

SOUTH AFRICA U15 BOYS TOUR 2026



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15 - 31 OCTOBER

- 17 October

Practice Session

Skukuza Cricket Club - 11am
- 18 October

Match Day 1

Skukuza Cricket Club

Johan Rudolph Cricket Academy

50 over - 9:30am
- 20/21 October

Match Day 2 & 3

Skukuza Cricket Club

Nelspruit High School

2-Day - 9:30am
- 23 October

Match Day 4

Milnerton High School

Western Province Dev XI

T20 x 2 - 1:30pm & 5:30pm (D/N)
- 25 October

Match Day 5

Curro Durbanville High School

Western Province Hub XI

50 over - 10:00am



- 26 October

Match Day 6

Green Point Cricket Club

Western Province Youth XI

50 over - 10:00am
- 28/29 October

Match Day 7 & 8

Rondebosch Sports Club

Western Province Invitational XI

2-Day - 10:00am



FROM THE TOUR MANAGERS

WELCOME

As we prepare for another unforgettable chapter in the Devon Cricket South Africa Tour story, we are incredibly proud to welcome you to the 2026 brochure.

For more than two decades, this tour has provided young cricketers with opportunities that extend far beyond the boundary rope. It has become a journey built on challenge, friendship, growth, and lifelong memories, values that continue to sit at the very heart of everything we do.

This year's brochure celebrates not only the players selected to represent Devon in South Africa, but also the remarkable community that helps make this tour possible. Inside these pages you'll find player profiles, stories from past tourists, insights into South African cricket and culture, and reflections on the experiences that have shaped generations of Devon cricketers.

The 2026 tour also gives us an opportunity to pay tribute to a man whose vision and passion created something truly special - Alan Swift.



Alan founded the South Africa tour back in 2002 with the belief that young cricketers should experience the game beyond their own surroundings, testing themselves in unfamiliar conditions whilst learning about different cultures and ways of life. His dedication helped establish one of the most respected and enriching age-group tours in county cricket, impacting hundreds of young people both on and off the field.

Alan's influence still runs through every aspect of the tour today. The friendships formed with our hosts in Kruger National Park and Cape Town, the emphasis on personal development, and the belief that cricket can be a vehicle for education and character growth all remain central to the ethos he created.

We owe Alan an enormous debt of gratitude, and we hope his legacy will continue for many years to come.

At its core, this tour has never simply been about producing better cricketers. It is about helping young people grow in confidence, resilience, independence, and teamwork. The players will face

challenging opposition, experience new cultures, and create memories that will stay with them for life. Some may go on to play professional cricket, while others will carry the lessons and friendships from this tour into completely different walks of life, and both outcomes are equally valuable.

Of course, over the years the tour has also played a part in the journeys of several players who have progressed into the professional game. From Lewis Gregory and Dom Bess to the Overton twins and Tom Lammonby, the experiences gained touring South Africa have helped inspire players to push their ambitions further. None of this would be possible without the incredible support we continue to receive from parents, sponsors, clubs, schools, volunteers, coaches, and our friends in South Africa. Your generosity and commitment allow these young players to experience something truly unique, and we are hugely grateful for every contribution made towards the tour.



To everyone supporting the boys in 2026, thank you.

We hope you enjoy reading this year's brochure and following the team's journey across South Africa. We know the players will represent Devon with pride, humility, and passion, and we cannot wait to see what memories this year's tour will create.

Matt Theedom & Matt Cooke
Joint Tour Managers





In memory of
ALAN SWIFT
1944 to 2026

ALAN SWIFT

WE CELEBRATE YOU!

Alan's name has become woven into the fabric of Devon Youth Cricket and the South Africa tour that continues to inspire generations of young cricketers. As the Devon U15s prepare for the 2026 tour, it is impossible not to reflect on the remarkable legacy of the man whose vision, determination and passion made it all possible.

As one former tour brochure perfectly captured: "When the Devon Cricket tour first ventured into the wilds of South Africa during 2002, none of us could have imagined the bond that would form between a group of young cricketers from England and a community nestled within the Kruger National Park." That

enduring bond exists because Alan Swift refused to let the idea remain simply an idea back in 2001.

Frik Rossouw – Our host in The Kruger National Park, Groundsman at Skukuza Cricket Club and the General Manager of Environmental Crime Investigations for SANParks recalls Alan's determination to tour South Africa:

"I could never have envisaged that the Devon U15 tour would become a permanent fixture and definitely the highlight of the Lowveld Schools Cricket season. Not only was Alan committed to the tour, but he also played a valuable role in Lowveld cricket with coaching clinics and equipment."

"Soon I found Alan to be one of the most effective managers I have ever met. Constantly checking and double checking that arrangements are in place and perfect, managing the 'troops' with the perfection of a submarine commander."

Frik recalls how Alan's commitment stretched far beyond organising cricket fixtures.

The annual "Battle for Kruger" became more than a cricket match, it became tradition, friendship and shared identity between Devon and South Africa.

"Alan will remain synonymous with Devon Youth Cricket to us and the South African tour. The space Alan filled is empty now, but he will remain in our memories and hearts as a legend."

Few people understood Alan's wider impact better than former Western Province Cricket Association chief executive Nabeel Dien, who first met him at Edgbaston in 2001 when Alan explained his ambitious plans for the tour.

What followed was the beginning of a lifelong friendships and admiration.

"Alan was someone driven by a deep desire to use cricket and education to shape young people into holistic and contributing human beings."

The success of the tour speaks for itself. In addition between 2002 and 2012, no fewer than 42 South African cricketers travelled to Devon from South Africa under Alan's mentoring watch. Many progressed into First-Class cricket, while four represented South Africa internationally.

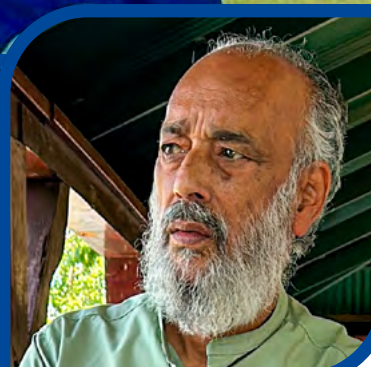
"Most importantly, Alan created something lasting".

"The tour which is now a legacy of Alan Swift will enter its 24th year in 2026, now led by Matt Theedom and Matt Cooke, whom he so ably mentored".



"Alan was someone driven by a deep desire to use cricket and education to shape young people into holistic and contributing human beings."

Nabeel Dien





**“ALAN SWIFT, MY DEAR FRIEND.
WE CELEBRATE NOT JUST A LIFE LIVED,
BUT A LIFE THAT CHANGED
AND POSITIVELY IMPACTED
SO MANY YOUNG LIVES
HERE IN CAPE TOWN,
SOUTH AFRICA”**

For many young Devon cricketers, the South Africa tour became a defining experience. Lewis Gregory, now a Somerset and former England player, toured twice as a teenager.

“Alan Swift was one of life’s givers, a special bloke, who gave hugely in time and effort to Devon Cricket,”

The tours expose young players to different cultures, demanding cricket conditions and life experiences far beyond the boundary rope.

“To experience a different country, culture and play cricket there was an amazing experience for a 14-15-year-old”.

“Alan had a knack of picking up half-decent cricketers and enabled them, myself included, to improve.”

The list of players who followed that pathway is extraordinary: Lewis Gregory, Craig and Jamie Overton, Dom Bess, Tom Lammonby, Ben Green, Sonny Baker and many others who progressed into the professional game.

Somerset and England international Craig Overton perhaps summed up Alan’s impact most powerfully.

“Alan Swift wasn’t just an inspiration, he was a doorway to possibility for countless young people”.

“A former player would walk into a packed room... and the first person they’d make a beeline for was ‘Swifty’. Always ‘Swifty’”.

“He was the manager with the steady instincts and the common-sense touch. One who put players first, long before it became a slogan”.

Alan’s influence extended beyond South Africa. He helped establish the Devon Youth Cricket Foundation, later the

David Shepherd Cricket Trust, which has supported youth and women’s cricket across Devon for many years.

Long-time colleague Gavin Lane remembers Alan as a charismatic man with “gentle persuasion, coherent argument and determination.”

“The tours provided the catalyst for the formation of the Devon Youth Cricket Foundation. Alan was a key figure in the success of Devon Youth Cricket over the last 30 years or more.”

Even as illness increasingly limited him physically, Alan never lost interest in the players, the tours or the game he loved.

Today, every Devon player who boards a plane for South Africa continues a journey Alan Swift began with little more than vision, persistence and belief in young people.

As another Devon touring side heads to South Africa in 2026, Alan Swift’s presence will still be felt, in every fixture, every friendship and every young player discovering what is possible.



**HIS LEGACY IS NOT SIMPLY IN MATCHES WON,
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TO KNOW “SWIFTY”.**



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CRICKET IN SOUTH AFRICA: A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

As we prepare for our 24th tour of South Africa, we reflect not just on the opportunity to play cricket in one of the most spectacular and passionate sporting countries in the world, but also on the unique and complex history of the game in South Africa, a story that spans generations, geographies, and, at times, profound societal change.



Cricket was first introduced to South Africa in the early 19th century by British colonists, with the first recorded match played in 1808. By the late 1800s, South Africa had become the third Test-playing nation, after England and Australia, with its first Test match in 1889.

Early South African cricket was predominantly white and elite, rooted firmly within colonial

structures and separated from the vast majority of the population.

Despite this, the game was passionately embraced by all communities. Black, Coloured, and Indian South Africans formed their own clubs and associations under extremely limited circumstances, playing in segregated leagues, often with little to no resources, but with deep commitment and love for the game.

APARTHEID AND SPORTING ISOLATION

From 1948, apartheid entrenched racial segregation across all aspects of South African life, including sport. Cricket, like many other institutions, was divided along racial lines. Talented players of colour were systematically excluded from national selection, and entire communities were denied fair access to facilities, development pathways, and recognition.

In response to the injustice, the international cricket community eventually imposed a ban on South Africa, and from 1970 until 1991, the country was excluded from official

Test cricket. This period of sporting isolation became a powerful global symbol of resistance against apartheid, reinforcing the message that equality and fair play should extend beyond the boundary rope.

REINTEGRATION AND TRANSFORMATION

In 1991, with the dismantling of apartheid underway and Nelson Mandela soon to walk free, South Africa were welcomed back into the international fold. The country played its first post-isolation ODI against India in Kolkata that same year. Just a year later, South Africa competed in the 1992 World Cup, a tournament that

reintroduced the Rainbow Nation to the cricketing world.

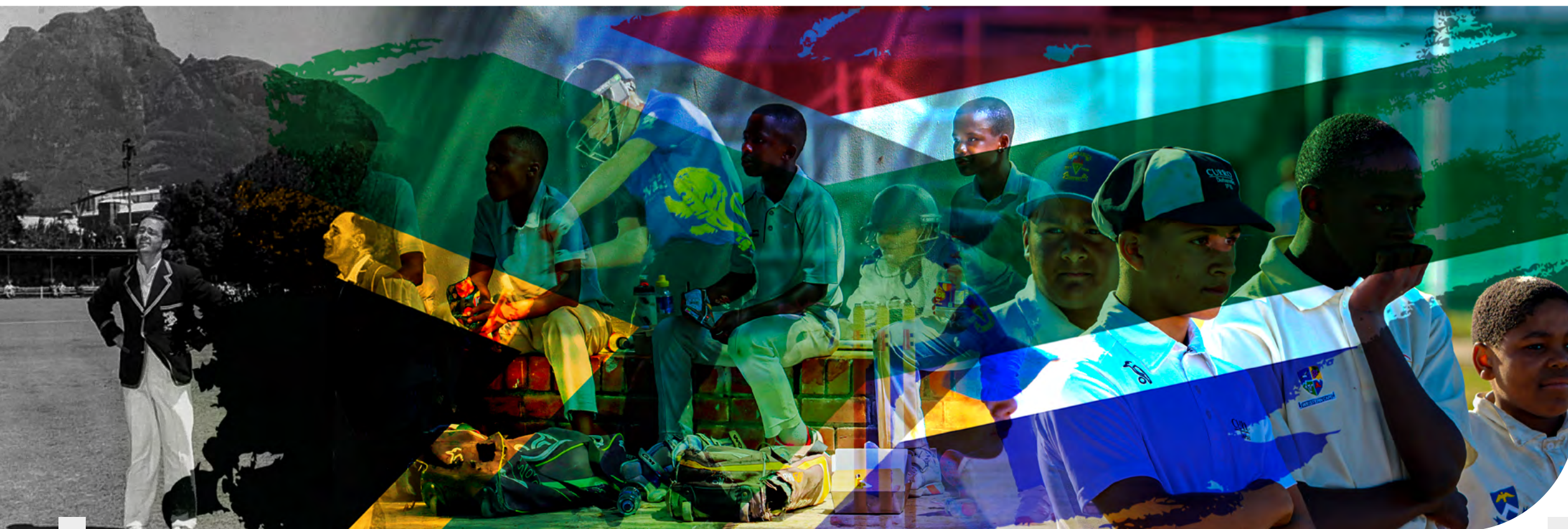
But reintegration brought new challenges. The need to redress the past and ensure equal opportunities for players of all backgrounds led to the introduction of transformation policies, including quotas aimed at increasing representation from historically disadvantaged groups.

These remain a subject of debate within South African cricket, balancing the legacies of history with the demands of merit, fairness, and unity.

Today, South African cricket reflects a country still on a journey, one striving to reconcile its history while fostering a more inclusive and competitive future.

The nation has produced some of the greatest cricketers the world has seen, from Jacques Kallis to Makhaya Ntini, from AB de Villiers to Kagiso Rabada, players who have captivated fans across the globe.

Cricket in South Africa is as much about community as it is about elite performance. Townships, schools, and clubs across the country remain vibrant centres of grassroots cricket. Touring sides like Devon U15 Boys are not just visiting a country with breathtaking scenery and rich wildlife, from the Kruger National Park to the Table Mountain coastline, they're stepping into a sporting culture shaped by resilience, hope, and an undying love for the game.





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DEVON U15'S CRICKET TOUR TO SOUTH AFRICA

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Good luck Stanley!



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Stanley Baker

OUR HOSTS IN THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

When I think about the Devon tours to South Africa, one name that always comes to mind is Frik Roussouw. What started back in 2002 as a cricket tour for young players has grown into something far bigger over the last 24 years, and a huge part of that is down to Frik and his family.

From the very beginning, Frik welcomed Devon Cricket into his world with open arms. Skukuza isn't just another cricket ground. It's a place unlike anywhere else I've ever been. You can be stood at mid-on watching a game while elephants wander in the distance, monkeys rifle through kit bags, or warthogs trot across the outfield like they own the place. It's raw, honest and unforgettable. For our players, especially the young lads seeing South Africa for the first time, it's an experience that stays with them forever.

But what has always made the trip special isn't just the wildlife or the setting. It's the people.

Frik has spent his life protecting the Kruger National Park and the wildlife that makes it so special. His work over the years, especially in anti-

rhino poaching, is something I know many people admire, and rightly so. But for all the incredible things he's done professionally, what has always stood out to me is his kindness, his humour and the way he's looked after every Devon group that has come through Skukuza.

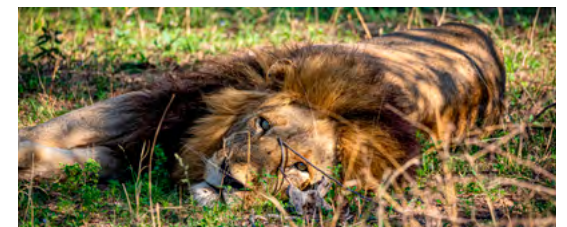
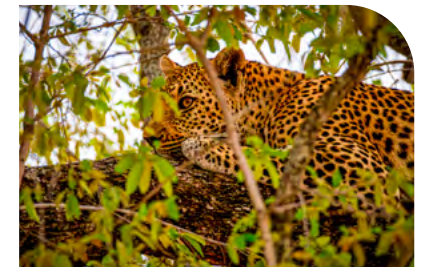
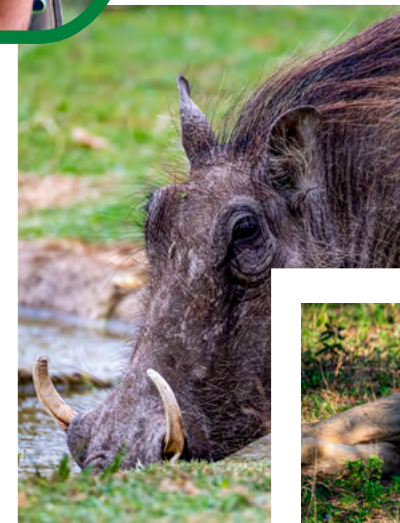


**Frik
Rossouw**

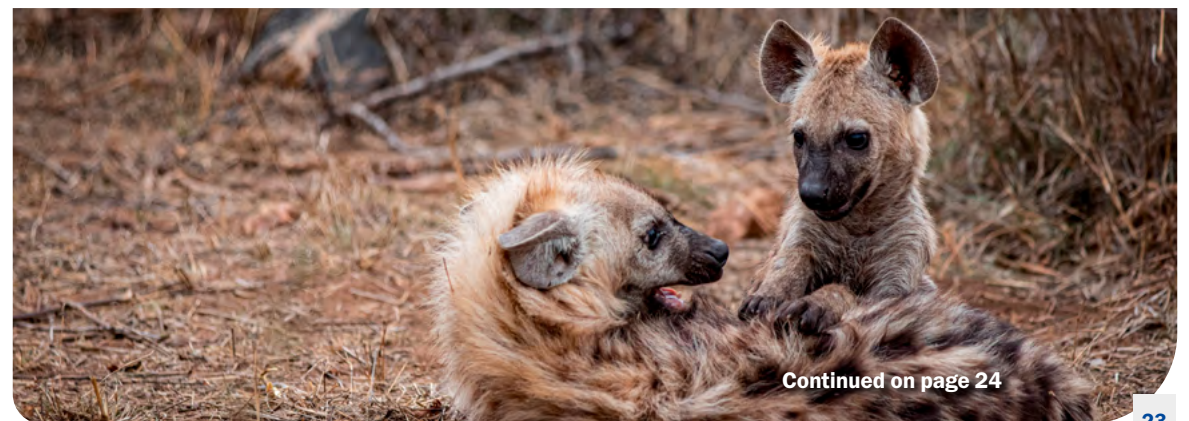


**"AN EXPERIENCE THAT STAYS
WITH THEM FOREVER"**

**"what makes the trip special isn't just the wildlife
or the setting. It's the people"**



Petro deserves just as much credit. I don't think there's a single player or coach who hasn't looked forward to her cooking after a long day in the bush or on the cricket field. She's always made our groups feel at home, and that warmth is something you can't fake. It's genuine, and it's appreciated more than words can really say.



Continued on page 24



Jean, Shanté, and family, have grown up around the tours as well, and it's been brilliant over the years seeing those friendships between Devon and South Africa continue through the next generation.

That's what this partnership has really become, not just a cricket tour, but a proper extended family.

The thing I've always loved most about our visits to Skukuza is that the players leave with far more than cricket memories. Yes, they play in one of the most unique places in the world, but they also learn about conservation, respect, culture and perspective. They hear stories around the braai, experience life in the Kruger and realise there's a much

bigger world outside of cricket scores and league tables.

Over the years, thousands of memories have been made because Frik and his family cared enough to keep opening their doors to us year after year.

That takes effort, patience and a huge amount of generosity, and I don't think any of us at Devon Cricket will ever take that for granted.

On behalf of everyone connected with Devon Cricket, past and present, I just want to say thank you. Thank you for 24 years of friendship, support and hard work. Thank you for making so many young people feel welcome in your home.

MATT THEEDOM
JOINT TOUR MANAGER

THE BATTLE OF KRUGER RETURNS 2026

The Battle of Kruger will once again see the Devon U15 Boys Cricket team take on Nelspruit Hoërskool in what has become one of the highlights of the tour calendar. This two-day fixture continues to provide a stern test for both sides.

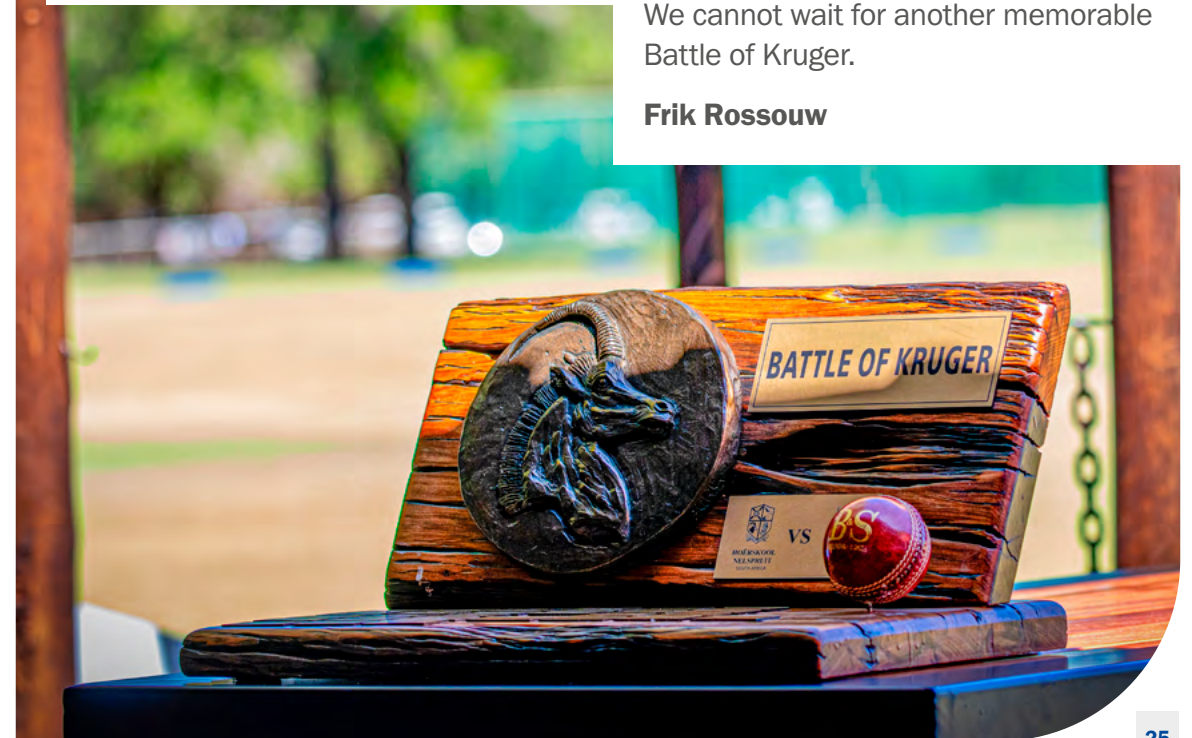
Last year's encounter ended in a fiercely contested, hard-fought draw after two days of cricket in challenging South African conditions. Both teams showed tremendous character, skill, and resilience, with momentum swinging throughout the match before honours were ultimately shared.

Devon will once again look to build on strong performances from recent tours, while Nelspruit Hoërskool will be determined to reclaim bragging rights on home soil. With temperatures expected to soar beyond 30 degrees in October, players can expect another demanding contest under the African sun.

Everyone in Kruger looks forward to welcoming the Devon touring party and ensuring players, staff, and supporters experience the warmth, hospitality, and magic that make South Africa so special.

We cannot wait for another memorable Battle of Kruger.

Frik Rossouw



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In 2026, South Africa's world-famous Kruger National Park celebrates a remarkable milestone, 100 years as one of the world's greatest wildlife conservation areas. Covering almost 20,000 square kilometres, Kruger is one of Africa's largest and most successful national parks, attracting visitors from across the globe who travel to experience its extraordinary wildlife, breathtaking landscapes and fascinating history.

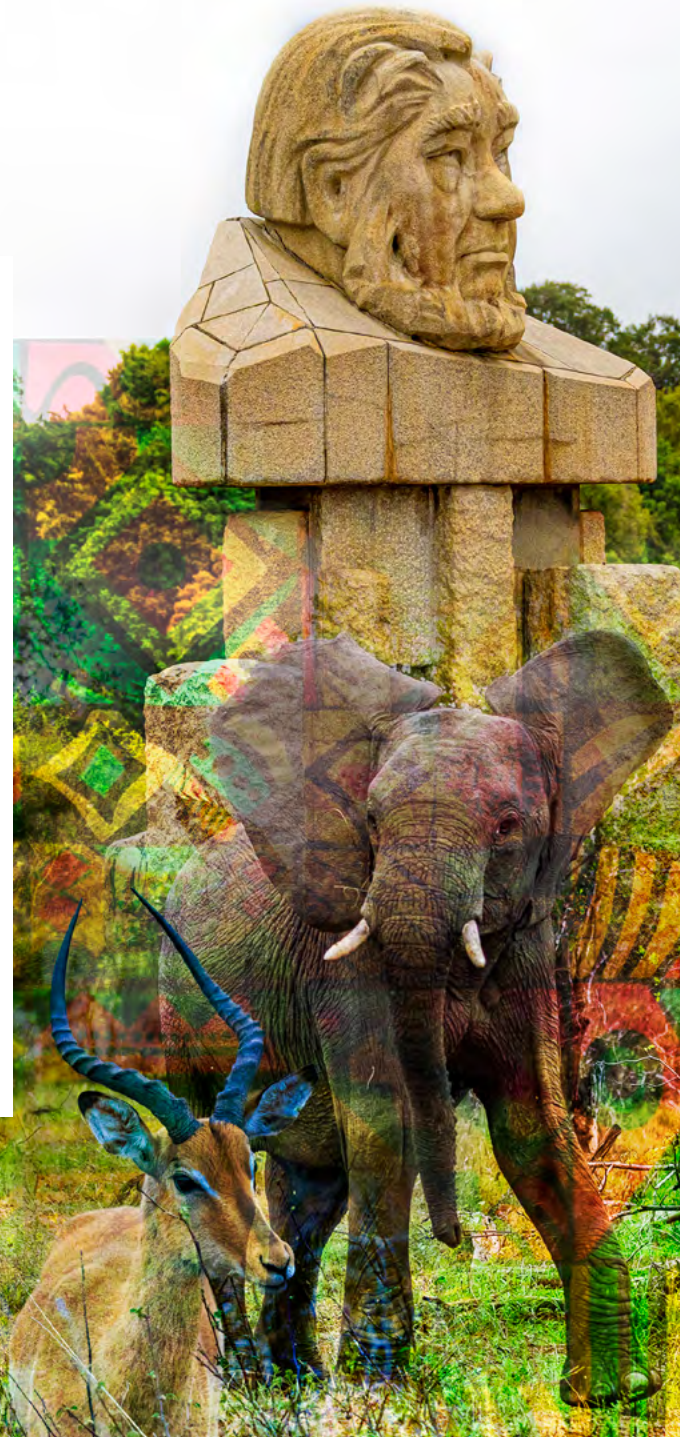
The park's origins date back to 1898 when President Paul Kruger established the Sabie Game Reserve to protect wildlife from uncontrolled hunting. In 1926, the reserve officially became Kruger National Park, marking the beginning of a century-long conservation success story. Today, it stands as a symbol of South Africa's commitment to preserving its natural heritage for future generations.

One of Kruger's greatest achievements is its role as a conservation leader. Scientists and wildlife managers working within the park have developed many of the wildlife management practices now used throughout Africa and beyond.

As the Kruger National Park celebrates its centenary year, there has never been a better time to visit. A century of conservation has created one of the planet's greatest wildlife destinations, where we can experience Africa much as it has existed for thousands of years.

Fascinating Facts about Kruger National Park

- The park stretches approximately 360 kilometres from north to south and covers an area larger than Wales.
- It is home to more than 147 mammal species, including the famous "Big Five" – lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo.
- Over 500 bird species have been recorded, making it a paradise for birdwatchers.
- More than 2,000 plant species thrive within the park's diverse ecosystems.
- Kruger contains ancient archaeological sites dating back thousands of years, including evidence of early human settlements and Iron Age communities.
- The park is home to Africa's largest populations of elephants, buffalo and white rhino.
- Several major rivers, including the Crocodile, Sabie and Olifants Rivers, flow through the park, supporting an incredible variety of wildlife.



CHARLES DARR[?]OW

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"A highlight of our cricket calendar"

The JR Cricket Academy was established by myself and Elmarie du Plessis in 2014. Over the previous eight years I had gained experience coaching the Namibia and Uganda national cricket teams.

However, it had always been in the back of my mind to establish a cricket academy back in South Africa. Now, twelve years on, the JR Academy is the biggest cricket academy in Mpumalanga province. We started with coaching primary and high school youngsters and then launched a junior coaching programme, JR Cubs, which caters for grades 1 to 3 children.

Throughout the year, the academy also organises various tournaments, tours and matches for all the

children. At the JR Academy, I am assisted by Isaac Senetla and Alwyn Viljeon. They are experienced and qualified coaches who add great value to the programme and also coach various programmes at Laerskool Nelspruit.

The Devon U15 Boys Tour is the highlight of our cricket calendar. We have had some exciting and competitive matches at the Skukuza cricket oval, this is a great experience for our boys to play an U15 overseas touring team.

Many thanks to both Matts and Frik and their support for organising the 2026 tour.

We are all looking forward to hosting you guys again!

Johan Rudolph

SPECIAL PLACE SPECIAL PEOPLE



In my three years working at the Devon Cricket Foundation up until the 2025 trip, I had heard many stories about the U15 Boys Tour of South Africa. Stories of the picturesque landscapes, the unique wildlife and the kindest people are commonly heard in the Foundation's office, and there's always a buzz when tour season approaches.

I had always hoped that I would one day get the opportunity to go on the tour in my time with the Foundation and was absolutely delighted when Matt told me I would be coming along in 2025.

I was coming into this trip fully expecting to soak in some lifetime experiences that I would always hope to have the good fortune of repeating in the future. And yet, the trip started with one I hope to never endure again! The rains down in Africa conspired against us, as our connecting flight to the Kruger was delayed due to the weather in Skukuza. After what felt like an eternity, our luggage was eventually sacrificed to get the plane under the weight required to land on a wet runway, with no guarantee it would arrive on next morning's flight from Johannesburg! Whilst Matt Theedom had very wisely advised the travelling party to bring spare clothes in their hand luggage just in case, I had been saddled with the camera bag and no change of clothes.

Once we arrived in the Kruger, you could sense it is a special place. Skukuza looks like any small airport, until you see a giraffe eating out of a tree at the end of the runway and you arrive at a beautiful wooden terminal with a thatched roof. It was here where we would first meet two of the most important people on the tour: Frik Rossouw, one half of our wonderful hosts during the Skukuza leg, and Edward Ndlovu, our driver and wildlife connoisseur.

Whilst it took longer to get to know Frik as he was busy helping sort out logistics to recover our luggage some 300 miles away, we were all instantly brought under Edward's charm as he drove us through the wilderness to our hotel. Edward, SANPark Trails Ranger, instantly went into what would be his default educational self, quietly teaching us about the wildlife we encountered whilst carefully and expertly guiding us as close to the animals as possible. Everywhere we went, Edward would take



"Skukuza is a truly unique place to experience, one that will stay with me for the rest of my life..."

us there and all the staff would fight for the privilege to sit at the front with him to be able to bombard him with questions about the Kruger. One particular highlight of the trip was seeing the boys gathered around the campfire at night, no phones in sight, simply listening to Edward tell stories about working in the park, completely enthralled by his calm and gentle demeanour as he recalled close encounters with some of the world's most dangerous predators.

Another man who also has endless stories to tell is Frik. I won't go into any detail here, as I would urge future tourists to hear them all from him themselves, but they will struggle to find someone of his stature who is as humble and welcoming as he is. Frik has time for absolutely everyone on the tour, and he has the respect of everyone we meet in the Kruger thanks to his position as one of SanParks' top anti-poaching squad. Such is his importance to preservation efforts, it is not uncommon for him to

suddenly be in the helicopter to tend to an emergency, but you know this will only lead to more stories in the evening.

But our hospitality would not be what it is without Frik's wife Petro. She is the embodiment of the warm, welcoming nature of everyone we meet in the park. To the tourists, she is like a mother, ensuring everyone is well looked after and fed, going on to treat us to an amazing Potjie in our final evening at Skukuza CC.

Skukuza is a truly unique place to experience, one that will stay with me for the rest of my life and that I hope I am fortunate enough to return to someday. Whilst I was saddened to be leaving, the Cape Town leg was just the contrast the players need on a tour like this one.

I've had the privilege of living in some bustling cities across the world, and Cape Town is no different from that perspective: there is always something going on and there is something for just

about anyone. For many of the travelling tourists, this will be the first time they are in a city like this, away from the familiar comforts of home, with the freedom to explore; a key opportunity for personal growth away from the confines of the cricket pitch.

Much like in Skukuza, we were immediately introduced to the local expert who would be transporting us around Cape Town: Shamiel. Another kind and gentle soul, Shamiel is well versed in the history and current affairs in the city, helping give us real a glimpse into what life is really like in South Africa.

Despite the hustle and bustle of Cape Town, as a group we also got a small, yet still shocking, glimpse into the troubled history of 20th century South Africa and the impact it continues to have on the city when we visited the District Six museum. A truly educational experience for all of us, not least our travelling tourists, for whom the horrors of those times are fortunately confined to the history books.

With so much to do in Cape Town, we also got a real flavour of Africa, literally, when we dined at Gold. Described as an authentic, 14 dish taste-safari, the evening was paired with live performances throughout to help us fully immerse ourselves in the richness of African culture whilst learning about each dish, their country of origin and the rich spices that bring each one to life. It was a dinner like no other I have experienced, and one I am glad will become part of the tour's tradition moving forward.



I have mostly covered the human experiences of the tour, but it would be wrong not to mention the brilliant people at Western Province CC who help make the most important part of the tour in Cape Town happen. Graham October, who makes time for any player or coach to impart his cricketing wisdom. Camillah Adams, who works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure a smooth week of cricket. And Shaheem who, while no longer as involved as he once was, still takes the time to come along to games, provide delicious treats and catch up with coaches and players.

The Tour to South Africa is made truly special by the unique environments and experiences we are afforded the privilege to access, bespoke to Devon because of the relationships we have been fortunate enough to build up over decades of visiting. This tour is a privilege not many get to experience, so to anyone fortunate enough be going: take it all in, ask every question you have and make memories and friends that will last a lifetime.

Julen Beer

SAME COUNTRY NEW ROLE

Returning to South Africa this time as a coach was an incredible experience, one filled with memories and flashbacks to my own tour there as a player back in 2014. Taking on a coaching role for the first time and being responsible for a group of young players was something I found both challenging and very rewarding. The experience taught me a lot, and I hope the players took just as much from it too.



As I remember from 2014, the cricket itself was naturally the highlight of the tour, but I hope the boys returned home with more than just cricket memories. Spending two weeks away from the comfort of home, living closely with teammates, and adapting to a completely different environment can be challenging. I thought they handled everything brilliantly. It was great to see them grow in confidence throughout the trip, both individually and as a group.

One of the most rewarding parts of the tour for me personally was seeing the friendships within the squad become stronger as the days went on. Those friendships and shared experiences are often what stay with you.

From a coaching perspective, it was a privilege to work with such a talented group of young cricketers over an extended period of time. There were moments where I was tough on the lads but understood that they are only at the beginning of their cricketing journeys and still learning every day. I tried throughout the tour to help create an environment where the boys could enjoy their cricket, improve their skills, develop important life lessons, and make lifelong memories alongside their teammates.

Overall, the tour was a great experience and one that has already taught me valuable lessons that I'll carry forward in my coaching journey. While I don't think anything can truly replicate the experience of touring as a player and the memories you create with your teammates, I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience South Africa again from a completely different perspective.

A huge thank you to Matt & Matt for giving me the opportunity to experience it again.

Tom Lammonby



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REFLECTIONS ON A JOURNEY TO & THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA

I first started playing for Devon at Under 12s, and that was also the first time I heard about the South Africa tour that would eventually happen three years later. From that moment, it was something I always looked forward to. The idea of getting on a plane and travelling to a completely different part of the world felt unreal. When the day finally came, it still didn't feel real. Stepping off the plane after an eleven-hour flight and being hit by a wall of heat was something I'll never forget. It honestly felt like the country itself was welcoming us.



The tour began in the Kruger National Park, which is easily the most amazing place I have ever been. Seeing wild animals in their natural habitat was unbelievable and unlike anything I'd experienced before. The early morning game drives sounded tough at first, but as soon as you saw your first lion, leopard or even wild dogs, you completely forgot how tired you were. You stopped thinking about the time and just took everything in.

just the grounds keeper. Later, during a presentation he gave, we found out he was much more than that. He had dedicated his life to protecting the Kruger wild lands. Listening to his stories over bowls of buffalo stew made us realise we were in the presence of someone truly special.

Continued on page 46



Cricket was still at the centre of the tour, and our first game quickly showed us how challenging the conditions were. Playing in the heat was exhausting, and at times it felt like the Kruger itself was the toughest opponent we faced. On that day, we also met Frik, who we first thought was



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DEVON U15 BOYS - 2026



**Paul
HEARD**

Joint Tour Manager
ECB Level 3 Coach
Assistant Pathway Coach
Devon Cricket Foundation



**Mathew
THEEDOM**

Joint Tour Manager
ECB Level 3 Coach
Chief Executive
Devon Cricket Foundation



**Sean
DAY**

Devon U15 Boys Lead Coach
ECB Level 2 Coach
Hospitality Operation Manager
East Devon Leisure





Henry
ALSOP

#1

RH RA-S

Crisp Flavour | Roast Chicken
Other Interests | Football & Golf



Stanley
BAKER

#2

RH RA-OS

Crisp Flavour | Salt & Vinegar
Other Interests | Rugby



Lucas
BELL

#3

LH LA-S

Crisp Flavour | Flame Grilled Steak
Other Interests | Football, Darts & Clay Pigeon Shooting



George
BOWER

#5

RH LA-S

Crisp Flavour | Prawn Cocktail
Other Interests | Rugby & Golf



Luan
MATTHEWS DE MENEZES

#10

RH RA-S

Crisp Flavour | Thai Sweet Chilli
Other Interests | Football, Music, Cooking, Travel & Socialising



Robert
MURFIN

#12

RH RA-S

Crisp Flavour | Prawn Cocktail
Other Interests | Golf, Guitar & Other Sports



Miles
OLCZAK

#14

RH RA-LS

Crisp Flavour | Cheese & Onion
Other Interests | Food & Hockey



Arthur
BUCKLEY

#17

RH RA-S

Crisp Flavour | Salt & Vinegar
Other Interests | RAF Air Cadets, Rugby, Piano & Guitar



Brendan
COLES

#24

RH RA-LS

Crisp Flavour | Prawn Cocktail
Other Interests | Golf & Football



George
CONNOLLY

#25

RH RA-OS

Crisp Flavour | Salt & Vinegar
Other Interests | Golf, Hockey & Learning to Fly



George
DAVEY

#26

RH RA-OS

Crisp Flavour | Prawn Cocktail
Other Interests | Snooker & Gaming



Joshua
BROOKES

#36

RH

Crisp Flavour | BBQ
Other Interests | Rugby, Golf & Swimming



Jack
McMANUS

#39

RH RA-S

Crisp Flavour | Salt & Vinegar
Other Interests | Rugby & Football

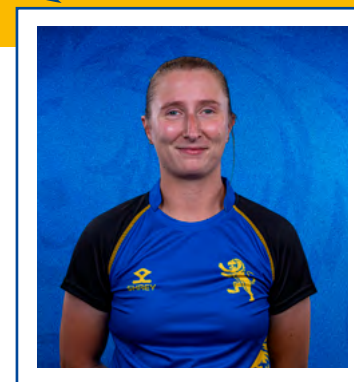


Max
TOPPING

#45

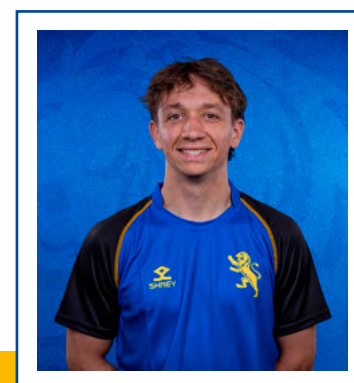
RH RA-S

Crisp Flavour | Sour Cream & Chive
Other Interests | Camping, Football & Cooking



Lauren
UNDERHILL

Tour Physio
BSc Sports Therapy - First Class (Honours)
Girls Pathway & Women's Assistant Physio - Somerset County Cricket Club



Teddy
HAFFENDEN

Devon U15 Boys Assistant Coach
Level 2 ECB Coach
Specialist Cricket Coach - Plymouth College & Somerset County Cricket Club

REFLECTIONS ON A JOURNEY TO & THROUGH

SOUTH AFRICA

For me, the two-day game in the Kruger summed up the whole tour. It was about much more than just cricket. Over those two days, the heat slowly started to affect us, and one by one players began to fall ill. At times, it felt like there were more people off the field than on it, and those who were left had to dig deep and keep going. Despite everything, we battled hard and managed to secure a draw.

That match also taught us important lessons away from cricket. After the first day, we went for a swim with the opposition and shared a braai together, where we learned a few inappropriate South African words that definitely made the evening memorable. It reminded us that cricket isn't just about winning and losing, but about the people you meet and the experiences you share. On the second day, we were tired and worn down, but we pushed through and eventually shared the

spoils, drawing the Battle of Kruger. Those moments are exactly why I wanted to go on this tour, and they're memories I'll always keep.

After a week in the Kruger, we travelled to Cape Town, which was a huge contrast. We went from eating braais by candlelight in the bush to being surrounded by skyscrapers and eating at the V&A Waterfront.

Our first game in Cape Town was played under floodlights, which is something I might never experience again. The conditions were tough, with cold ocean winds and heavy dew making the ball slippery and our fingers numb, but we stuck together and managed to come away with another win.

Personally, this was one of the biggest learning experiences of the tour for me as a spinner. Bowling with a wet ball in changing conditions completely changed

the way I thought about bowling, especially in T20 cricket. It forced me to adapt and develop parts of my game that I hadn't needed before.

Visiting the District Six Museum was another powerful experience, but in a very different way. Learning about apartheid and the struggles South Africa faced was eye-opening. Hearing how Nelson Mandela helped shape the country it is today made me think much more deeply about my own life and the privileges I have.

We finished the tour on a bitter-sweet note. Our final match was played at one of the most stunning grounds I've ever seen, Rondebosch Cricket Club, with Table Mountain towering in the background. Earlier that week, we had

climbed Table Mountain and looked out over Cape Town, which made playing there even more special.

We played a two-day match against Western Province, who showed us the true quality of South African cricket. There were moments of success and moments of disappointment, and in the end we lost on the second day. We swapped shirts afterwards and once again realised that cricket itself had been the real winner.

This tour has shaped me not just as a cricketer, but as a person. Cricket, like life, teaches you more through challenges than successes. You improve through failure, not comfort, and that is the most important lesson I took away from this experience.



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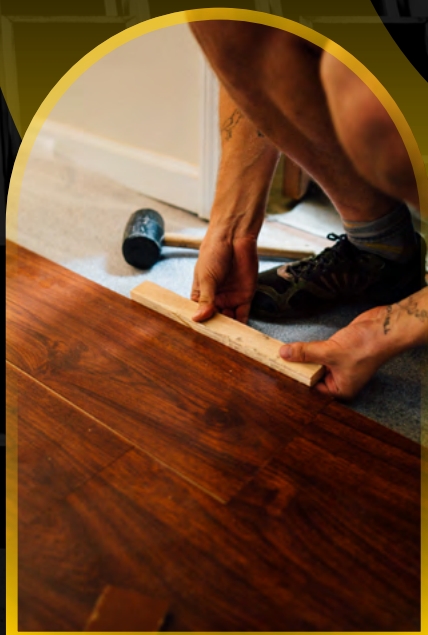
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BOWLING, BONDING, BECOMING BETTER



My name is Max Topping, and I have been part of the Devon Cricket Pathway since 2024. During that time, I have had the chance to develop my cricket, meet new people and create some great memories. Being selected for the Devon tour to South Africa in 2026 is something I am incredibly proud of, and I am really looking forward to representing Devon in South Africa.

One of the best things about being involved in county cricket is the friendships you make. Over the past two years, I have spent a lot of time training and playing with a fantastic group of players. We have worked hard together, supported each other and shared some brilliant experiences on and off the field. The South Africa tour will be another exciting opportunity for us to grow as a team and create even more memories together.

I currently play my club cricket for Bovey Tracey and enjoy contributing wherever I can. I have mainly focused on my bowling, but I have also been working hard to improve my batting so that I can become a stronger all-round player.

"I am excited about experiencing cricket in a different country"

My goal is to keep developing my game and continue progressing through the Devon Pathway. Thanks to the coaches, my teammates and Bovey for helping me along the way.

I am excited about experiencing cricket in a different country, alongside the amazing safaris and cultural experience that South Africa is able to offer. Most of all, I am looking forward to sharing the experience with my teammates, but I also want the tour to help me gain more self-confidence and help me learn to be a more independent person.

FORMER TOURISTS MAKING THEIR MARK IN CRICKET

Since the very first South Africa tour in 2002, the Devon U15 Boys programme has always been about more than results on a scoreboard. Alan Swift designed tours to challenge young players in unfamiliar conditions, expose them to different cultures, and accelerate their development both as cricketers and as young people.

Over the years, that experience has helped shape the journeys of several players who have gone on to forge professional careers within the game.

For many, South Africa provided their first taste of high-performance cricket away from home. Hard pitches, intense heat, competitive opposition and long days together as a squad created an environment that demanded resilience, adaptability and maturity. Those experiences have often become defining moments in players' development.

Among the most notable success stories are England internationals Lewis Gregory, Craig Overton, Jamie Overton, Dom Bess and Sonny Baker, all of whom represented Devon on tour before progressing into the

professional game. Each has spoken positively about the impact overseas cricket had on their development and understanding of the game.

Tom Lammonby and Ben Green, both former tourists and recent tour coaches, have become established parts of Somerset's and Leicestershire's first-team set-ups after touring with Devon.

The tour has also seen players represent counties across the country, including Adam Dibble, Kazi Szymanski, James Burke, and Tom Allin, demonstrating the breadth of talent that has emerged through the Devon pathway.

One of the more recent names to emerge is James Theedom, who toured South Africa with Devon in 2022 before progressing into the Somerset pathway

FORMER DEVON SOUTH AFRICA TOURISTS TO PROGRESS INTO THE PROFESSIONAL GAME:

Tom Allin
Warwickshire
2003

Adam Dibble
Somerset
2005 & 2006

James Burke
Somerset, Surrey
& Leicestershire
2005 & 2006

Lewis Gregory
Somerset & England
2006 & 2007

Craig Overton
Somerset & England
2009

Jamie Overton
Somerset, Surrey
& England
2009

Dom Bess
Yorkshire & England
2011 & 2012

Ben Green
Somerset & Leicestershire
2012 & 2013

Kazi Szymanski
Glamorgan
2014 & 2015

Tom Lammonby
Somerset
2015

Sonny Baker
Somerset, Hampshire
& England
2018

Fin Hill
Somerset
Cancelled Tour
2021

James Theedom
Somerset
2022



and more recently the Somerset CCC staff. James' development is another example of how the tour continues to provide young players with an opportunity to test themselves, grow in confidence and pursue their cricketing ambitions.

While professional cricket is never the expectation, these stories highlight what can grow from the experiences provided on tour. More importantly, they reinforce the tour's wider purpose, helping young people discover their

potential, build lifelong friendships and create memories that last forever.

For every player who pulls on the Devon shirt in South Africa, the journey is unique. Some may go on to county or international cricket, others may simply return home with a greater appreciation for the game and the world around them. Either way, the impact of the tour remains the same.

And that is exactly what Alan Swift intended when the journey first began.



Sandy Allen

GROWING PLAYERS GROWING PEOPLE

For many young cricketers, representing Devon on an overseas tour is something they dream about for years. While the upcoming U15 Boys' tour to South Africa will undoubtedly be a memorable experience, for us it is much more than just a cricket tour. It is an important part of the player development journey we have built at Devon Cricket.

We don't see these tours as the end goal or a reward for talent. They are opportunities for young people to learn, grow and develop both on and off the field.

The South Africa tour has been carefully positioned within our boys Performance Pathway. It gives players the chance to challenge themselves in a high-performance environment, play against strong opposition, experience different conditions and immerse themselves in a completely different culture. These experiences help build resilience, adaptability, confidence and leadership - all qualities that are central to the values we want to develop in our players.

Groups develop strong bonds through shared experiences. Long days of travel,

challenging matches and time spent together create lasting friendships and a level of maturity that often carries through the rest of the season.

Our aim has never been to produce finished players. Instead, it is about giving young people valuable experiences that help shape their growth, both as cricketers and as individuals.

Our South West Development Camps are another key part of this journey. These residential camps bring boys and girls together for several days of cricket, learning and personal development. Living and training alongside their peers helps young people develop independence, communication skills and shared responsibility.

The Devon Cricket Performance Pathway is designed to support players through every stage of their journey. It starts with the Early Engagement Programme (EEP), progresses through Youth Development Cricket (YDC) and County Age Group (CAG) cricket, and for some players into our Emerging Player Programme (EPP).

Each stage has a clear purpose:

EEP (10-12 years) Focusing on enjoyment, skill development and learning in a positive environment.

YDC (Under 13-15) Exposing players to higher-level cricket while developing game awareness and core skills.

CAG (Under 13-18) Introducing greater competition alongside technical, tactical and personal development.

EPP (Under 13+) Providing advanced support through specialist coaching, physical preparation and performance psychology.

“Across every stage, we encourage players to be curious, resilient and team-focused. We believe success looks different for every individual, and our role is to help each player maximise their own potential.”

Cricket is only one part of what we're trying to achieve. We want young people to leave our programmes as better people, not just better players.

That is why overseas tours play such an important role. They challenge players technically and tactically, but they also broaden horizons, develop social skills and encourage personal growth. The players who returned from our previous tours came back with greater confidence, maturity and self-awareness. These experiences also benefit the wider cricket community. Players return to their clubs and schools with new confidence, fresh ideas and stronger leadership skills. They inspire teammates and help strengthen cricket across Devon.

Ultimately, our Performance Pathway is about much more than producing cricketers. It is about helping young people develop physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Some players may progress into professional cricket or national pathways. Others may become club captains, coaches, volunteers or lifelong supporters of the game. Every outcome has value.

As our U15 boys prepare for South Africa, our message is simple: this is not the destination. It is another important step in a much bigger journey. We want every player to challenge themselves, embrace new experiences and continue discovering what they are capable of achieving. At Devon Cricket, every step is important and matters.

Wishing George Davey and the squad a successful and enjoyable tour

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Wishing George Davey and the squad a successful and enjoyable tour



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Our inaugural trip in 2002 laid the foundations for a long-standing partnership, with Cape Town becoming a focal point for every tour that has followed. What started as a single tour quickly developed into a long-standing partnership with Western Province Cricket Association that continues to thrive today.

Since the first tour, a number of dedicated volunteers and cricket administrators have helped strengthen the partnership. Their work has ensured that each tour provides outstanding cricket, valuable life experiences and lasting friendships. We can not talk about cricket in Cape Town and not thank Nabeal Dein, the ex-Chief Executive of Western Province Cricket Association, who was instrumental in setting up the Cape Town leg of our tour.

Our relationship previously led to a successful player exchange programme, led by Alan Swift, with talented young South African cricketers spending seasons playing for clubs across Devon. Many went on to enjoy professional careers and represent their country, while making a lasting impact on Devon cricket along the way. Vernon Philander, J.P. Duminy, Qaasim Adams, Craig Alexander, Dominic Telo and most recently Kyle Verreynne came over to cut their teeth in the Devon Cricket League.



Clinton Du Preez

CRICKET SERVICES
MANAGER



Camillah Adams

YOUTH CRICKET
CO-ORDINATOR



Nabeal Dien

TOUR ADVISER



Shafiek Johnson

WP U16 CONVENOR OF
SELECTORS



Graham October

CSA TAP LEAD
(WESTERN CAPE)

Today, the partnership remains as strong as ever. It's now more professional than personal, but no less effective. A special mention to Clinton Du Preez and especially Camillah Adams who are invaluable in ensuring the tour is an annual success.

Working closely with Western Province Cricket Association, Devon players continue to enjoy opportunities to compete against talented opposition at some of the best cricket venues in Cape Town.

Since 2022, the move to an October tour has created new benefits for both sides. Devon players experience cricket in challenging overseas conditions, while South African coaches can assess their young players at the start of their season ahead of major competitions.

The success of our partnership is built on the support of countless coaches, clubs, volunteers, and administrators in both Devon and South Africa. Their commitment has helped create something truly special for generations of young cricketers.

More than twenty years on from the first tour, the connection between Devon Cricket and Western Province remains a highly valued part of our player development programme and we look forward to many more years of shared experiences and friendship.

Thank you



CAPE TOWN

Cape Town, often called the "Mother City", is one of South Africa's most famous and beautiful cities. It sits on the coast beneath the stunning Table Mountain and has a long and fascinating history.

People have lived in the area around Cape Town for thousands of years. Evidence found nearby shows that people were living there more than 12,000 years ago. European explorers first arrived in 1488 when Portuguese sailor Bartolomeu Dias sailed around the Cape of Good Hope.

Later, in 1652, Dutch explorer Jan van Riebeeck set up the first permanent European settlement. Cape Town quickly became an important stop for ships travelling between Europe and Asia.

Over time, people from many different backgrounds settled in Cape Town, creating a city full of different cultures, languages and traditions.

During the 20th century, South Africa was ruled under apartheid, a system that separated people based on race. One of the most famous examples was District Six in Cape Town, where more than 60,000 people were forced to leave their homes in the 1970s. Despite these difficult times, Cape Town also became an important symbol of



"CRICKET HAS BEEN PLAYED IN CAPE TOWN FOR MORE THAN 200 YEARS."

freedom. In 1990, Nelson Mandela gave his first public speech after spending 27 years in prison. He spoke from the balcony of Cape Town City Hall, marking the beginning of a new era for South Africa. Today, a statue stands there to remember this historic moment.

Cricket has been played in Cape Town for more than 200 years. The first recorded match took place in 1808 between British military teams. The game grew in popularity, and in 1888 Newlands Cricket Ground was opened.

With Table Mountain and Devil's Peak in the background, Newlands is one of the most beautiful cricket grounds in the world and has hosted many famous matches.

Today, Cape Town is a modern and vibrant city. Visitors enjoy its colourful markets, lively arts scene, beautiful beaches and excellent food. The city celebrates its rich history while continuing to grow and develop.

LOGISTICS? **SORTED**
LIFTS? **SORTED**
LAUGHS? **ALWAYS**



ABOVE | **Shaheem**



RIGHT | **Shameil**



Every successful tour has its heroes, and for Devon Cricket's South African adventure, two names stand out: Shaheem Taliep and Shamiel Williams.

Shaheem has been the driving force behind the logistics since our very first tour, using his local knowledge, contacts and problem-solving skills to keep everything running smoothly. Even though he no longer does much of the driving, his support remains invaluable.

In recent years, Shamiel Williams has taken the wheel, becoming a trusted and popular part of the touring group. His reliability, positivity and connection with the boys make him much more than a driver.

Thank you both for helping make the tour so special.



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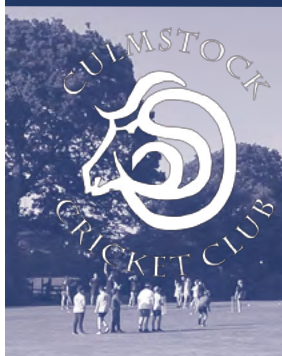


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