a twisted sense of humour, and a penchant for the absurd.

Where were you set up? There was a lot of talk about caravans.

Yep, we were all set up in a caravan that was towed around the country for the NZ vs India series and towed into position on the boundary rope for each ODI. The caravan was a genius idea in terms of creating a hothouse for ideas, body odour and rapport. The rain delay in Hamilton was a challenge as the 8 of us plus the 2 crew members helping make it all work were crammed into this 1970s caravan – and it leaked.

Where did this irreverent idea come from?

A bunch of people were involved – the ringleaders were Mike Lane (Beige Brigade co-founder and special projects maestro at The Radio Network), Jeremy Wells (raconteur and Grafton club cricketer) with a bunch of work behind the scenes from the likes of NZ Cricket and its creative agency True, The Radio Network and iHeartRadio.

What was the feedback like?

Staggeringly good: it went berserk to be honest and it was bloody humbling for everyone involved. There seemed to be a great connection between people tuning in and the voices on-air, and it struck a balance between being being a bit rough around the edges and keeping listeners in touch with the ins and outs of the game.

There was also genuine interaction with

hundreds of tweets, Facebook comments, emails and text messages raining down and being responded to or integrated into the stream.

We also had a few of the players popping in from time-to-time, providing off-kilter updates and obscure information from inside the dressing room. Mitch McClenaghan even dropped us in a massive bag of biltong.

Why do you think it worked?

It worked because a bunch of people wanted something different – especially the audience that likes cricket but doesn't consider it as life and death thing, but a great way to spend a day with a few mates having a beer and a laugh.

Is traditional commentary dead and buried?

Nah the ACC doesn't compete with traditional commentary, it complements it and is inspired by it. Bryan Waddle is like a demigod for us and we had a shrine to him in the caravan. We shared audio tips with Ian Smith over a few pints in Wellington too.

Jeremy and Mike realised that the ball-by-ball stuff was crucial to the whole thing working because without it, the chat just becomes a rabble of nonsense with no storyline or progression. It's the glue. I thought Jason Hoyte and Jeremy did an extraordinarily good job on that front – man it's a tough gig describing all that action every ball for 8 hours. And unlike the professionals, they were often interrupting one of the other commentator's preposterous anecdotes about crabs, llamas or 1980s blue light discos.

What sort of content stimulated a reaction from the audience?

Oh all sorts really – some of the slightly scatological stuff hit a nerve that generated heaps of feedback, and the talk of Nathan McCullum looking like a komodo dragon and guarding his nest seemed to get a lot of agreement from the Kiwi cricketing public. We got some

cracking pics through from listeners inspired by that observation. Sorry Mattress.

And you picked a hell of a series to debut the ACC?

It was unbelievable – that tie at Eden Park was just such an epic game of cricket. I'll never forget the stunned mullet faces in and around the caravan as we all wandered around in our bone suits looking bewildered. It was totally unexpected for the ACC to be undefeated, but the NZ team was superb.

No Test series version of The ACC – too tough on your silky voices?

We've had heaps of people asking us to do the Tests but at the moment we're short-form specialists (and we have day jobs).

Will the ACC be back next year?

Hopefully. As far as experiments go, it seemed like a massively successful one from the caravan squab I was sitting on, but that's all in the lap of the cricketing gods. It's just awesome that there is an underbelly of cricket lovers who like their commentary not to have sensible trousers – the whole thing was a bloody dream come true for us.

Right to left in pic: The ACC is Leigh Hart, Jason Hoyte, Lee Baker, Jeremy Wells, Mike Lane, Paul Ford & Matt Heath.



BUSINESS CLUB MEMBERS



Bringing fans Together: Queen St Cricket Club

The QSCC club was formed in the 1980s by a group of eccentric and enthusiastic cricket fans, known these days as tragics. Aside from gathering for functions and on one occasion fielding a team, the club has focussed on raising and distributing funds to disadvantaged children through providing facilities, equipment and coaching. The club currently offers individual grants through the Peter Hooton Scholarship programme in addition to a funding programme for low decile schools for agreed purposes. The club is currently looking to actively engage with the NZCPA in identifying joint activities going forward.

"There are some great stories from mostly individuals working hard without resource to keep cricket going in a lot of schools" said club Chairman Brian Moss.

"One of the better stories from last year's funding round was from Gary

Timms from Queen Charlotte College, who set about building 2 batting cages from scratch. All was done with working bees with boys and contractors donating their time. The poles were rescued from an old tennis court, King Salmon provided some Salmon netting and we were able to provide the matting for the run up. The nets have been a great success and are used by local club members as well as the boys".

The club's committee headed by Chairman Brian Moss and Treasurer Chris White is actively seeking new members to broaden its base and to allow for more activities, hopefully culminating in fielding a team.

Membership is free and those interested in joining should apply via the website at www.qscc.org.nz or contact Brian on 09 3075712 or Chris on 09 3025596.

Upcoming Events

Choice Hotels Masters Series

The last time the Choice Hotels Masters Series was scheduled for Wellington it coincided with one of the most unsettling periods in New Zealand history. The 22 February Christchurch earthquake was the catalyst for Stephen Fleming to create some good feeling in the capital and the masters match was moved aside to allow what became a memorable day for all New Zealanders - the match dubbed 'Fill the Basin'.

Back this time at Karori Park the MoleMap Masters will be aiming to shake off the festive season celebrations in a match up against a local Karori Selection XI that will feature a mixture of the regions present and past talent.

Rounding out the Choice Hotels Masters Series is the now annual fixture against Northern Maori at Rotorua. Weather has been the curse over the past couple of years but fingers are crossed for a fine day this time around.

Sunday 2 March:

MoleMap Masters v Karori Selection XI, Karori Park, Wellington; 2pm start

Sunday 16 March:

MoleMap Masters v Northern Maori Smallbone Park, Rotorua; 1pm start

Masters Weekend

All members are invited to attend the Masters Weekend in Queenstown where the Central Districts team will aim for their third consecutive Masters Tournament title.

Friday 4 April – Monday 7 April
(tournament is 5 and 6 April)

The Players' Cap Presentation

Friday 7 March at the Players' Golf Day presentations

The Players' Golf Day

Friday 7 March at Pakuranga Golf Club

National Player Conference

Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 April in Auckland

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