

From The Editor-in-Chief

On behalf of the Board of the Nigeria Cricket Federation(NCF), I present to all Nigerian cricket lovers both at home and in diaspora, this maiden edition of 'The Wicket', the NCF's newsletter.

There is little doubt that Nigerian cricket has witnessed a re-awakening in the last four years leading to a first-ever ODI ranking by the International Cricket Council(ICC) of 39th in the world and 6th in Africa for the senior Nigerian team.

The introduction of this newsletter is to further that re-awakening by having NCF programmes catalogued and disseminated seamlessly in a pleasant reading format to lovers of cricket both in Nigeria and beyond.

This maiden edition, therefore reflects on events in the last quarter of 2009 and the newsletter would henceforth be published on a quarterly basis.

My thanks goes to the editor of the bulletin, George Wiltshire and the entire Publicity Committee as well as the secretariat led by Patrick Okeke

for birthing this initiative that would further indicate the level of growth of the game we all love in Nigeria.

I must say that I'm most impressed with not only the visual quality of the bulletin but also the editorial content; however we welcome comments on how the publication can be continuously improved upon.

I wish you a pleasant sharing experience.

- Kwesi Sagoe



The Wicket



Maiden Edition

A quarterly Newsletter of the Nigeria Cricket Federation

October- December 2009



Members of Nigeria Senior Cricket Team and officials that represented the country at the Pepsi World Cricket League (Division 7) held in Guernsey in 2009.

Nigerian Cricket ranked 39 in global ranking

Nigerian Cricket has been ranked 39 in the global section of the International Cricket Council's (ICC) ranking of Senior men's One-Day Internationals.

Nigeria's third position finish in the World Cricket League (WCL) Division 7 held in Guernsey in 2009 determined the eventual ranking of the six countries within the 37th to the 42nd positions in the latest ICC Global Rankings. Nigeria is currently by this ranking, the sixth best African Associate/Affiliate member of the ICC after Kenya, Namibia, Uganda, Tanzania and Botswana. Prior to this, it had remained below the line in the Africa divisional ranking.

Also, CricketEurope, a website for European and world cricket, as well as posts a cricket ranking section, on November 13, 2009, ranked Nigeria 29 out of 84 ICC Associate and Affiliate member.

The ranking, which does not include the ten ICC Full members, ranked Nigeria at 29 with 87 points. Ireland tops the ranking with 153 points, followed by Scotland (140), Netherlands (138) and Kenya (136) in second, third and fourth positions respectively, while Switzerland with no point is at the base of the rankings.

Nigeria's North-West African neighbours are ranked as follows; Sierra Leone (38), Ghana (48), Morocco (58), and Gambia (70).



Nigeria Cricket Federation President's remarks at the 2009/2010 beginning of season match

The year 2009 has indeed turned out to be a watershed in the history of Nigerian cricket.

Pursuant to the Nigerian senior team's participation at the World Cricket League (Division 7) in Guernsey last May, Nigeria for the first time ever, is now ranked 39th in the world and sixth in Africa in the One-Day-International (ODI) version of the game.

I believe this is the reward in the past four years of creating pathway structures for cricket in the country.

Such pathway structures include the following items which were integral to the 6-point vision of the last Board of the NCF:

- (i) Re-establishing a sponsored National Secondary Schools tournament
- (ii) Re-establishing a sponsored National Cricket Clubs tournament
- (iii) Establishing qualitative local sponsorships to at least equate ICC funding
- (iv) Improving the standard of play of Nigerian teams at all levels.
- (v) Renewal of the NCF Secretariat into a modern office that will support the thrust of the Federation.
- (vi) Construction of at least a turf wicket before the end of 2009. Let me commend the last Board of the NCF for ensuring that at least five out of the six points were met during its tenor to a large

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NCF President's remarks

extent.

We now have the National Secondary Schools tournament sponsored by DUFIL Prima Plc makers of Indomie Noodles, which made its debut last season.

We have annually featured the National Cricket Club championships; indeed the fourth edition of that tournament held in Kaduna in July, 2009.

In 2008, the NCF raised almost N30 Million in terms of local sponsorship for both the National Secondary Schools tournament and the North-West African Cricket Championships (NWACC).

Our Africa ranking of sixth and global ranking of 39th can attest to the improvement in standard of our senior national team.

Finally, some measure of renewal was carried out at the secretariat compared to what we inherited in 2006.

The outstanding issue on that six-point agenda is the construction of at least one turf wicket before the end of 2009.

We now have a new Board that was inaugurated last July and is constituted as follows:

We must integrate girls/women's' cricket into our programmes on an immediate basis. We already have about four states with some women's' cricket structure and the necessary first step is to have an annual National Women's' tournament as soon as possible.

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|-------------------------------|---|
| (i) Mr. Kwesi Sagoe | - President (International Bodies) |
| (ii) Dr. Yahaya Ukwanya | - 1st Vice - President (North-West Zone) |
| (iii) Mr. Soki Dakoru | - 2nd Vice - President (South-South Zone) |
| (iv) Hon. Bappa Misau | - Member (Government Nominee) |
| (v) Ms. Bimbo Olusola-Sowoolu | - Member (NAWIS) |
| (vi) Mr. Okon Ukpong | - Member (South-West Zone) |
| (vii) Alhaji Saidu El-Buba | - Member (North-East Zone) |
| (viii) Col. A.O. Okoh | - Member (Armed Forces) |
| (ix) Alhaji Alfa Mohammed | - Member (North-Central) |
| (x) Dr. A.O. Okunbor | - Member (NAPHER-SD) |

There is a lot of work still to be done in moving cricket to a new pedestal both in Nigeria and internationally:-

(i) It is time to professionalize the administration of the NCF office by the appointment of a full time General Manager/Chief Operating Officer, who will report to the Board and be in charge of day-to-day administration. Other African Associate members, who have done this successfully include Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Botswana.

The General Manager/COO would be complemented by a National Development Manager (NDM) and an Accounts Officer.

Whilst obviously the NDM will focus on development and will set up a zonal development structure that will have Development Officers in each of the six geo-political zones reporting to him; the Accounts Officer will be responsible for preparing monthly and quarterly reports to both the Board and the ICC Africa to ensure that we meet reporting timelines effectively and efficiently.

(i) We also need to rebrand the NCF into Cricket Nigeria in line with not only global contemporary practice but also to give the body a private sector orientation in carrying out its marketing activities.

We must integrate girls/women's' cricket into our programmes on an immediate basis. We already have about four states with some women's' cricket structure and the necessary first step is to have an annual National Women's' tournament as soon as possible.

The journey towards construction of the turf wicket must be completed as we expect the Kenyan curator before the end of the year to start work at the MKO Abiola Cricket Oval in Abeokuta.

Finally, we must ensure that TBS remain the home of cricket in Nigeria.

2009/2010 Event/Tournaments

- U - 15 NWA Girls tournament in Gambia (tentatively December, 2009)
- U - 18 NWA Boys' tournament in Ghana (April 2010)
- U 15 NWA Boys' tournament in Nigeria (December 2010)
- NWACC 2010 (tentatively April 2010)
- NCF Umpires Levels 1/2 courses (November/December 2009)
- Introductory Coaching Courses in Rivers and Delta State (Nov./Dec. 2009)
- National Secondary Schools championship (Dec. 2009 April. 2010)
- 5th National Cricket Club championship (May/June 2010)"

-Kwesi Sagoe
President, Nigeria Cricket Federation

Lagos Holds Nigeria's First Official Cricket Match In Coloured Attire



• The inaugural cricket match played in coloured attire in Lagos, Nigeria in November 2009, between Ibeju Lekki CC and FGC, Warri Old Boys CC.

History was made on Saturday, November 7, 2009 when the Iris Smart CCC Cricket League took off at the TBS Cricket Oval in Lagos, the home of Nigerian cricket, when the first official Limited Overs match was played in Nigeria with Coloured Clothing and a white ball.

The game featured newcomers to Division 1 of the CCC league, FGCWOSA Cricket Club, against defending champions, Ibeju-Lekki Cricket Club in the first league game for the 2009/10 cricket season.

To mark the historic occasion, CCC invited the Lagos State Cricket Association Chairman, George Wiltshire, a Nigerian ex-International, to bowl the first ball using a white cricket ball.

Facing him with the bat was another Nigerian ex-International, Ewa Henshaw, with the CCC Chairman, Tunde Akinleye and Vice-Chairman, Anil Gopwani closely observing proceedings. The competing teams thereafter took to the field in their coloured outfits.

With the brilliant weather and the lush close-cropped outfield, it was a glorious site to behold as it illustrated the rate at which cricket has developed in Nigeria, especially in the last three years.

CCC has promised that the tempo of the opening game would be maintained throughout the season with the focus on continuously improving the quality and quantity of cricket being played. The idea, it said, was to attract more spectators and thus encourage attendance at its matches, as well as making cricket ties a form of social outing for families and cricket aficionados alike.

The CCC Chairman, Tunde Akinleye, confirmed that committee in conjunction with the National Cricket Federation (NCF) was working with the University of Lagos authorities to refurbish the Unilag Cricket Oval and bring the facilities up to par.



• Participants at Abuja inaugural Secondary Schools Cricket Fair.

Abuja Holds Inaugural Secondary Schools Cricket Fair

The Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) in conjunction with the Cricket Club of Abuja held an Abuja Secondary Schools Cricket Fair on Tuesday, December 1, 2009 at the National Stadium cricket oval in Abuja.

According to the NCF, the aim of the fair was to sow the seeds of the game in schools in Abuja.

Whiteplains British School, Army Day Secondary School, Asokoro, Federal Government Boys' College Garki, Government Day Secondary School, Karu and Government Secondary School, Karu, all participated in the fair, which was basically an introductory coaching clinic for the schools aimed at developing grassroots cricket in Abuja.

The schools thus join Loyola Jesuit College, which participated in the maiden Indomie National Secondary Schools Cricket Championship earlier in the year, as cricket playing institutions in Abuja.

The clinic was handled by two former Nigerian

Captains; Okon Ukpong, who is the current NCF Technical Committee Chairman and his predecessor in office, Ewa Henshaw.

The two NCF coaches also conducted a train-the-trainer programme on Sunday, November 29, 2009 on the membership of the Cricket Club of Abuja (CCA), who supported the coaching clinic. Some CCA members assisted the NCF coaches on the day in order to have a reasonable coach to pupils ratio of 1:12.

The event was also used by the Federation to mark the World AIDS Day in alignment with the marking of the day world-wide by members of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Speaking during the event, NCF President, Kwesi Sagoe, remarked that the introductory coaching clinic would be done on a periodic basis across the six geo-political zones in an attempt to popularize the game of cricket at the school level in the country.

NCF Holds Level 1 Coaching Course and Level 0 Umpiring Course In Kaduna



● Chairman of the Technical Committee of the NCF, Mr. Okon Ukpong demonstrating the backlift to participants at the Level 1 Coaching Course and Level 0 Umpiring Course held in Kaduna.

The Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) continued its technical capacity building programmes in the North-West zone of the country with the hosting of back-to-back Coaching and Umpiring certificate courses at the Ahmadu Bello Stadium in Kaduna.

Fresh from an Introductory Coaching clinic conducted on four schools in Abuja, the NCF duo of Okon Ukpong and Ewa Henshaw facilitated the courses, assessed the participants and thereafter conducted an examination for the course participants.

Some of the candidates, who participated in the programme are Mike Egiethua, Peter Yakubu, Ohimai Ehijhaetor, Titus George, Telema Dargoe, Nnadozie Echeocha, Habib Enesi, and Joseph Ochie. Others are Dan Asabe, Mohammed Ibrahim, Abdulahi Kasando, Sanni Opene, Tony Benson, Haruna Thomas, Emmanuel Gowon, Yusuf Gashun, Moses Joseph, Tisgin Lucas, O. Aderibigbe, Godwin Onoja, Dahiru Enesi, and Samuel Wantana among others.

The Level 1 Coaching Course was held on Thursday December 3, 2009 whilst the Level 0 Umpiring Course was held the next day on Friday December 4, 2009.

Nigeria Hosts North-West Africa All-Rounder Academy



● Participants at a coaching session at the North-West Africa All-Rounder Academy hosted by Nigeria in 2009.

The Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) hosted a North-West Africa regional elite programme under the auspices of ICC-Africa. The All-Rounder Academy is directed at improving the skills of all-rounders in the region.

Nigeria as the only Associate member in the region, had the honour of hosting these programmes, which drew participants from Cameroun, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Sierra Leone and hosts Nigeria with two participants representing each country.

The participants were Julien Nyoma and Raymond Fongana (Cameroun); Zacchaeus Akila and David Johnson (Gambia); Isaac Aboagye and Julius Mensah (Ghana); Kamara Abubakarr and Ibrahim Kabia (Sierra Leone); Ichagha Fofana and Mohammadu Diaby (Mali) and James Chukwu and Rotimi Adesanya (Nigeria).

The course was facilitated by Messrs Okon Ukpong and Ewa Henshaw with logistics provided by the NCF Secretary, Dans Adokiye.

Lagos State Cricket Association marks ICC Centenary Celebration with Seminar



● Cross section of participants at the (LSCA) organised seminar for coaches and umpires in the spirit of the global celebrations marking the ICC Centenary anniversary.

IT was a constellation of Nigerian cricket stars, both past and present at the Tafawa Balewa Square Cricket Oval, Lagos when the Lagos State Cricket Association (LSCA) organised a seminar for coaches and umpires in the spirit of the global celebrations marking the ICC Centenary anniversary.

Leading the personalities at the event was the President of the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF), Kwesi Sagoe, who was on hand to declare the event open.

NCF board member, Okon Ukpong, chairman of the Ogun State Cricket Association, Dipo Idowu, former Nigerian international, Dr Jide Adedeji, were also among the dignitaries that graced the occasion. The 48 coaches and umpires, who attended the seminar, were drawn from Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States.

In his welcome address, chief host and LSCA chairman, George Wiltshire, expressed his delight in organising the event, which to him, was like a celebration of 100 years of cricket in Lagos nay Nigeria.

The LSCA boss noted with pride the strides cricket had taken globally in recent years and acknowledged the efforts of the NCF in ensuring that the country benefitted from the evolving developments in the international arena.

He seized the opportunity to review the activities of his association in the last season and the successes of Lagos state teams in national competitions and tournaments. Harping on the day's event, Wiltshire reminded participants that the knowledge they would get at the end of the seminar would help them in the coming season as the state was aiming for the best.

He commended the state sports council, organisations involved in the teaching and promotion of the sport, particularly, the Howzat

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ICC Centenary Celebration

Foundation for Cricket, Ibeju Lekki Local Government, other individuals and corporate bodies that were contributing to the development of the sport in the state.

He also informed his audience that the cricket association was ready for the coming season, which would be heralded by the GTA 2020 tournament.

Also speaking, NCF President, Kwesi Sagoe, said he was happy that the LSCA initiated such a programme in commemoration of the ICC Centenary celebrations, and charged other state associations to emulate the Lagos initiative.

Sagoe assured the states of NCF's support as they strove to develop the sport in their various states.

He noted that cricket had recorded significant progress in three years of his stewardship and promised that the federation would not rest on its oars, adding that it is out to ensure Nigeria improved in its present 39th position in the ICC ODI global ranking and sixth in Africa.

Just before the seminar proper commenced, the chairman of the Lagos Club Cricket Committee (CCC), Babatunde Akinleye, presented a keynote address entitled: 'One Hundred Years of Cricket; Expectations from Nigeria,' in which he attempted to trace the history of cricket and its development in over three centuries.

OVERVIEW: + No one is sure of when cricket started; + Rules have existed since time immemorial but were first codified in 1774 and then modified in the same year, 1774; + MCC was founded in 1787 at Lord's and became custodian of the Laws; + ICC was founded on 15th June, 1909; + Nigeria is an Associate member. + Ultimate status is to attain test status to become a full member.

WAY FORWARD:

Develop discipline in cricketers, especially at the formative stages of primary and secondary schools. Provide mentoring opportunities for young cricketers. Provide economic opportunities to support cricket through merchandising; Propagate a positive image for Nigeria; Improve the quality of the game in Nigeria; Continuous improvement of Nigeria in international ranking, culminating in the achievement of a full ICC Membership status in the next decade. Two papers were presented at the seminar. The first, The Role of Cricket Umpires in the 21st Century was presented by ICC certificated Umpire, Roland Ilube, while Coach Ewa Henshaw presented

the second paper on Teaching the Gentleman's Game.

Communique At The End Of The One Day Coaches And Umpire's Seminar at the end of the seminar for coaches and umpires organised by the Lagos State Cricket Association in commemoration of the ICC Centenary celebrations, held at the Tafawa Balewa Square Cricket Oval, the participants agreed to the following:

1. That Nigerian cricket has in the last three years recorded significant improvement both in quality of play and administration, but more is still desired to be done to improve in world ranking.
2. That the way forward is for the country to go professional so as to give young cricketers in the country hope to pursue careers in the sport, develop the sport from the grassroots and make teams more competitions and tournaments. This way Nigeria can build on progress made so far.
3. That the rapid transformation of the sport coupled with modern technology and television coverage has put so much pressure on umpires to get things done properly. This has influenced officiating.
4. Also, the transformation of cricket into a multi-million Dollar industry affects the intensity of competition and officiating, thereby putting the umpire's authority under constant questioning. Various versions of the game with various laws demand a lot from umpires.
5. The spirit of the game says you must respect umpire's decisions. But an umpire worth his salt must earn this respect.
6. The Umpire must be in-charge and take total control of the game.
7. The Umpire must absolutely understand the laws of the game.
8. Understand the facts before decisions are taken. Must take his time not to rush into any decision. When in doubt, the umpire must consult his onfield and squareleg umpires before taking critical decisions.
9. An umpire must ensure his records and that of the scorer's are in harmony.
10. The biggest asset in every cricket player is character, good temperament and self control. A good cricket player must not allow himself to be bothered by

what his opponents or spectators say on the stands.

11. Players must not employ foul calls to sway officiation in their favour.
12. Discipline: Be obedient to leadership. Players must obey umpire's call as their reaction to umpire's decisions sends signals (rightly or wrongly) to the spectators.
13. In teaching the game, coaches must live by example and impart same to their wards. Coaches should tell the players to stand out no matter the situation. At the end of the event 48 coaches and umpires were awarded certificates of participation by the Lagos State Cricket Association.

Just before the seminar proper commenced, the chairman of the Lagos Club Cricket Committee (CCC), Babatunde Akinleye, presented a keynote address entitled: 'One Hundred Years of Cricket; Expectations from Nigeria,' in which he attempted to trace the history of cricket and its development in over three centuries.

These include: Ayanusi Abayomi, Wale Adekoya, Dolapo Gafar, Friday Udoh, Femi Oduyebo, Joseph Eshua, Onome Ogghenekevwe, Osita Onwuzulike, Ademola Onikoyi, Gbenga Odedele, Ruth Ayonnaoki, Rickson Tete, Frank Omozegele, Clement Amonakhai, Oboh Omoigui, Newton Ikenwaso, Chimeze Onwuzulike, Gbenga Akinriola, Garuba Haruna, Taya Atoloye, Azeez Salako, Austin Aregban, Tamuno John, Tayo Sowole, Muritala Afolabi, Sunday Adeleye, Lekan Awolowo, Oladayo Lawal, Dr. Otegbeye Jide, Hammed Sani, Itua Edekharegbe, Olugbon Olympio, Oluseyi Olympio, Bejide Jide, Akolade Saheed, Ogun Godian, Musibau Ajayi, Bayo Thompson, Akin Denton, Tunde Elliot, Olayemi Amusa and Garuba Oluwaseyi.

The 12 from Abeokuta were Seyi Sonde, Anofiu Salako, Baynes Toyosi, Salako Seun, Kehinde Olanbiwonnu, Yemi Adegbola, Taiwo Oladunjoye, Femi Oguntoke, Rotimi Adesanya, Dimeji Oladunjoye, Asisat Adegboyega and Patience Onebamoih.



• Chairman of Lagos State Cricket Association, Mr. George Wiltshire (left) receiving cheque for the 2nd Edition of GTAssur 20/20 cricket tourney from Mr. Michael Oyebola, Chief Investment Officer, GTAssur at the cheque presentation ceremony held at the corporate Head Office of the sponsors in Lagos.

The Management of Guaranty Trust Assurance Plc (GTAssur) redeemed its pledge to continue to support Lagos State Cricket Association (LSCA) by sponsoring the second edition of the GTAssur 20/20 Cricket Tournament.

GTAssur Sponsors 20/20 Cricket Tournament

Speaking at the cheque presentation ceremony, which took place at Guaranty Trust Assurance Plc's Corporate Head Office on Bishop Aboyade Cole, Victoria Island, Lagos, Michael Dele Oyebola, Chief Investment Officer, said that his company was supporting cricket as part of its social responsibility in the area of sports development with the aim of setting a platform for the exposure of talented cricketers, who would represent Nigeria in future in the 20-20 form of cricket. The 20-20 is the new format of play that is becoming very popular all over the world.

Elated at the development, Lagos State Cricket Association (LSCA) Chairman, George Wiltshire, while receiving the sponsorship cheque, thanked

the Management of GTAssur for sponsoring the second edition of the tournament, a year after it sponsored the maiden edition.

He said the gesture attested to the fact that the company reposed confidence in the LSCA after organizing the maiden edition successfully, just as he assured the Management of GTAssur that the secondnd edition of the tournament would be an improvement on the maiden edition. In attendance at the brief ceremony were Chike Ogwo of Marketing & Communication, GTAssur, Akinwande Denton, second Vice Chairman of Lagos State Cricket Association (LSCA) and Adebola Ogunsina, representative of Club Cricket Committee (CCC).