

**SOUTH WESTERN DISTRICTS CRICKET
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: 2023/24 by
MR M.C. EKSTEEN
(PRESIDENT SOUTH WESTERN DISTRICTS CRICKET)**



INTRODUCTION

I feel very privileged, humble, and blessed to table my first Chairmans Report at the AGM as President of South Western Districts Cricket Non-Profit Company.

Considering the filling of new directors' positions at the Annual General Meeting of 2023 and the September 2023 Members' Council meeting more than 60% of the Board of Directors positions were filled by newly appointed directors.

The foundation for our functioning was set with an induction session that was held on 30 September 2023.

BACKGROUND

During the period under review, we again recorded some significant achievements and milestones but in terms of the performance of our flagship team, the Six Gun Grill Garden Route Badgers men's professional team, who showcased their most disappointing results of the new era together with our financial position, which unfortunately deteriorated – the new season ahead will be a critical season for a proud affiliate of Cricket South Africa.

GLOBAL CRICKET LANDSCAPE

CSA Sustainability. As a company's - 85% of SWDC's revenue is dependent on Cricket South Africa. As an entity, CSA are bound to collapse in under a decade if they do not reign in our cost base, hence the importance of finalising their financial sustainability project as a matter of urgency. With the changing and volatile landscape currently being experienced in cricket, the CSA Board is really concerned on the environment CSA will be facing post-2031, after the end of our Viacom-18 broadcast deal.

The CSA Board has instructed the Chief Financial Officer that the different sustainability workstreams need to finalise their reports by October 2024, which will then be consolidated and shared with all parties. All role-players will need to discuss and vigorously debate the outcomes of the sustainability project, and possibly make difficult decisions to ensure the future of cricket in South Africa.

CSA's sustainability exercise with Members. Post the engagement sessions with Members, a report with recommendations will be formulated considering the findings for the Sustainability Committee's consideration.

Sustainability can serve as a preventative measure to address anticipated issues. Some of the key issues that necessitates the cricket eco-system to embark on this exercise are:

- a. Revenue streams are decreasing and/or cricket landscape is changing globally.
- b. CSA foresee a change in the stakeholder base from a participation perspective (i.e. schools, clubs, match officials, etc.) that will change the way the business cricket is done at CSA and Member level.
- c. CSA foresee a major change in the market that CSA and its Members operate in. The critical question is are we equipped to tackle some of these challenges that impact the traditional income streams for cricket as an eco-system (impact of private leagues and ICC Events to scheduling/broadcasting landscape the way people consume cricket)?
- d. Self-reflection of our structures - are we complacent with a mediocre status quo (no accountability to poor performance and keeping to programmes that are not yield the intended results)?
- e. In CSA's analysis, typical financial factors and performance scorecard, though informative, do they tell the entire picture of implementation on the ground?
- f. Other major factors to consider includes the CSA and Members' position in the market and changes anticipated in the environment, for sustainability efforts are not simply quick fixes to underlying problems but are investments for long-term growth and adaptability to change.
- g. This necessitates and in-depth analysis of the situations and problems plaguing the cricket pathway at CSA and Member level.

The first sustainability engagement with CSA, focussing on the Cricket Services Department took place on 17 July 2024.

Cricket South Africa's cost base is again above R1 billion, which is not sustainable. CSA are faced with the reality of incurring significant losses annually, except when we host India. A perfect example can be seen during FY2026/27, where despite hosting multiple formats tours by Australia and England, CSA still project significant losses.

A serious threat for SWD is possible investigation to reduce the number of professional teams due to the impact of sustainability. This matter was at length discussed at our Strategic planning session that was held on 7 and 8 June 2024.

OVERVIEW

The past season saw the inception of a professional women's league in South African cricket – with the Garden Route Badgers being one of the six fully professional units. This league is a symbol of progress, breaking down stereotypes, and the challenging of preconceived notions about women's roles in sports. It represents a shift in mindset, where talent, dedication, and passion take precedence over gender. Significant changes have been implemented to the women's structure with the number of permanent contracts in the "Top Six" Division 1 raised from six to 11 players per team. Additionally, there will be an improved and permanent coaching set-up consisting of a head coach and an assistant coach, as well as a centralised system for physiotherapists and strength and conditioning coaches attending to each team.

In 2019 the Members' Council has approved a concept to investigate the movement of the headquarters to George. The impact of Covid on our operations has undoubtedly wasted a lot of time in this aspiration. In March this year the Council of George has given us to green light and as reported to the Member' Council we have accepted to offer from *Global High Performance Centre* as an equity partner. The project which is handled by an ad hoc committee – *George Propco* – are in process to deal with the finalization of the contracts, lease agreements and to performance due diligence. We are still hoping to be ready to host warm-up matches in George with the 2027 ICC Cricket World Cup.

It gives me pleasure to report the following notable achievements during the past season:

- **Tabitha la Grange** for being selected for the SA Schools Fillies Girls'/19 team that was selected upon conclusion of the CSA Girls u/19 National tournament that was hosted in Cape Town during December 2023.
- **Trent Huisamen** (Outeniqua High School) who received the award as allrounder of the tournament for the Cricket SA u/16 National tournament that was hosted in Oudtshoorn in December 2023.
- **Josef Enslin** (Outeniqua High School) who received the award as batsman of tournament for scoring the most runs (152 runs of 78 at an average of 38) in the Cricket SA u/16 National tournament that was hosted in Oudtshoorn in December 2023.
- **Charl-Francois Marais** (Outeniqua High School) for being selected for the Southern Superstars Western Cape regional team that competed in the Cricket South Africa Cubs tournament that was hosted in Stellenbosch during January 2024.
- **Enathi Kitshini** (Themba lethu High School) for being selected for the Southern Superstars Western Cape regional team that competed in the Cricket South Africa Cubs tournament that was hosted in Stellenbosch during January 2024, for being selected for the SA Hubs XI that was selected upon conclusion of the Cricket South Africa National tournament that was hosted in George during March 2024 and for being selected for the SA Colts XI that was selected upon conclusion of the Khaya Majola Cricket South Africa U/19 National tournament that was hosted in Makhanda during December 2023.
- **Keano Coerecius** (Bridgton Secondary School) for being selected for the SA Hubs XI that was selected upon conclusion of the Cricket South Africa National tournament that was hosted in George during March 2024.
- **Wynand de Ridder** for being appointed as Head Coach for the Southern Superstars Western Cape regional team that competed in the Cricket South Africa Cubs tournament that was hosted in Stellenbosch during January.
- **Jermaine LeKay** (Harlequins Forces Cricket Club) for being selected for the South African Rural Coastal XI that was selected upon conclusion of the Cricket South Africa Rural team for Coastal Provinces that was held in Saldanha during April 2024.
- **Pieter Stuurman** for being appointed as coach of the South African Rural Coastal XI that was selected upon conclusion of the Cricket South Africa Rural team for Coastal Provinces that was held in Saldanha during April 2024.
- **André Olivier** as a CSA Panel Umpire who officiated in the CSA Division 2 Four-Day competition-, One Day Cup and Twenty 20 finals.

- **Kerrin Klaaste** who officiated as a CSA Panel umpire (Reserve List) Appointed to the CSA Reserve Panel of Umpires and who officiated in various ICC international women's fixtures.
- **Lyndon Volkwyn and Nathan Rhodes** who – as umpires - officiated in the various Cricket South Africa tournaments.
- **Gary Moos** who were appointed as CSA Host venue manager for the ICC u/19 World Cup that was presented in South Africa.
- **Thomas Kaber** for being selected for the MI Cape Town franchise during the 2023 edition of the SA 20 league.
- **Jean du Plessis** was selected to represent South Africa 'A' in a four-day match against India 'A' in Potchefstroom during December 2023. • **Annerie Dercksen and Asakhe Nyovane** for being selected for the 2024 CSA National Academy intake.
- **Jané Winstler and Annerie Dercksen** for being selected for Team South Africa that won a silver medal in the Africa Games that was hosted in Ghana in March 2024
- **Tazmin Brits, Annerie Dercksen and Mieke de Ridder** for being selected for the Momentum Proteas Women's squad for international fixtures during the past season.
- **Miceala Andrews, Mochelle May, Heroline Rhodes and Jane Winstler.** All for representing the Garden Route Badgers in 50 or more Limited over matches.

The Garden Route Badgers Hubs team won the CSA National Hub challenge for Coastal provinces in March. The performance of this team confirms the quality of our development program in the province. Our boy's u/16 team made us proud and will be promoted to the Platinum Division next season whilst the women's team of Union Stars again reach the final of the National T20 competition where they return as silver medallists.

During the past year we successfully hosted four national tournaments with distinction and stimulate extra revenue:

- CSA USSA B-tournament
- CSA Boy's U/16 national tournament
- CSA Hub Challenge for Coastal provinces
- CSA Division 2 Women's inter-provincial tournament

We are grateful towards our anchor sponsor, Six Gun Grill and Daisy Business Solutions as an associate sponsor for your ongoing support. Your contribution is highly appreciated. The financial support from the Western Cape Department for Cultural Affairs and Sport and the Municipalities of Oudtshoorn and George with major event grants.

As reported in the financial report, the company were challenged on the financial front – specifically entering the financial year for the period under review under cash flow challenges effected with a 20% budget cut from CSA on the Activity Based funding allocation in 2022. I am confident that the Board will successfully implement a financial restoration plan as mitigating process to address the financial position of the company.

In early February this year, we received the sad news of the passing of Simon Swigelaar, who passed away on February, 2nd 2024 aged 90. The late Mr Swigelaar was one of the three Honorary Life Members of Cricket South Africa at the time of his passing. He leaves behind an impressive cricket legacy, spanning over 50 years as a player, umpire, administrator, and selector. Throughout his career, he received numerous accolades, including the Khaya Majola Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing his enduring contribution to the advancement of South African cricket.

His impact extended beyond the cricket field, as evidenced by the 2003 Lifetime Achievers Award from the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport. Additionally, he played a crucial role in the unification process of sporting bodies in South Africa in 1990, earning him a Legend Award from the Western Cape MEC for Sport & Recreation in 2007.

I would also like to pay tribute to other members of the cricket fraternity who passed away during the past year. We honour your contribution towards cricket.

I would also like to thank Messrs Maurice Ellis and Reginald Salmons (two members who served for two terms of three years) as independent directors of the company. Your dedication, commitment and skills will forever be appreciated.

WAY FORWARD

Focus of Main Effort. The Board of Directors, together with the Associate bodies and management staff had a very successful strategic planning session on 7 and 8 June 2024. On the short-and-medium term the season ahead the Board and management team will need focus on the following critical matters:

- a. Focus on the financial restoration plan.
- b. Seeking of key sponsorships for Hub program, Stadium Naming Rights and two x Associate Sponsorships
- c. Drive the campaign for the movement of the Headquarters to George
- d. Focus on team preparation of the Garden Route Badgers Men's and Women's team campaigns for the 2024/25 season at the background of the set objectives.
- e. Rolling-out of junior programs in preparation for CSA National tournaments (u/13, u/16 and u/19 Boys and Girls) and SWDC junior festivals (u/11, u/13 and u/15) for boys and girls.
- f. The implementation of a Performance Appraisal system for staff.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Board of Directors, members of Board committees, the chairpersons of the associated bodies, affiliated clubs and the administrative office for their continued support and commitment to make SWD cricket an outstanding and leading province in the country.

We are faced with challenging times in South African cricket and in the province but I do have the confidence in leadership and management to cohesively pull together to take us to a brighter future.