OSU Cricket Club shares Midwest title

By Jill Goecke
Lantern sports writer

"When most Ohio State students think of cricket, an annoying insect is the first image that comes to mind. For one group of Buckeyes, cricket means a grueling sport and a chance at a tournament championship.

The Ohio State Cricket Club hosted the Midwest Cricket Tournament recently with hopes of a championship. The Buckeyes succeeded — sort of.

The tournament ended with the Buckeyes sharing a co-championship with the University of Cincinnati.

The tournament, which took place at the Jesse Owens Recreation Center on West Campus, ended with both teams tied with a score of 123 runs.

"At 123 it’s a very rare thing in the game of cricket," said OSU Cricket Club President Vineet Arya. "It is something that happens every three or four years."

Arya, who has been the club’s president since 1988, said the Bearcats had to score at least one run with two pitches left to win. That is usually an easy score to get, but OSU held Cincinnati on both pitches and the game ended in a tie, Arya said.

One problem for the Buckeyes was they did not have their captain for the final game.

Salman Farooq, OSU’s Cricket Club captain, broke his finger in the semifinal match and could not participate in the championship game. Farooq was named Most Valuable Player of the tournament even with his absence in the finals, Arya said.

The Bearcats had already lost to OSU in two previous regular season games this year.

OSU beat the University of Toledo in the semifinals. The Rockets needed three runs in the last pitch and could not do it, leading the Buckeyes to the championship game.

This was the fifth year of the Midwest tournament, and it consisted of 18 teams this year.

The remaining season for the Cricket Club will last until the end of September. The club is currently participating in their final tournament for the season.
Cricket club seeks third straight title

By Onyero Onyeachoem
Lantern staff writer

The Ohio State Cricket Club kicked off their regular season with a win over the Cleveland Cricket Club on Sunday, April 20 at the Cuyahoga Airport in Cleveland.

"There were some players from the other team that played well," said Salman Farooq, the OSU Cricket Club’s captain. Farooq said they gave the other team many chances to win by dropping the ball several times and not playing well at their practices.

The game could have been considered a tie since both teams scored 187 runs in 30 overs. Since OSU had 7 batters out and CCC had 8 batters out, OSU was declared the winners by having one less batter out than Cleveland Cricket Club.

Also, Farooq said the cold weather and the wet ground made the conditions unfavorable to play in. "There was twice as much effort by the players to move around," said Farooq.

The club anticipated a strong season with the same 35 players back from last year’s championship team in the Midwest Tournament including Farooq, who was named the Most Valuable Player of the final game, and Ahmed Vakil, who was named Most Valuable Player for the tournament.

"Everybody is in good health, plus we have good team chemistry," said Farooq, the team’s captain.

Since 1995, the team has won back-to-back championship titles in the Midwest Tournament held at OSU during the summer and are determined to win their third title this year.

This year, the club has Dr. Sheikh Ali Akbar as their new primary advisor.

Akbar said he decided to become the club’s advisor because of his interest in cricket and he knew OSU had a strong and enthusiastic team.

As a faculty member, Akbar will be able to generate a lot of contacts and sponsorships from the local businesses to fund the club.

"I will give them all the support that they need," said Akbar.

On Friday, May 2, the Cricket Club will be playing an exhibition game for Lane Avenue Park’s groundbreaking ceremony at 12:30 p.m.

Farooq said, “People will be able learn about the sport and get themselves familiarize with how the game is played.”
Local clubs promote baseball’s predecessor

Cricket a weekly event at OSU West Campus

By MICHAEL ALWOOD
Suburban News Sports Reporter

To most American sports fans, the game of cricket is a curious sport with baffling rules and seemingly never-ending matches.

It isn’t true, of course. But that is what most Americans think when they think of cricket.

The truth is, cricket is a fairly simple game similar to baseball. Most matches are completed in one afternoon. It is also a hugely popular sport in much of the English-speaking world.

The most simplified explanation of cricket is that it is played much like baseball, with one team fielding while the other bats. The bowler initiates play by throwing the ball to the batsmen. The batters hit the ball into play and run between bases to score runs.

What may surprise Central Ohioans is that cricket is played weekly on the Ohio State University campus.

Both the Columbus Cricket Club and the OSU Cricket Club played matches on the field outside the Jesse Owens West Recreation Center on West Campus.

On Sunday, the Columbus club hosted a team of visiting professional players from India in an exhibition match with the OSU team. The New Sports Club team featured several world-class players, including top bowlers Atul Wassan and Raju Venkapatni.

Jacob Benjamin, president of the Columbus club who extended the invitation to the visitors to help promote the sport in Central Ohio, said the event was a success.

“We’ve had very good response from the community,” Benjamin said.

Wassan, who has played for the national team of India, is known as a pace bowler, the equal of a fastball pitcher in baseball. He said his team also visited California on its trip to the United States in hopes of promoting the game here.

“I hope Americans take to this game,” Wassan said. “It’s exciting.”

It wasn’t as fast-paced as other games, but certainly there is skill involved.

Raquib Bosunia, an OSU student from Bangladesh, is also one of the top batsmen on the club. He managed a “sixer” (about the same as a home run) off Wassan.

“It feels great,” Bosunia said. “He’s a highest-level bowler. But even he can have one bad bowl, and you wait for it.”

The OSU club beat the visiting squad 150-85, an outcome that was a bit of a surprise to team captain Salman Farooq.

“We didn’t expect to beat them that bad,” Farooq said. “But every individual on the team came out and gave one-hundred percent.”

The OSU club plays in the Midwest League, with teams from all over the Midwest and most of the Big Ten schools. Team member Vicky Vashist said OSU has won the league championship three years in a row.

Vashist said most Midwest players come from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, with a few from Australia, Jamaica and other countries. In those countries, he said, it is common to see kids playing cricket on the street corner, much like Americans play basketball or baseball.

Farooq said he hopes the exhibition drew some much-needed attention to his sport. He said around 70 to 80 people showed up Sunday to watch the match.

“It was a good turnout,” he said. “We’ve never had that big a crowd.”