

WARATAH WARRIORS CRICKET CLUB

2020 PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Going into Season 2020, the stated vision of Waratah Cricket Club was to return the Club to a leading Premier Grade club in the Darwin and District Cricket Competition. At the conclusion of the season, and after having won premierships in Premier Grade Men, Premier Grade Women, B Grade, E Grade and winning the CDU Top End T20, I think we can say we have gone a long way towards achieving this vision.

Affiliation with Ceylon Warriors

The major turning point for the Club occurred on Sunday 16 February when Waratah Cricket Club joined forces with Ceylon Warriors Sports Club (CWSC). Whilst not a legal merger, the two clubs entered a Memorandum of Understanding that has resulted in, amongst other things, the club playing under the banner of the Waratah Warriors.

The affiliation has been a deeply rewarding experience for the Club, with the main benefit being a substantial increase in senior playing members from around 40 or 50 players in 2019 to approximately 110 players in 2020. I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the committee of the CWSC, in particular Udara Weerasinghe, Nim Perera, Sam Sellaheewa and Kajaliny Ranjithkumar for their efforts in making the affiliation such a success.

Sign-on Day

Sign-on day, held on Sunday 8 March at the Gardens Oval Clubhouse, was an important day as it was the first real opportunity for members, old and new, to get together to meet one another. What was evident on this day was the renewed sense of optimism and excitement, not just for the season ahead, but for the future of the Club more broadly.

At Sign-on day, we announced the appointment of our captains - Isaac Conway (Premier Men), Chris Garth (B), Nim Perera (C), Dr Tamoor Mirza (D Lions) and Dr Aruna Liyanage (D Warriors). Additionally, we announced the appointment of Cricket Academy NT, under the direction of Udara Weerasinghe, as the provider of coaching services to the Club's junior and senior players. Emily Tjung from Essential Training and Fitness was engaged to improve player fitness through the provision of regular sessions - and the importance of Emily's contribution in the Club's success should not be underestimated.

Pre-Season

We commenced the season without a Gardens Oval curator, and I would like to acknowledge David Jackson and Gavin Fortune for the assistance they provided me in getting the wicket prepared in time for the season opening. Curation duties were gleefully handed over to Isaac Conway upon his arrival in Darwin in June and he again did an excellent job in ensuring the pitch delivered plenty of runs.

Things began to move off the field as well. We welcomed All About Demolition Services NT and Top End Medical as new Club sponsors and announced the creation of a new member category, the Patron's Club, comprised primarily of Club stalwarts who pledged to financially support the Club. Within a short period of time, the Patron's Club had reached 25 members. I wish to thank all Patron's Club Members for their support and for assisting the Club improve its financial position.

A few days after Sign-on Day, COVID-19 intervened. And for a while, it looked like Season 2020 was not going to happen at all. But in mid-May, in the absence of community transmission of COVID in the NT, the announcement was made that cricket would resume in Darwin on 6 June, starting with the inaugural CDU Top End T20.

Seniors

It was a new look Tahs outfit that took to the field in the T20 tournament with Udara Weerasinghe, Sanka Wijegunaratne, Riley Vernon, Ishara Dilshan, Samindra Madushan, Himesh Silva and Pasindu Sandanayake all making their Club debut. In addition, we welcomed back Friday Kasteni and Madura Weerasinghe after periods of absence from the Club. COVID provided the Club with a silver lining with the unexpected return of James Seymour, who joined “regulars” Isaac Conway, Tristan Glover, Tahir and Soups Campbell.

History shows we went through the tournament undefeated, with the club claiming its first piece of silverware in a number of years.

The season proper saw the addition of two more teams, E Grade Red and E Grade White, under the captaincy of Nishantha Wijesinghe and Himanshu Bhatia, respectively.

The Junior season commenced on 13 June and the Women’s Competition commenced two weeks later on Fri 26 June, with the Tahs lead by Melissa “Shorty” Campbell. And in early July, the Club took delivery of new look player uniforms.

Ashley Chandrasinghe joined the Club in July and made an immediate impression batting at 3 and 4 in Premier Grade. Ash’s inclusion made for a formidable Premier Grade team and largely removed any weakness that might have previously existed.

The Club has an incredibly successful season. Of the 109 senior games played in 2020, Waratah Warriors won 78 of those games. That’s a winning percentage of 72% across all senior grades - a fantastic achievement. And our Premier Men, Women, B & C Grades, only lost 12 games between them, across the entire season.

Success in senior cricket is ultimately measured by premierships won and for this reason, congratulations must go to Club Coach Udara Weerasinghe and Premiership Captains Isaac Conway, Shorty Campbell, Chris Garth, Himanshu Bhatia and their respective teams. Special mention also to Nishanthu Wijesinghe for getting his team to the Grand Final as well as Nim Perera and his boys, who went down to University in a tightly fought semi-final.

Thank you to Premier Grade scorer, Mark White. Not only did Whitey score for the A Grade each weekend, but he also scored for the Premier Women and was responsible for registering the majority of our new players. Whitey, as the Club’s Public Officer, has been a reliable source of information in relation to Club history and governance matters.

The Club is also indebted to Isaac Conway, James Seymour, Riley Vernon and Ash Chandrasinghe who each endured two weeks mandatory quarantine upon their arrival in Darwin, with the \$2,500 expense all paid for out of their own pockets. Thank you also to Lorenzo Peake who then provided heavily discounted accommodation at Argus Apartments to these four players, for the duration of the season.

It should also be noted that James Seymour donated a cricket bat to the Club, which he received as winner of the Darwin and District Cricket Competition *2019 Player of the Year*. The bat was auctioned for \$650 at the Patron’s Lunch in August.

Juniors

Our juniors didn’t experience the same level of success as our senior players and sadly none of the junior teams qualified for the finals. There was however some excellent cricket played and most importantly, everyone had fun and enjoyed themselves. It should be added that the progression development shown by many of our players over the course of the season was significant.

Our Junior coaches did an outstanding job in managing and coaching our Junior teams this year and I thank them each for their contribution.

- Himesh Silva, Junior Head Coach
- Sanka Wijegunaratne, Woolies Blaster
- Ian Symonds, U/12 Red
- Ramanan Rasathurai, U/12 Blue
- Tim Whiteside, U/15 Blue
- Andrew Christianson, U/18 (from Tracy Village Cricket Club)

The Club also recognises the achievements of Archie and Clancy McCormick in being selected for, and representing, the Northern Territory in the U/15 National Championships in Adelaide in January 2020.

Special thanks to Junior Coordinator Chris McCormick for the dedication and commitment he gives to our junior cricketers. Thanks also to U/12 Red Coach Ian Symonds who organised the Junior's end of season gift. And thankyou to all parents for the support provided to our junior teams, particularly on match days.

The Committee recognise that a healthy junior program is essential to the long-term success of the Club and will be a major area of focus in Season 202, and beyond.

A key component of our junior strategy going forward will be the continued growth of the working relationship with the Waratah Football Club. Significant inroads were made in this area during the course of the year and I thank former Waratah Football Club President Paul Gross and current President Rohan Langworthy for their cooperation and support.

Junior & Senior Season Summary Table

GRADE	MINOR ROUND		FINISHING POSITION
	WINS	LOSSES	
PREMIER MEN	10	2	PREMIERS
PREMIER WOMEN	6	2	PREMIERS
B	9	3	PREMIERS
C	10	4	3 RD
D LIONS	5	7	8 TH
D WARRIORS	5	7	7 TH
E RED	12	1	RUNNER-UP
E WHITE	9	3	PREMIERS
CDU TOP END T20	5	0	PREMIERS
U/18*	0	12	6 TH
U/15 BLUE	5	6	5 TH
U/12 BLUE	3	8	6 TH
U/12 RED	N/A	N/A	PARTICIPATORY ONLY

**U/18 was a combined side with Tracy Village.*

Waratah Cricket Club Scholarship

In 2020, we launched the Waratah Cricket Scholarship. This is a \$5,000 privately funded annual scholarship provided to a young Darwin-based cricketer, to allow them to achieve their education goals at Charles Darwin University, while pursuing their love of cricket as a playing member of the Waratah Warriors. The recipient of the inaugural Waratah Cricket Scholarship was final year Master of Professional Accounting student, and Waratah cricketer, Kanishka Weerakoon.

Sponsors

The Club was fortunate to receive financial support from the following sponsors in 2020:

- All About Demolition Services NT, Alan & Stacey Maher
- NT Optometrists, Chris McCormick
- Top Hospital Executive Management, Michael Martin
- Top End Medical, Dr Jay Muhandiram & Dr Aruna Liyanage
- Delta Electrics, Mark White
- Top End Line Markers, Nugget

Thankyou also to Tim Elder for his \$500 donation to the Club.

I thank each sponsor for their support. With over 150 registered players (seniors and juniors), as well as a large number of parents and supporters, we are an increasingly attractive marketing proposition for those businesses considering sponsoring the Club.

Patron

Thank you to Club Patron Michael Martin OAM who continues to provide terrific support to the Club. Michael, with the assistance of wife Lyn, organised a fantastic Patron's Lunch which raised approximately \$4,500 for the Club. In addition, Michael's business Top Hospital Executive Management are a valued Club sponsor. Michael was also instrumental in the success of the newly created Patron's Club and was a regular attendee at club matches.

Senior Trophy Winners

GRADE	AWARD	WINNER
CLUB AWARD	Waratah Way Award	James Seymour
CLUB AWARD	Player of the Finals	Tahir
CLUB AWARD	T20 Player of the Tournament	Isaac Conway
PREMIER MEN	Michael Martin Award - Cricketer of the Year	James Seymour
PREMIER MEN	Batting Trophy	Isaac Conway
PREMIER MEN	Bowling Trophy	Udara Weerasinghe
PREMIER WOMEN	Cricketer of the Year, Batting Trophy & Bowling Trophy (Joint Winner)	Monet Hunter
PREMIER WOMEN	Bowling Trophy (Joint Winner)	Kat Byron
B	Cricketer of the Year	Lorenzo Peake
B	Batting Trophy	Matthew Smith
B	Bowling Trophy	Pasindu Sandanayake
C	Cricketer of the Year & Batting Trophy	Sam Sellahewa
C	Bowling Trophy (Joint Winner)	Paul Gilbert
C	Bowling Trophy (Joint Winner)	Patrick Rawsthorne
D LIONS	Cricketer of the Year	Tamoor Mirza
D LIONS	Batting Trophy	Imran Muhammad
D LIONS	Bowling Trophy	Tarique Memon
D WARRIORS	Cricketer of the Year & Batting Trophy	Lakshan Kumajeera
D WARRIORS	Bowling Trophy	Chi Chi Perera
E RED	Cricketer of the Year & Batting Trophy	Dulip Niranjana
E RED	Bowling Trophy	Akila Ramanadan
E WHITE	Cricketer of the Year & Bowling Trophy	Randika Arachchige
E WHITE	Batting Trophy	Amila Fernando

Junior Trophy Winners

GRADE	AWARD	WINNER
CLUB AWARD	Topperwien Award for Junior Cricketer of the Year	Hugo Matthias
U/18*	Bowling Trophy	Jimmy Piper
U/15	Champion Player	Archie McCormick
U/15	Batting & Bowling Trophy	Hugo Matthias
U/15	Champion Player – 3 rd Place	Sebastian Cox
U/12	Champion Player	Harvey McCormick
U/12	Champion Player – 2 nd Place	Sebastian Matthias
U/12	Champion Player – 3 rd Place	Riley Souter

**U/18 was a combined side with Tracy Village.*

The above list does not include numerous special performances recognised over the course of the season.

Committee

In closing, I wish to thank you the committee for their efforts during the year. I would like to give particular thanks to outgoing Treasurer Matt Smith who has done a great job in managing the books over the past three seasons. Matt reportedly took on the job with a high degree of reluctance, so it is pleasing that he leaves the Treasurer role with the Club in a much-improved financial position. Thankyou Matt.

Thank you also to past Secretary Paul Gross, who left Darwin in August to return to his hometown of Adelaide. Whilst Paulie's tenure as Secretary was brief, he has left a lasting impression at the Club. His contribution to can bar takings is unlikely to be surpassed and his "SUCCESS" catchcry now reverberates throughout our changerooms after each and every win.

Waratah Cricket Club has enjoyed tremendous success in Season 2020 and our future is bright.

The Club is reinvigorated and re-energised and we are well positioned to experience further success in Season 2021. The recently erected lights at Gardens Oval will allow us to play and train under lights and presents the Club with a myriad of exciting new opportunities.

I thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you in Season 2021.

GO TAHS.

Simon Matthias
President
Waratah Cricket Club Inc.