

Immerse yourself in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 this Summer



David Warner, Run Machine



GREAT SCOT!

by Richard Asher

**QUALIFIER QUALITY**  
Calum MacLeod celebrates reaching his century in a Qualifier against Canada at Hagley Oval



**HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SCOT**  
Scotland gets a taste of glory after winning the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier New Zealand 2014

## Cricket enjoys a rich heritage in Scotland, but the One Day International side is yet to record its first ICC Cricket World Cup win. Will 2015 be the year that finally changes?

**Not so very long ago, if you checked your letterbox** in Aberdeen, there was every chance your mail had been delivered by a lanky Scotland international wicketkeeper-batsman named Colin Smith.

How times have changed. The Scotland squad you see at the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 is made up of full-time professional cricketers. There isn't a postman among them. It's coached by full-time professionals too, and one of them, Performance Development Manager Craig Wright, still clearly recalls those innocent days.

"Back in the late 90s a few of the guys who weren't playing county cricket had jobs," recounts Wright, who also captained Scotland in its last ICC Cricket World Cup, in 2007. "I remember once we had a game against Durham on a Sunday, and Colin had to drive all the way up to Aberdeen in time to deliver his post early the next morning!"

No wonder things were a struggle back then. Funding was a battle. Results were thin on the ground. Scotland first qualified for the tournament in 1999, even playing a couple of games at home in Edinburgh, but no fairytale win came. Sixteen years on, in its third crack at the tournament, the Scots arrive in Australia and New Zealand still seeking that elusive World Cup win. But its chances have never been better. In the 20 years since it split from England and became an ICC Associate Member, Scotland has become a cricketing force to be reckoned with.

"The dedication, commitment and work ethic a lot of the guys showed in those early years, with full-time jobs and families, was fantastic," says Wright. "There's been a progression from about 10 years ago, when we started playing more cricket at county level and opportunities started to increase from the ICC, with the introduction of the

four-day, first-class ICC Intercontinental Cup and other competitions.

"During that time we've gone from being completely amateur to being semi-professional and now to a fully professional squad. It's the same for the coaching staff and the whole infrastructure around the team, so we're in a pretty strong position now."

There can be little arguing with that, at least in the context of the second-tier nations. Scotland was ruthless in winning seven straight matches to claim the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier New Zealand 2014. Its captain, Preston Mommsen, made an undefeated 139 in the final and ended up scooping the 2014 ICC Associate and Affiliate Player of the Year award.

With the rise of other exciting players such as Calum MacLeod, a Gaelic-speaking run machine of a batsman from the Outer Hebrides, Scotland come into this tournament with a realistic right to dream of emulating Celtic counterpart Ireland, whose win over England in the 2011 edition is now the stuff of ICC Cricket World Cup folklore.

"We haven't won a World Cup game in our two previous tournaments," says Wright, whose charges

**We want to try and progress from our group. We need to have a fearless attitude**

get a bite at both England and Australia in Pool A, "so that's one of our objectives. I'd like to think we can give some of the teams in our group a good game, so we want to try and progress from our group. We need to have a fearless attitude and back ourselves."

### SCOTTISH PRIDE

It turns out Scottish cricket sides have been doing exactly that for the better part of 200 years. If you thought the Ashes was an ancient contest, consider that Scotland first took on an All-England XI (not strictly a first-class affair, it must be said) as early as 1849.

Australia and Scotland go way back too. Right the way back to the celebrated UK tour of 1882, in fact. That particular match is a footnote in cricketing history, buried by a mountain of Ashes legend that went with the 'Death of English Cricket' a few weeks later, but it's worth noting that the Scots did sneak a win in the second game.

There's another noteworthy connection between the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 co-hosts and Scotland. Sir Donald Bradman played his last games on UK soil against the Scots at the tail end of the 1948 Invincibles tour. In the second of the matches, in Aberdeen, The Don made 123 to leave Britain in trademark style. ➤

**Cricket has a far greater heritage and popularity in Scotland than a lot of people give it credit for**



The history is most certainly there, but so is a club scene that is far more active than many casual cricket fans might imagine. Cricket, particularly in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, is a surprisingly big deal in Scotland. From a participation point of view, there's not much to choose between cricket and rugby.

Put another way, all eyes back home will be on Mommsen's men during this tournament and beyond. And the players know it. "This group is very determined to create its own history," says Wright. "We want to start achieving in this World Cup and over the next few years. Although there's a real history and heritage over the last couple of hundred years, the players see this tournament as a huge opportunity to start writing a new chapter in Scottish cricket history.

"A lot of the players still play their cricket in Scotland, and they're very aware that they're not just playing for the national team but also representing the thousands of Scottish supporters. Cricket is a

sport with a far greater heritage and popularity in Scotland than a lot of people give it credit for. They're very mindful and aware that cricket is embedded into Scottish sporting heritage."

And that's just another reason why Scotland is taking this tournament so seriously. It has undertaken a lot of preparation, including acclimatisation tours to Australia and New Zealand. It has also brought grizzled English Ashes campaigner Paul Collingwood on board to help coach Grant Bradburn and his team.

Whatever happens at this ICC Cricket World Cup, though, it's just another step on a journey to a place Scotland hope will be much greater. No longer does it want to be considered a mere add-on to the English county game, or a jolly that bookends a UK tour. The days of postman-wicketkeepers are now past, and – as a line in its haunting national anthem suggests – in the past they must remain. It's down to this squad to write the future. ●

## FIVE MORE GREAT SCOTS

### 1 DOUGLAS JARDINE

Yes, the man behind Bodyline considered himself a Scot! He may have been born in India and played his cricket for England, but his parents were Scottish and he spent some of his boyhood in St Andrews. After his death his ashes (!) were scattered in Perthshire.

### 2 MIKE DENNESS

Born in North Lanarkshire, just east of Glasgow, Denness is the only Scottish-born player to have captained the England cricket side. The batsman was a controversial leader of England's troops during the 1974-75 Ashes tour to Australia, thanks mainly to Geoff Boycott's objections to his skipper.

### 3 BRIAN HARDIE

Born in Stirlingshire, Hardie's playing career in the 1970s and '80s predated Scotland's arrival as an Associate nation. But he played a massive role in Essex's success in county cricket, forming a formidable opening partnership with Graham Gooch for many years.



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### 4 GAVIN HAMILTON

A rare example of a modern Scottish Test cricketer, thanks to one (disastrous) appearance in whites for England at Johannesburg 1999. The all-rounder enjoyed 38 limited-overs internationals for the Scots between 1993 and 2010, featuring in both his nation's previous ICC Cricket World Cups.

### 5 DOUGIE BROWN

A never-say-die all-rounder, Brown played a handful of times for England during the 90s before reviving his career for his homeland. He appeared at the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007, where he dismissed none other than Australian legend Adam Gilchrist.

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