

# **NORTHERN CRICKET UNION OF IRELAND**



## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **2019 SEASON**

The Northern Cricket Union of Ireland is a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Northern Ireland (Company Number NI 649724) and a Charity registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (Charity Number NIC 106791) having its registered office at The Pavilion, Stormont Estate, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast. BT4 3TA

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## **2018-19 REVIEW**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

<b>Chairman</b>	Alan Waite
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Sam Beckett
<b>Hon Treasurer</b>	Kailash Chada
<b>Directors</b>	Roger Bell Rosemary Bryans Alastair Burton Stephen Dyer Ross Ellerby Michael Humphreys Ken Nixon Alan Rutherford Brian Walsh

## OFFICIALS AND COMMITTEES

<b>President</b>	Richard Johnson	
<b>Vice President</b>	Roger Bell	
<b>Company Secretary</b>	Murray Power	
<b>Child Welfare Officer</b>	Owen Lambert	
<b>Public Relations Officer</b>	Richard White	
<b>General Manager</b>	Angela Platt	
<b>General Secretary</b>	Bryan Milford	
<b>Cricket Operations Manager</b>	Uel Graham	
<b>Cricket Development Officer</b>	Callum Atkinson	
<b>School &amp; Club Engagement Officer</b>	Wayne Hughes	
<b>Knights &amp; Pathway Head Coach</b>	Simon Johnston	
<b>Domestic Cricket Directorate</b>	Sam Beckett Gary Blair James Kennedy David Skelton	Roger Bell Sam Grant Andrew Rose
<b>Representative Cricket Directorate</b>	Alan Rutherford Stephen Hanna	Stephen Dyer Brian Walsh
<b>Finance &amp; Sponsorship Directorate</b>	Alastair Burton	Kailash Chada
<b>Competitions Committee</b>	Roger Bell Michael McDowell Wylie McKinty David Skelton Joe Moore Colin McCaughey Colin Latham Derek McKinley	Jack Quinn Staci Maxwell Ryan McMaster Kyle Weir Adrian Campbell Dave Williams Richard Johnson
<b>Disciplinary Panel</b>	Colin Webster Alan McMillan Peter Shepherd Bobby Fleetham	Ian Dickie Alan Johnston Gordon Scott

## **Appeals Panel**

Neale Matthews      Julie Knight  
Carson McCullough      Graeme Pollock  
Andrew Babington      Harry McFadden  
Jack Quinn

## **Inter Provincial / MTB Northern Knights**

**Head Coach**

**Manager**

**Selectors**

Simon Johnston  
Andrew Rose  
Ryan Eagleson      Alan Rutherford  
Simon Johnston      Brian Walsh

## **Honorary Life Members**

IJ Anderson  
JRW Boyce OBE  
JC Hiles  
JR Law  
AJ Linehan (deceased 25 June 2019)  
P Lunney  
H McCrory  
C Walker MBE

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff, welcome to the Northern Cricket Union Annual Report for the year since the last AGM. The report provides an overview and a useful insight into the Union's key activities and achievements during the past season. Compiled by Staff and Volunteers, the report covers a range of information relating to Cricket Development as well as Youth, School, Club and Interprovincial competitions, demonstrating the large volume of activity that has taken place during the past season.

The volume and range of cricket activity the Union now covers continues to develop and grow. Many areas of our operations have again seen great progress during 2019. However, this growth in activity also results in more challenges as our resources continue to be stretched. The NCU school and club development programmes, domestic competitions and representative cricket at youth and senior levels have all combined to result in an ever-increasing workload for our volunteers and administrators. Sincere thanks must go to all our volunteers and administrators for the valuable contribution they make and for the time they continue to give to enable the successful delivery of cricket throughout the NCU.

General Manager, Angela Platt, has continued to support the Board of Directors with improvements to the implementation of our Governance and Operational systems. Angela oversees the day to day operations of the Union's staff and ensures we continue to make progress to achieve our key targets and objectives. Angela has again been successful in securing a range of grants to support the delivery of our cricket development programmes. Seeking and securing external investment will continue to be a key target in the coming years as we ensure we access additional investment to impact positively on our clubs and schools. The General Manager appointment would not have been possible without the support and financial investment from Cricket Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland and we thank both organisations for that continued investment.

General Secretary, Bryan Milford, continues to play a key role in the Union's administration. Bryan's work often goes unseen to the wider membership, with many hours spent behind the scenes preparing and supporting the administration of our domestic programmes. Bryan's role is wide and varied but is essential as the main communications role within the Union between the Union and our clubs. His experience and knowledge of the NCU continues to be invaluable as we continue our development in the coming years.

Cricket Operations Manager, Uel Graham, has settled well into his role following his appointment in May 2018 and he has already played a significant role in improving the standard and quality of our cricket operations. Some of Uel's highlights to date include significant improvements in the volume of activity and increased competitive opportunities for our regional development squad programmes (both male and female). Uel has also been instrumental in the delivery of the first NCU Golf Day held at Royal Belfast Golf Club in April 2019, which was a great success and raised much needed funds to support the Emerging Knights and Women's Representative programmes in 2019. Uel has also been the driving force in another successful delivery of the NCU U16 Cricket Festival held in Belfast in August with visiting teams from across the UK. A hugely important role for the NCU and one that would not be possible without support and investment from Cricket Ireland.

2019 has also seen some changes in our Cricket Development Staff team. With the transfer of responsibility for Cricket Development from Cricket Ireland to the NCU this resulted in two new roles being recruited in 2019.

In March 2019 Wayne Hughes was appointed as the new School & Club Engagement Officer for the Union, a role supported by investment from Sport NI and Cricket Ireland. Wayne's role focuses on establishing opportunities for schools to be introduced to the game of cricket across the region and enable strong school club links to effectively increase the number and quality of opportunities available to school aged players within cricket. Wayne's role is also focused on supporting the development of a greater diversity of programmes within youth and adult club cricket for both males and females.

In September 2019 Callum Atkinson was appointed as the new Club & Workforce Development Officer, another role supported by investment from Sport NI and Cricket Ireland. In this role Callum will focus on providing greater support to clubs to enhance individual club development systems and improving capacity building within club workforce (Coaches, Officials and Volunteers) development structures.

Up to August 2019, Callum Atkinson, was the Union's Cricket Development Officer, a role jointly funded by Ulster University and the NCU. During that time Callum worked hard to deliver our development programmes with many clubs and schools benefitting from that work to date. The role also saw improvements in the University Indoor and Outdoor competitions as well as the implementation of the Women & Girls Cricket Academy. We are grateful to the Ulster University for their financial support for the role. As current funding for the role ends in December 2019, we are currently exploring options with Ulster University for the continuation of potential investment for the role beyond this year. We look forward to continuing to work with Ulster University to developing our partnership over the coming years.

February 2019 also saw the appointment of Simon Johnston as the Northern Knights Head Coach and NCU Pathway Head Coach role. Cricket Ireland continued with their investment to support the Northern Knights Head Coach role, with the NCU agreeing to invest in the pathway head coach role to ensure the role was a full time position up to December 2020. The success of that appointment has already been evident following an excellent year for the MTB Northern Knights Programme and individual success for Knights players at International level.

The MTB Northern Knights secured a first Interprovincial T20 Title and performed well in all other formats. The programme has also evolved to include wider player development through our Emerging Knights programme. Thanks, must go to the coaches and players representing the Northern Knights during the past season as their contribution, in addition to their club commitments, has been exceptional.

The 2019 season has again seen record numbers being involved in our regional development squad programmes (RDS) for boys' and girls' as well as our Senior Women and Emerging Knights programmes. We again saw a significant increase in the number of competitive games and tours provided for our talented young players through our representative squads with various tours occurring the summer months, including our first ever Women's tour to Cornwall in August. We look forward to seeing those young players in our system progress through our pathway

programmes in the years to come. We are of course indebted to the dedication and commitment of the many coaches involved in delivering those programmes and activities during the season as they simply wouldn't happen without our excellent coaches at all levels.

A significant highlight during the 2019 season was the success of the inaugural NCU Golf Day, held in April 2019 at Royal Belfast Golf Club. Our thanks must go to Uel Graham who organised the event superbly and Belfast City Auctions for their sponsorship, as well as the many individuals, businesses and organisations who supported with sponsorship of tees and greens, to enable the event to be so successful. We look forward to hosting similar fundraising events in the future. At International level 2019 again saw an increase in the number of international fixtures being hosted at Stormont. This season the NCU supported Cricket Ireland in hosting a Senior Men's series against Afghanistan in May and a Senior Men's series against Zimbabwe in July. Unfortunately, the planned Women's T20 games against Zimbabwe were cancelled due to Zimbabwe not being able to travel but we do hope we will have future opportunities to host Women's internationals in Stormont. Thanks must go to Ivan McMinn and the CSNI CC volunteers who supported the delivery of the international games at Stormont, as well as the NCU staff team who made sure they supported Cricket Ireland in the smooth running of those international fixtures.

Once again it has been a busy season for everyone involved in cricket and one that was unfortunately impacted significantly by poor weather at times throughout the season, resulting in a difficult finish to the leagues. However, on a positive for 2019 we have been able to again add to our professional staff team during the past year to support our work and provide additional resources to support our clubs and schools throughout the region. However, even with increased staff resources we continue to be mindful of the fact that the delivery and development of cricket continues to be dependent on the large number of valuable volunteers at Union and club level who give so much of their free time to assist with the many cricket events and programmes delivered throughout the year.

On behalf of everyone in the NCU I also extend our sincere thanks to the many clubs and schools who have assisted us in providing their facilities during the season to enable us to host a range of competitions, representative games and practice sessions. Your support is greatly appreciated. As my term as Chairman now comes to an end, I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who supported me in my role over the last three years and especially during the last year. Thank you also to those who are now standing down from the Board after many years of great service to the Union. They have all contributed so much to the NCU and whilst their input will be missed by the Board, I am sure they will continue to volunteer their time to support the Union in other ways over the coming years.

Thank you to everyone for their contribution to cricket during the past year. For many of you it won't be a long break as clubs plan for the new season and the NCU indoor winter RDS programmes for girls and boys are scheduled again to begin in October. However, I hope you all enjoy a break from cricket and come back refreshed and ready to embrace the new 2020 cricket season.

**Alan Waite**  
**Chairman**

## GENERAL MANAGER

The General Manager, Angela Platt, has been in position since April 2017. Progress has been made in that time in some key areas of business. The following report outlines the key areas of responsibility the General Manager covers, as well as highlighting some of the achievements that have been delivered during the past year.

### Strategic Planning and General Management

Key responsibility for ensuring clarity of direction in relation to strategy, operational plans and delivery against targets and objectives, which includes key areas:

- **Strategic Plan** - with lead responsibility the General Manager has been working alongside the board to develop the Union's next strategic plan. Draft documentation is now with the Board for consideration and the implementation of that new Strategy will begin in January 2020.
- **Operational Plan** – alongside the work on the Strategic Plan, annual operational plans in key areas of business are now being finalised to ensure key targets and priorities for the year are identified, and these are linked to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan.
- **Oversight** – the General Manager has an oversight function to ensure the implementation of the operational plans and provide regular updates to the Board and relevant funding stakeholders on progress.
- **Service Level Agreements** – lead responsibility for securing the delivery and implementation of Union obligations outlined in relevant service level agreements with CI and other organisations. These include Ulster University, Sport Northern Ireland and Department for Communities currently.
- **Governance** – responsibility for ensuring the NCU works towards achieving the requirements within the Good Governance Guide for Sports organisations. Progress being made in key areas of the code with regular reports provided to the Board on this.
- **Programmes and Policies** - Facilitating and promoting policy development through appropriate committees to ensure policies are in place and reviewed regularly to ensure up to date and relevant.

### Financial Management and Control

- **Xero Accounts Package** – leading on the co-ordination of the Union's Xero Online Accounts system with regular reconciliations completed and reports generated for relevant programme leads, Finance Committee and Board.
- **Budgets** – supporting programme leads with preparation of draft budgets for each forthcoming year, in line with the Union's strategic and operational priorities.
- **Reports** – plan and prepare relevant Finance Reports In conjunction with the Honorary Treasurer, preparing reports to the Board on performance against budget and other financial matters.

- **Management** - Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for the allocation of budgets and for the accountable management and monitoring of all financial resources.
- **Funding Requirements** – tracking and monitoring spend against key funding bodies including Cricket Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland, Department for Communities and Local Councils.

## Income Generation and Commercial Activity

- **Sponsorship** – lead responsibility for seeking and negotiating all forms of sponsorship and commercial partnerships, and for managing relationships with sponsors and commercial partners. This includes managing the promotional activity and brand activation requirements for all sponsors and commercial partners. The Union now has an expanded portfolio of sponsors supporting key aspects of our business. Work continues to expand this further in the future.
- **Grants** – responsible for overseeing the preparation of grant application submissions to appropriate grant-awarding agencies at local, national or supra-national level. There has been good success on this to date with several grants secured from Local Councils and more recently a large grant secured from the Department for Communities. Continuing to explore further opportunities and awaiting the outcome of other grants that have been submitted to Sport NI and Local Councils to support delivery of our wider programmes and partnerships.
- **Fundraising** – also responsible for planning and implementation, including volunteer and other resource requirements, researching funding sources, establishing strategies to approach potential funders, submitting proposals, and maintaining appropriate records and documentation.

## NCU Resource and Staff Management

- **Recruitment** – leading on the Union’s recruitment processes during the past year with the support of Independent Board member, Rosemary Bryans. Several recruitment processes completed for the appointment of two new roles. Entering into a further recruitment process soon with support of Ulster University for replacement Cricket Development Officer role, subject to future funding.
- **Staff Management** – line managing all Union staff ensuring achievement against targets and objectives are measured and reported appropriately. Also responsible for effective performance review and support for development of staff.

## Cricket Ireland

Responsible for communication between NCU and Cricket Ireland at Senior Management level. Also represent the Union on a range of CI Committees and working groups including:

- Finance Committee
- Cricket Committee
- Match Allocation Group (MAG)
- Senior Management Team
- Women’s Strategy Steering Group

Also lead on the support for International Event Planning where international events are held in Stormont. Successful delivery of international matches hosted at Stormont this year against Afghanistan (May) and Zimbabwe (July).

## Other areas of Responsibility

A wide range of further areas of responsibility for management and oversight include:

- **Communication**
  - Ensuring that an appropriate participative and consultative approach is taken in the development of policy, strategy and business plans, involving all relevant stakeholders.
  - Providing progress reports to Board/sub-committees where required throughout the year.
  - Effective communications with members, media, the public and all key stakeholders.
  - Lead responsibility for all matters relating to communication with all key stakeholders including, but not limited to Union members, other Unions, Cricket Ireland, other governing bodies, public and private funding bodies, and media partners.
  
- **Public Relations**

An expanded area of responsibility as the Union has evolved and grown its operations over the last few years. Responsibility for leading and managing all marketing and public relations activities, ensuring that the Union and the game of cricket are presented in a positive light. This also involves the management of all public relations activity in respect of the Union's partners and sponsors for key events and activities throughout the year.

Significant work was also undertaken this year to co-ordinate improved communications plans during the cricket season. This has resulted in some improvements including improved media coverage and online coverage of relevant events and activities.

- **IT - SharePoint Data Management**
  - Currently responsible for the implementation and management of the Unions Data management system including ownership and access for employees and volunteers to relevant data.
  - **GDPR** – responsible for ensuring the Union's compliance with GDPR legislation as well as the review and update of relevant policies and procedures in relation to this.

## GENERAL SECRETARY

The Union's General Secretary, Bryan Milford, carries out an extremely important administration function in order to support our clubs and schools and make life easy for our members. The General Secretary is the main communication channel between the Union and all members. Much of Bryan's work can go unnoticed, however, the following section outlines just some of the work that Bryan carries out, and all within part-time hours.

### Administration Support Function

- **Board and Committees**

The General Secretary provides a secretariat function to the Management Board, Directorates and Committees. This includes the arrangement of all meetings of the Management Board, Directorates and sub-committees, as well as collating and issuing all associated papers for all.

- **AGM**

Make all arrangements for the AGM including collating and issuing necessary forms seeking nominations to Officer Posts and Management Board, changes to General and Competition Rules. Issuing all relevant papers to clubs and others eligible to attend as well as keep minutes of the meeting and amending General and Competition Rules as per serials carried at meeting.

- **Disciplinary Reports**

In conjunction with Chairman of Disciplinary Panel the General Secretary processes all Disciplinary Reports

For Level 1 cases this includes forwarding details to the Chairman and offender, seeking response, obtain decision from Chairman, advise offender and club.

Level 2 cases and above Establish a Disciplinary Committee from panel, forward to it and offender details, arrange meeting, advise offender and club of outcome.

- **Appeals**

In conjunction with Chairman of Appeals Panel process all appeals

Establish an Appeals Committee from panel, provide all relevant paperwork, arrange meeting, advise individual/club of outcome.

### Competitions

The General Secretary has significant workload in the organisation and collation of information relating to all adult and youth Competitions, including:

- **Competitions Committee**

Arranging meetings (6) of the Competitions Committee and keeping minutes of all meetings. A key function carried out is also to notify clubs of any fines levied during the season as well as collating fines and invoicing clubs at end of each season.

- **Competition Entries**

Seeking, receiving and collating all entries for all adult and youth competitions from clubs.

- **Registrations and Starrings**

Receiving all registrations and starrings pre-season and distributing those to relevant league and cup secretaries. Throughout the season any additional registrations and starrings or amendments are monitored and communicated to the appropriate people. Maintenance of the master copies of registrations and starrings for each club is carried out and at end of season the total number of registered adult players for each club is collated and utilised for invoicing.

- **Fixtures**

Compiling Premier League and Senior Leagues 1, 2 and 3 fixtures (ensuring club requests, cup final and representative venues are taken into account) and distribute to clubs. The General Secretary role also includes arranging fixture meetings (3) for Junior Leagues and issue to clubs, as well as arranging draws for various cup competitions.

- **Cup Finals**

Organisation of logistics for all Cup Finals including

- Meeting / liaising with host club to discuss arrangements.
- Advising competing clubs of arrangements.
- Overseeing catering requirements for players and umpires.
- Arranging for presentation of trophy and medals.
- Obtaining full names of players on winning team for inscription.

- **Medals**

Order medals for adult, youth and school competitions from supplier.

Collect medals from supplier.

Ensure medals are distributed to schools, youth convenors and cup finals as appropriate.

- **Cricket Balls**

Order balls for adult, youth and school competitions from supplier.

Collect balls from supplier.

Ensure balls are distributed to schools, youth convenors and cup finals as appropriate.

- **Trophies**

Recall all trophies in August.

(Many trophies then taken for club dinners and process has to be repeated)

Ensure trophies are in presentable state for presentation at Annual Dinner.

## **Finance Administration**

An important function in supporting the financial operations of the Union. This is particularly important now that the volume of financial transactions has increased greatly. The General Secretary's work includes the following

- Invoice all clubs pre-season regarding affiliation fees, advance of registration fees, advance of umpire's fees and fixture book charge.
- Invoice all affiliated clubs post-season regarding balance of registration fees, balance of umpires' fees and fines.
- Regularly follow-up late payments.
- Invoice affiliated schools pre-season regarding affiliation fees.

- Invoice schools regarding recharge of umpires' fees.
- Invoice sponsors and advertisers.
- Prepare and issue miscellaneous invoices as necessary.
- Record all payments received and lodge with bank.
- Issue payments for invoices received.
- Maintain payment journal and liaise with General Manager and Honorary Treasurer on day to day finances

## Other Work Areas

- **Annual Dinner**

Co-ordinate all aspects of the Annual Dinner including venue logistics, guest speakers, guest invitations and club attendees.

- **Fixture / Rules Book**

Responsibility for production of electronic version of Fixture Book including collection of advertisements from clubs and sponsors and other material from sources e.g. NIACUS, Clubs, Cricket Ireland. Once information passed to printer for proof and approval then copies are distributed to clubs, officials, convenors, Hon Life Members, press, other Unions etc.

- **Schools' Fixture / Rule Book**

Responsibility for production of this beginning with obtaining material from School's Committee for inclusion before pass material to printer for proofing. Arrange proofing and once printed then arrange delivery and distribution individually to each affiliated school.

- **Pre-Season Material**

Regularly update all competition forms for the use of clubs e.g. Registration forms, Starring forms, Result forms, Umpire Report Forms, Ground Report Forms etc

Distribute all relevant forms to clubs prior to start of season.

- **Annual Report**

Support the compilation of the Annual Report and statistical records or results and achievements each season. Once finalised then distribution of Annual Report to clubs, officials, Hon Life Members, press and other interested parties

- **Player of the Year Awards**

Arrange for voting by clubs for Player of the Year in Premier League and the Senior Leagues. Collate votes cast by clubs.

- **Liaison with Clubs**

Act as point of liaison for the Union with clubs on all matters.

## **SCHOOL AND CLUB ENGAGEMENT OFFICER**

The School and Club Engagement Officer role is a new role implemented in March 2019 thanks to financial investment from Sport NI and Cricket Ireland. Wayne Hughes was appointed to that role and has worked hard in his first six months with the NCU to develop school and club engagement programmes as outlined below.

### **School's Development Programmes (Summer 2019)**

This Summer the NCU Development Team has undertaken its biggest schools programmes yet with five different focus areas. The role of School and Club Engagement Officer is focused on making the school cricket programmes sustainable by getting more boys and girls playing at primary and secondary school levels and linking this in with the local club game. This year we had over 40 schools being supported by our programmes with 15 coaches on the ground providing their expertise.

The five School development programmes are:

#### **1. T10 Primary Boys Big Bash (Hardball)**

T10 Primary Boys Big Bash is an introduction to hardball cricket. There were previously only 3 primary schools playing hardball cricket in the NCU and the plan to increase this to 21 schools across 7 different regions. This starts with 6-weeks coaching support and culminates in a regional tri-series between 3 schools in a 10 over format. To strengthen the links between clubs and schools, schools are invited to train at their local club for 6 sessions with a coach and equipment supplied by the NCU before competing in their regional tri-series event. This year, as a starting point for T10 Boys Hardball, the programme was delivered to 15 Primary Schools and linked to 13 clubs, which we hope to increase and progress year by year.

#### **2. Year 8 Boys Coaching Support**

To further sustain T10 Primary Boys Hardball, we provided coaching support to 14 secondary schools across 7 different regions with the long-term ambition of more boys playing hardball cricket at school and club. This is a 7-week programme (competitions are already in place) with the NCU providing a coach to each school, linking in with 15 clubs. The programme this year was delivered to 10 Secondary Schools and provided links to 12 clubs throughout the NCU region

#### **3. Primary Girls Super 8's**

Primary Girls Super 8's is the next progression on from kwik cricket. This is played in a fast and fun 8 over format with full equipment and incrediball. This programme this year engaged with 7 primary schools across 6 different regions, linking in with 8 clubs. This starts with 6-weeks coaching support and culminates in a Super 8's Finals Day. The ambition is to get more girls playing at primary school level which will strengthen secondary schools and the club game.

#### **4. U13 Girls Super 8's**

U13 Girls Super 8's has been a hugely popular and successful event over the last five years. This programme will engaged 11 schools across 7 different regions linking in with 12 clubs. There is 4 weeks coaching support culminating in a Super 8 Finals Day at Friends School Lisburn, which was held on 17<sup>th</sup> June. This was a very exciting programme which links in with the next progression at U15 Hardball.

#### **5. U15/1<sup>st</sup> XI Girls Coaching Support**

U15/1<sup>st</sup> XI is the starting point for Hardball Girls Cricket leading into U15 and 1<sup>st</sup> XI Schools Cups. The NCU provided 6 weeks coaching support to 6 schools across 6 different regions linking in with 11 clubs. With competitions already in place, long term plan is to increase the number of schools playing girls cricket at U13 level and hopefully this will follow through to the U15 and U18 Cup competitions and lead to more girls playing both school and club cricket.

### **Events**

The Schools Development Programme culminated in a series of events to close off each programme before the end of the school term

- U13 Girls Blitz – 7th June
- U13 Girls Super 8's – 17th June
- NI Kwik Cricket finals – 18th June
- Primary Girls Super 8's – 19th June
- T10 Tri-Series – 4
  - Lisburn/Derriaghy- Friday 14th at Wallace Park
  - East Belfast- Thursday 20th June at Campbell College
  - Mid Ulster- Thursday 20th June at DonaghcloneyMill CC
  - Antrim- Thursday 20th June at Ben Madigan Prep

## CRICKET DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (UU)

The Cricket Development Officer (UU) role has been in place now for three years and has been the result of a partnership funding from Ulster University through their sports match funding. Callum Atkinson has been in the role since December 2016 and during that time has contributed greatly to cricket development in the region. The following report outlines the key areas of focus for the role and the work the CDO has carried out in the last year for both NCU and Ulster University work areas.

### Ulster University

The work relating to Ulster University spans several areas of development from participation to performance cricket. These are outlined more specifically in the sections below but will give a greater understanding of the programmes being delivered across the region.

- **Performance Development**
  - **Talented Athlete Entry Scheme** - Lead role in co-ordinating this opportunity for students entering Ulster University. Students can gain a reduction in the grades required to enter courses at UU if they are identified as a talented athlete. Key priority for NCU is to retain young talented players at home and improve the offer for Ulster University as a choice for their further education and training environment.
  - **Performance Sport Scholarship Programme** – lead role in supporting the development of any cricket athletes at Ulster University in receipt of scholarship funding. Focus on increasing the number of scholarships offered to cricket athletes in future to improve access to education and training environments for our aspiring young athletes
  - **Promotion and Recruitment** – the role involves ensuring adequate promotion of all performance development camps delivered on behalf of UU
  - **Girls Cricket Academy** – this is a new programme that was developed in 2018 to support the development of girls’ cricket at the University. Now entering its second year of operation it is supporting our talented young females studying at Ulster University with their training and cricket specific development
  - **Irish Universities** – Ulster University Cricket teams participate in the Irish Universities cricket competitions (indoor and outdoor) annually. The role supports the organisation of these events when Ulster University hosts them, as well as being the lead coach of the teams and arranging all logistics for entry and participation in the competitions.
  
- **Participation Development Programmes (Across Campus)**
  - **Club Outreach** (e.g. Sport Changes Life) – this involves partnerships with other organisations to support participation opportunities to expose cricket to new participants across all UU campus sites and is focused on working with clubs that are in close proximity to UU camps sites.
  - **Holiday Camps** – organisation and delivery of a range of holiday cricket camps to support community and club engagement at UU campus sites

- **Social Cricket** – organisation and delivery of social cricket programmes which have been developed in Magee, Coleraine and Jordanstown campus sites throughout the year. Involves indoor and outdoor cricket
- **Coleraine Cricket Promotion** – supported the promotion of cricket opportunities at Coleraine Campus in conjunction with the Students on site and the local club / council.
- **Recruitment Camps** – organisation and delivery of a range of recruitment camps to attract more students to get involved and stay involved in cricket through their student sport opportunities.
- **Events (Across Campus)**
  - **Social Cricket** – regular events to enable those playing social cricket to participate collectively in events throughout the year
  - **IUCA Annual Indoor Competition** – lead organiser of the Irish Universities indoor competition that has been hosted in Jordanstown for the last two years. This is held each January and involves teams competing from Universities across Ireland.
  - **Recruitment Days** – these are co-ordinated during freshers week each year across all campus sites and are designed to showcase cricket as an option for participation and performance at Ulster University.

### NCU Club Support

An important part of the CDO role is to ensure support for clubs affiliated to the NCU region. This support comes in various ways and is not a one size fits all approach as every club is different in terms of their stage of development and their needs. However, some of the support offered to clubs during the past year by the CDO has included:

- **Club Delivery**
  - **School Programmes** – support with coach delivery in schools to link to clubs
  - **Holiday Camps** – coaching support and delivery of club specific holiday camps
  - **Community Groups** – coaching support and delivery of cricket to specific community groups on behalf of clubs to improve club membership and community outreach
- **Club Development Meetings**
  - **Development Planning** – support has been offered to a range of clubs to assist them with their planning and strategy / development plan.
  - **Youth Structures** – consideration of the development of new and improved youth cricket structures in some clubs
  - **Capacity Building** – offer of courses and support to build capacity, knowledge and experience of coaches and volunteers within clubs
  - **Grant applications** – supported a number of clubs with accessing and applying for a range of grants during the year. Some were successful and unfortunately some were not, but this opportunity still exists to support more clubs in the future to access external funds through grants to support club development and cricket delivery.
- **Club Workforce Programme**

In the absence of a second development officer role focusing on Club and Workforce Development, due to the delay in recruitment, Cricket Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland

supported a programme during the summer months to support club development. That programme was delivered between June and August and was:

- Designed to work with 20 Identified Clubs
- Focused on increasing engagement and delivery of cricket within clubs
- Enable activators to support clubs to review / create club development plans

### **NCU Coach Development**

Another key element of the CDO role is to provide learning and development opportunities for coaches and volunteers within schools, clubs and the wider NCU structure. Some of the support offered to clubs during the past year by the CDO has included:

- **Capacity Building**
  - Coach Education Courses
  - Volunteer Development Courses
  - Volunteer Placements
  - Club Workforce Activators

### **NCU Regional Development Programme Support**

When time allows within the busy development work schedule the CDO also supports the wider NCU programmes by carrying out various coaching roles when required, including:

- **Coaching Roles**
  - Lead Coach Boys U15 Squad (Interpros)
  - Lead Coach Boys U14 Squad (Taunton)
  - Support Women's Senior Squad
  - Lead Coach NCU & UU Girls Cricket Academy

## CRICKET OPERATIONS MANAGER

Defined Work programme/plans to date. The Cricket Operations Manager is an important role that is essential for the NCU and one that is supported by investment from Cricket Ireland. Uel Graham joined the Union in May 2018 and since then has had a significant impact on the organisation and development of many elements of our cricket operations, some of which are outlined below.

### Representative Cricket Operations and Logistics

- **MTB Northern Knights**

This is a busy element of the role which includes the organisation and management of all MTB Northern Knights Interprovincial fixtures. This year that included arrangements for La Manga and all home series matches to ensure smooth running of all fixtures. All match operations were successfully completed this year as well as ensuring that all players representing the Knights completed the necessary IP documentation and online Anti-Doping E learning.

- **Senior Women**

Development and co-ordination of a dedicated training programme including 6 outdoor sessions at Wallace HS and some smaller cluster sessions at localised level held at Waringstown, Templepatrick and North Down. Some challenges to overcome this season relating to coach availability for the group that needs to be considered for the future. However, this summer saw the Women participate in a programme that included 6 match series, including a 3 match tour to Cornwall. This was the first tour organised for any NCU Women's squad.

- **Emerging Knights/Andrew White Academy**

The planning this year for the Emerging Programme was significant with a 10 match programme arranged with NW/CL/MCC/Irish U19s. Unfortunately, many of these games were lost to the weather, which was outside of our control, but firm plans now being put in place for next season to expand the Emerging Knights Programme. This year also saw the Emerging Knights programme travel to La Manga in February, which was excellent preparation for the 2019 season. We are grateful to MG2 for their financial support that enabled that to happen.

- **Development Groups**

Planning, organisation and oversight of all regional programme activities throughout the year including winter (Oct – Mar) phase and summer (Apr – Sept) phase. This work includes:

- All Junior squads training planning / booking of facilities and arrangements of coaches across all age grades boys and girls, emerging men and women.
- At Boys U11, U13, U15 & U17 both performance and development squads have been training and playing together, with coloured clothing and team identity introduced at U11 & U13 along with white ball cricket for the first time. U15 & U17 summer programme unfortunately was curtailed by school exams but despite that the sessions that did go ahead were good
- Junior Development squads have used new cricket facilities at Parkhall Integrated College in Antrim, and also at Meadowbank Sports Arena where NCU have had two joint ventures with NWCU.

- Girls Emerging and Performance squads have also trained together also at Wallace HS with increased training sessions delivered across the summer programme. The U15s have had a match (first at this age grade) with NWCUC also at Meadowbank.
- Further matches planned for girls squad programme with NWCUC at both U15 and U17 level during the summer and we hope to hold a residential series with NW at both Foyle and Campbell.

- **Regional Summer Match Programme**

Organisation and delivery of an extensive calendar of games for junior age grades has included all logistics for the following opportunities that occurred during summer 2019 season:

- U9/10 Boys: Three games versus NW
- U11 Boys: Nine games in total: 4 Cricket Leinster, 2 NWCUC and 3 match tour to Cornwall
- U13 Boys: 8 games in total: 4 Cricket Leinster, 2 NWCUC and 2 day tour to Scotland
- U14 Boys: 5 game tour to West Cricket Festival, Taunton
- U15 Boys: T20 versus touring South African Academy and 6 match Interprovincial series
- U15 Girls: 2 matches against NW
- U16 Boys: 3 Match Festival based in Belfast
- U17 Boys: T20 versus touring South African Academy and 6 match Interprovincial series
- U17 Girls: 3 matches against NW

This programme combined with Senior Men and Emerging Men totals over 50 games during the summer to plan and deliver, as well as keep track of financial requirements for each element of the programme.

## Other areas of Cricket Operations

- **Online Clothing Shop (Gotto Sports)**

From December 2018, all Junior RDS clothing was stock checked and relocated to Gotto Sports where an online shop was set up to sell clothing direct to parents and players. This partnership has gone extremely well with monthly meetings held and stock/sales verified, and invoices raised. Clothing range is now extending to additional items.

- **Coach Education (Cricket Ireland / NCU)**

In the absence of a Club and Workforce Development Officer, due to delay in recruitment, the Cricket Operations Manager assumed responsibility for some of the coach education area of business until recruitment for the new post was completed. This has involved collaborating with Brett Reid, CI Coach Dev Manager, on content and context of Coach Education delivery in the NCU and liaising with local coaches.

This summer the NCU has facilitated delivery of two CI coaching courses:

- Coaching Cricket - with 10 attendees from clubs and schools across NCU, all successfully attained their accreditation.
- Coaching Kids (5-11) - with 18 attendees (accreditation on attendance only)

CI intend that PUs fully run all future coaching courses. To support that a Coach Developer day was held in early October with 8 NCU coaches attending. The intention is for the NCU to run 4 coach education courses between 2019 and 2020 seasons, one of each course prior to

and after Christmas. The NCU & Campbell College will also host Level 2 course during the winter.

- **Facilities**

The Cricket Operations Manager has had a key role as the liaison with all of the facilities we utilise for NCU programmes and activities during the past year. This has included discussions and meetings with:

- Stormont: Two IP50 and one IPC 3 day game as well as 8 junior games on bottom pitch
- North Down/Comber: One IPC 3 day game
- UUJ: Enhanced programmes using 20% more hours than 2018
- UUJ: Functional Movement/Strength and Conditioning collaboration with Performance services
- Campbell College: Host for U15 & U17 Boys interpros series (along with Holywood CC & Bangor CC) and U16 Festival. Campbell was also the main base for Northern Knights outdoor training April-June 2019
- Wallace HS: Base for Domestic District Programme (Summer 2019)
- Osborne: Base for Northern Knights outdoor training (Summer 2019)
- Woodvale: Base for Northern Knights outdoor training (Summer 2019) & U16 Festival
- Parkhall Integrated School: Indoor facility for junior groups/outdoor facility for junior blitzes
- Lisburn hosting U17 Interpro v NWCUC, Carrick MCC games/
- Laurevale NCU v NW Women
- Waringstown NK Emerging versus Professional XI

- **NIACUS/Grounds reports**

Formed close working relationship to ensure all junior domestic and representative fixtures have official umpires, including the Junior Knights Programme. Thanks to NIACUS and Ian Houston in particular for their support with this during the year.

- **Sponsorship, Partnerships & Grants**

Supported the ongoing work of the Union in terms of income generation through sponsorship, fundraising and grants during the year. The Inaugural NCU Golf Day held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at Royal Belfast Golf Club was a huge success with funds raised to support the Emerging Knights programme and the Senior Women's programme during 2019.

A wider working Group has also been developed on Sponsorship/Commercial Activity, led by David Allister, which has already been successful in the acquisition of MTB as Knights sponsor. David Allister has secured commercial sponsor (Agile Communications) to support the NCU U16 festival.

- **Access NI**

The COM also has the role as Counter signatory for Cricket Ireland for all NCU Access NI applications. Whilst the process is documented on CI/NCU websites, completion of applications and applicants providing correct paperwork has been time consuming, with email/telephone conversations to try to complete cases.

## KNIGHTS AND PATHWAY LEAD COACH

In January 2019 the NCU Board took the decision to support the expansion of the Knights Head Coach role to enable a full time coaching role to be implemented for the NCU. Simon Johnston began the expanded role in February 2019. The Knights Head coach element of the role is funded by Cricket Ireland with the pathway coach element of the role being funded by the NCU.

This role was designed to have the following key areas of responsibility:

- Act as Head Coach for the Senior Men's MTB Northern Knights Squad
- Manage and act as lead coach for the "Andrew White Academy" and the NCU Women's Cricket Academy.
- Manage and act as lead coach for the "Emerging Knights" development programme.
- Establish, implement, monitor and review individual development plans for relevant talent pathway players including skill, wellbeing, S & C and player welfare.
- Assist with the strategic development of the NCU RDS programme for both Boys and Girls.
- Support the development of coaches working within the NCU RDS programme and talent pathway squads

With the key areas of responsibility outlined above in mind, Simon's work to date has involved the following:

- **Senior Knights Men Head Coach**
  - Programme planning, liaising with players, selectors, captain, physio and medical staff for all team training and match logistics
  - Coaching Delivery 4 hrs weekly and 8hrs weekly with Cricket Ireland contracted players
  - Player management support, which is ongoing
- **Senior Women**
  - Provision of Coaching Support (supporting Tim Simmonite as head Coach). Attended the first Women's tour to Cornwall in August and great to see the learning and progress the group has made over the summer months
- **Emerging Knights / Academy**
  - Programme Planning (game / training programmes devised)
  - Leading the Coaching Delivery with players in training and all match days
  - Lead Coach for the Andrew White Academy trip to la Manga in February and all coaching preparation to ensure focus on individual player needs and development.
  - Player management and support, which is ongoing
- **UU Girls Academy**
  - Coaching Support and delivery for the Girls Academy programme at all sessions over the winter and summer (both indoor and outdoor)
  - Supported the programme development to ensure high focus on individual player development alongside Callum Atkinson

- **Regional Development Pathway Programme / Tours**
  - Reviewing Programmes weekly, as well as evaluation of programme and planning for next year. Providing suggestions for improvements and establishing frameworks for coaching and player development at each age group.
  - Direct Coaching Support to assisting various age groups in the pathway programme
  - Informal Coaching Support Shadowing opportunities and mentoring provided to wide range of coaches operating within the NCU pathway programmes
  - Led a regional pathway coaches learning evening in early October, alongside Uel Graham, to outline support and learning opportunities for all coaches within the NCU pathway programmes.
  
- **Irish Programmes**
  - Contract Players sessions 8hrs weekly
  - Involved in Selection 20+ selection days a year including time/travel/planning/feedback
  
- **Coach Development/CPD**
  - Informal and formal learning opportunities being identified to support coaches as well as assisting Pathway Coaches during weekend sessions for all age groups

## **DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**

Sixteen disciplinary reports were submitted by umpires during the season and one by the Competitions Committee.

Level 1 offences proven	15
Level 2 offences proven	2

Penalties awarded:

Suspension for two matches	2
Reprimand and warning as to future conduct	15

Clubs:

Premier League	6
Senior League 1	8
Senior League 2	1
Senior League 3	1
Midweek League	1

## **APPEALS COMMITTEE**

The Appeals Committee considered one appeal from a club and one from an individual. Both appeals were upheld.

## **ANNUAL DINNER**

The Annual Dinner was held in the Hilton Hotel, Belfast on 5 October 2019 with 170 people present.

The principal guest and speaker was former England Cricketer Angus Fraser.

## SPONSORS

The Union wishes to record its sincere thanks to all its sponsors and encourages all members to support them.

The following Companies and Bodies sponsored the Union in 2019:

Agile Communications	NCU U16 Cricket Festival
Cartwrights Sports	Premier & Senior League Player of the Year Awards
City Auction Group	NCU Golf Day
Cleaver Black	Minor (Lindsay) Cup
Gallagher Insurance	Challenge Cup (Men's & Women's)
Gardiner Brothers	Women's Premier and Senior League
GMcG	Junior Cup
Gribben & Watt Financial Planning	Quoile Cup
Lagan Valley Steels	Twenty20 Cup, Trophy and Shield
McCartan, Turkington & Breen	Northern Knights, Emerging Knights & Annual Dinner
MG2	Emerging Knights La Manga Tour
Norman Shannon & Co.	Under 11 League
PwC	Junior Knights
Robinson Services	Men's Premier and Senior Leagues
The Stoveyard	Knights Kit Bags & Helmets
Ulster Bank Ltd	Schools' Cup

The NCU also extends its thanks to all the sponsors who supported the NCU Golf Day at Royal Belfast Golf Club in April 2019

## THANKS

The Union wishes to record its thanks to the Schools and Clubs who made their facilities available during the 2019 season for cup finals and representative matches. It is appreciated that especially in times of inclement weather the burden that this can impose, and the Union recognises that it could not carry out its cricketing programme without the generosity and support of our Schools and Clubs.

## **OBITUARIES**

### **Alfie Linehan**

Alfie Linehan died on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019 aged 79.

In one of the most distinguished legacies to the local game the retired Downpatrick farmer captained Ireland before turning to administration in the roles of chairman (1988-89) and president (1998-99) of the Northern Cricket Union followed by the presidency of the Irish Cricket Union (1993).

Yet it was where it mattered most, at the grass roots of the game, that Alfie Linehan left his indelible mark. His devotion to the Downpatrick club and its famous international ground The Meadow was boundless and life-long, from underage player, captain of the club, coach and ultimately chairman and president.

As a batsman his hard-hitting ways over four decades from the 1950s took him to 11 Irish appearances - six of them as captain - in the days when international caps were much less liberally awarded, and his contribution to the success of NCU representative cricket has rarely been equalled.

### **William (Billy) Boyd**

Billy Boyd who died on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019 gave a lifetime of service to local cricket.

A lifelong member of Lurgan Rugby Football and Cricket Club which he served as President and of which, at the time of his passing was Club Chairman.

At provincial level he was a member of the Executive Committee of the NCU for more than twenty-five years serving as Chairman in 2006-2007 and as President in 2014-2015.

He served the Union not only in the highest offices but in the key area of strategic planning where he was largely responsible for the production of a number of the Strategic Plans that have carried the Union forward in recent years.

He represented the NCU on the Executive Committee of the Irish Cricket Union where again his contribution to the working group was instrumental in the Union's transition to Incorporation.

Billy led the planning for a number of important fixtures in the NCU area including the inaugural one-day international against England at Stormont.