



South Africa Tour - 2005

Report - Better than their Wildest Dreams

DEVON'S over-50s cricket side have returned from their first-ever tour of South Africa — already vowing to make a return trip. The visit, which included seven games, has been hailed a resounding success.

The tour began in Knysna at the tip of the country's famous Garden Route and also took in a stay in the wine valleys of Stellenbosch and Cape Town.

The team won three and lost four. One of the highlights was a day-night match under lights against Mossel Bay. Main organiser, Sandford Cricket Club-based Chris Theedom said: "The trip turned out better than our wildest dreams." "The hospitality shown to us throughout was second to none and we would love to do a return trip."

The tour began with a 55-run win over Knysna; the Mossel Bay game ended in defeat by 18 runs, that was followed by a tight one-wicket defeat in Stellenbosch against FCA. The game against Groot Drakenstein was played on the country's oldest-recorded square. Players were ordered to pay due homage by drinking a tot of the area's specially-brewed brandy at the tea interval.

Devon went on to lose by four wickets... fielding second. The next match against the Gardens Old Boys was played directly in front of the world-famous Table Top mountain in Cape Town and ended in a 79-run defeat. The team got back to its winning ways by beating Wombats CC, based in Cape Town, by 37 runs a couple of days later. It rounded off the tour with a seven-wicket victory against Western Province CC. Sight-seeing trips included a visit to a private game reserve, a visit to the top of Table Mountain via cable car, a tour of the Langa township in Cape Town and a guided visit to the Cape Town Test ground of Newlands.

There was also a "match" with a difference when Devon batsman Barry Flicker and girlfriend Jacqui Mann decided to tie the knot while on tour. The wedding was held on the beach outside the Blouberg Manor Hotel at Bloubergstrand, just north of Cape Town with Table Mountain looming in the background. Everything was arranged by Jacqui, via the internet, using a South African wedding organisation. Barry, who plays for Ottery St Mary CC, said: "We had been contemplating marriage for some time, and when the over-50s tour came up, it seemed like too good an opportunity to miss." "We were initially a little unsure about going off and doing it without involving family, and for that reason tried to keep it quiet. But by the time Jacqui had told her kids and her mum, and I had told my kids, the cat was well and truly out of the bag. Nevertheless, we went ahead with the best wishes of both our families.." The couple met two years ago. Jacqui works in NHS management in Exeter. She is a paediatric nurse by training, and had previously worked as a sister at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Barry, a project leader with South West Water. Things also went well for Barry on the field — he scored 176 runs in five games on tour, averaging 58.7.

Scorecards

Devon 245-5 (Page 56, Meyer 59, Flicker 57, Theedom 20); Knysna 190-7 (Munday 2-39, Amery 2-28, Vranck 2-44).

Mossel Bay 186 (Shephard 2-43); Devon 168 (Macey 47, Page 29, Parker 35).

Devon 200-9 (Macey 65, Theedom 39, Page 44); F CA 202-1 (Amery 2-41, Parker 2-30).

Devon 197-7 (Flicker 76, Shephard 24, Mountford 31); Groot Drakenstein 198-6 (Howard 2-36, Parker 2-22).

Gardens Old Boys 189 (Rose 2-28, Munday 2-36, Macey 2-19); Devon 110-9 (Meyer 34).

Devon 231-6 (Cavendish 45, Shephard 75, Eames 25, Page 33, Parker 15 no); Wombats CC 194 (Rose 3-27, Vranck 4-48).

Western Province 122-5 (Amery 2-23); Devon 126-3 (Mountford 42 no, Flicker 27, Cavendish 29, Eames 20 no).

The full squad which went on tour was:

Dave Amery (S Devon), Phil Arbourne (Seaton), Richard Cavendish (Cornwood), Bob Eames (Sandford), Barry Flicker (Ottery), Brent Howard (Sandford), Mike Hunt (Torquay), Stuart Lott Cockington), Rob Macey (Sidmouth), Neil Matthews (Torquay), Rob Meyer (unattached), Nigel Mountford (Bovey Tracey), Stuart Munday (Tavistock), Julian Page (Exmouth), Jim Parker (Barton), Pete Rose (Shobrooke), Pete Shephard (Bovey Tracey), Chris Theedom (Sandford), Dave Vranck (Exeter St James), Nigel Mountford (Bovey Tracey).