

Youth Development in the South-West

Document presented to ACCSO AGM on 19th November 2011

With this caveat: The answer given to the question posed in AOB (see page 5) about the format of the Ligue Nationale in 2012 was based on FC's assessment at the date of the meeting. FC's position has since evolved.

Note of meeting held at Le Moulineau, Damazan (47) on Sunday 25 September 2011.

Present:

- Andy Crawford (AC), president ACCSO (chair)
- Marc Dalling (MD), i/c youth, Midi CC (MCC), and 'FC referent jeunes sud-ouest'
- Wynford Hicks (WH), i/c youth, Saint Aulaye Cricket (SAC)
- David Johnson (DJ), i/c youth, Toulouse CC (TCC)
- Daniel Nott (DN), SAC
- Mark Moodley (MM), G-M FC
- David Bordes (DB), CTC FC
- Peter Townsend (PT), i/c development matters for ACCSO Committee (meeting secretary)
- Eddie Cannon (EC), SAC (in attendance)
- Sharon Whiting (SW), Thoiry CC and captain French ladies' national team (in attendance).

AC thanked everybody for making the journey to Damazan despite the fact that the LN final had regrettably been cancelled.

The meeting had originally been called, at Marc Dalling's request, to enable those ACCSO clubs with active youth development activities to meet to discuss what degree of coherence should be possible, especially with regard to inter-club/regional matches. Subsequently, Mark Moodley had expressed a desire to present the latest developments in the youth programmes of France Cricket.

USEP

Invited by AC to open the discussions, MM said that very early on after his appointment to FC he was impressed by the potential of the USEP pilot programme that DB had been running for nearly 3 years in the Limoges region. USEP (Union Sportive de l'Enseignement du Premier degree – see www.usep.org) is charged with Physical Education in 14,000 primary schools and thus represents an enormous potential for getting cricket in front of many thousands of young children. USEP management have now approved the project and agreed on a roll-out to 200 schools (= 20,000 children) over a 3-year period.

The meeting congratulated DB on this excellent achievement.

The plan (expected to be confirmed on 12th October) is for a roll-out in 5 sequential areas: 1=North; 2=Paris; 3=West; 4=Limoges/Poitiers; 5=South-west. Each area's project will be handled by a CPC (supremo), in charge of 40-50 schools. Training will be done over the winter (November-March). The first children will be exiting the scheme in 2013, but it is not sure how quickly this will happen in the S-W, the last region to roll out.

DB advised that, in both Limoges and the North, salaried persons in the FFBS Ligues Régionales have come forward to offer to be FC's representatives in the roll-out, in effect to be Regional Development Officers. This offers a pathway for the children exiting the programme to be part of a cricket section within baseball clubs. A timely reminder that, in the baseball world, the tendency is for the French parents of interested children to set up a club especially for those children. PT reminded the meeting that this is particularly the case in Aquitaine. By comparison, non-French adult cricketers set up a club for themselves.

MM said that S-W clubs will be welcome to participate in "USEP" schools right from the start, should they choose to do so. Attending one or more of the school sessions, to demonstrate that there is a cricketing life after school, could be useful to the programme.

MM and DB emphasized that, in any contact with USEP personnel, clubs should avoid talking in terms of competitions: USEP are competition-averse, preferring to think in terms of "rencontres".

Conclusion: FC to be sure to keep ACCSO informed as to progress towards USEP implementation in the S-W. ACCSO will brief clubs in order that they may make timely decisions on their own participation/contributions. **Action: FC.**

UFOLEP

MM went on to talk about the prospects for a similar deal with UFOLEP (Union Française des Oeuvres Laïques d'Education Physique) the number 1 multisports federation, providing access to some 130 sports in secondary school environments, ages 11-16. MM was due to have a meeting in Agen with UFOLEP-47 the day after the meeting, on the back of a chance encounter with its president at one of the Siddalls Cup semi-finals.

MM hopes that he would be able to use the USEP deal as leverage and that a meeting with UFOLEP's top managers in Paris would follow. **A suivre.**

No action required on the part of ACCSO/clubs at present.

Conclusion: FC will keep ACCSO informed of progress. **Action: FC**

"Chance to Shine"

MM advised that he is looking at how it might be possible to follow the model of this UK charity, which aims at teaching cricket in inner-city areas and in state schools where cricket is no longer on the curriculum. **A suivre (MM).**

Kent CC

MM and DB advised that Kent CC had decided to treat France as its very own Minor County and wanted to set up arrangements with FC for access to their coaching (Paul Farbrace) and other facilities, including school twinning. WH and DN particularly welcomed this information: the SAC UK tour, although highly successful, would have much more accessible had it been to Kent than to Lancashire.

AC invited the clubs present to review their programmes, issues, etc.

Saint Aulaye

WH reminded the meeting that SAC is a rural club whose player resources are limited and rather specific: it has some youngsters and some very mature players, with precious few players aged in

between. There is not a youth side, as such. Seven SAC youngsters were joined by 4 from TCC for the recent UK trip. Single-age matches are currently the only viable form for the occasional match with TCC (matches billed as Aquitaine vs Midi-Pyrénées).

Many youngsters are the children of club members (example: DN); but others – such as Alizée Bodet – have been brought on from scratch.

The club has been active in the youth area for many years, notably with the Cricket Week (anchored in the first week of August for 20-plus years such that everybody knows not to go away!); but the number of people able to invest in the programme has been seriously declining and WH is effectively alone now. The “management” challenge is to find and make use of experienced resources both inside and outside the club. The use of the more senior youngsters to step up to coaching the newer recruits is an interesting notion.

The club has been proactive in contacting several departmental Foyers for sans-papiers. This has resulted in several training sessions and more than one match; and 2 young men have made it into the SAC team for this year’s competitions. Another one made it into Eymet’s team this year. This is a route worth pursuing, for it can yield virtually ready-made players for the club side.

Concluding, WH said that in his experience the number of children inexorably reduces, but that the good ones can be persuaded to stay on and to progress.

Midi CC

MD admits that he has significant advantages: as a teacher, he is already on the inside and can make time available. His secondary school sessions are well established and have already yielded 4 players aged 13-15 for this year’s Midi CC adult team.

Mme Dalling is présidente of the Foyer Rural of their village and 10 children aged 8-11 years are coached every Saturday morning. €500 of kit has been funded by the Foyer Rural.

There is, as yet, no MCC junior side, and the recent match with TCC had to be a single-age match. But 2 MCC colleagues are planning to set up a club in their own village (Pomerol) which might serve as another focal point.

MD emphasized that it is essential to follow through with all the interested children, and that commitment and continuity are vital.

As to a potential link-up with the USEP programme, MD also works in a primary school and knows the person responsible for the budgets and it is to this person that he would turn if he were asked to nominate potential sites for USEP roll-out in the Montpellier area. **A suivre (MM).**

Toulouse CC

DJ said that TCC has no “youth strategy” as such; and the club is very fortunate in having more or less constant access to new players thanks to turnover at Airbus and other sources. The children of new adult arrivals represent a real bonus, although there are times (such as 2011) when the numbers are down on previous years.

DJ organizes and leads the coaching of the juniors, with support from some other club members: he has to work against a backdrop of most club adults being motivated only by their own game.

He is looking to get the more mature juniors to contribute to the coaching effort, perhaps getting the time spent registered as counting towards the “CAT” time required by the Bac.

DJ stresses the importance of providing competitive cricket for the youngsters; or at least more opportunities to play matches rather than be confined to practice sessions. For the immediate future, if youth matches remain limited to the 3 clubs present at the meeting, then the current problems will persist: 2 week-ends/3-4 matches will be all that could be scheduled.

DB and MM both made the suggestion of indoor off-season matches, at 6-a-side, for example.

Other clubs

AC informed the meeting that the president of Bordeaux-Giscours had responded to his request for information on youth activities in other ACCSO clubs. The BGCC report highlighted a number of initiatives taken over the past years, including training in various local schools. However the initiatives have not been successful for a number of reasons, including lack of volunteers, unwillingness on the part of the children to travel to the ground for training, and lack of access to a gym.

For the future, finding volunteers is still a big challenge, and the hope is to develop some training indoor in the winter.

Conclusions

AC: Having heard that the 3 clubs effectively represent 3 different models, each with its own access route to different sources of raw material: what chance is there of a common development strategy for the region? MD amplified this by posing a further question: how far are the 3 clubs prepared to invest time and effort in going à la recherche of the raw material and to develop them in-house?

Both WH and DJ said that their clubs simply lack the time and manpower to go prospecting on a wide scale; but that they are willing and more or less able to receive and develop.

MM asked the meeting to explain why the regional-level youth programme did not flourish in 2011:

All: leaving aside the perennial problem of distances and costs (including accommodation), the principal reason was the fact that, by the time anything got close to being proposed (in the form of a week-end), there were few if any slots left in the club/school calendars, and parental accompaniment was not forthcoming. The fall-back was for a visit to Toulouse by Midi, where a flexible approach to team selection produced a rather successful event.

DJ stressed the urgent need for opportunities for juniors to play club/tournament cricket at national level, and it is essential that clubs get much earlier notice of junior championship planning – in effect, the date of the Paris final - in order to avoid holiday absences, clashes with school/club calendars, etc. MM agreed to action with the Commission Jeunes and to provide early sight of the age parameters for 2012. **Action: MM to provide date of final and age parameters.**

For their part, the 3 clubs agreed that, by the date of the ACCSO AGM on 19th November, they will confirm to MD (copy AC) that they will provide a team for inter-regional matches 2012 and also confirm a set of available dates that can be ring-fenced. Toulouse CC will engage with Mondonville for access; and MM will do work on how to get better access to local funds for travel/accommodation costs. **Action: MD, WH, DJ, MM.**

MM asked the meeting what FC would do/provide to help.

- MD: Midi CC needs more junior kit. Probably Intercricket stuff, for 10-11 year-olds.
- MD: The parents of children in his and Midi CC's programmes are generally not able to afford equipment, travel and accommodation costs. MM said that he would always expect parental contributions.
- The use of Facebook, blogs, posters and such was discussed, but the attendees did not warm to these ideas....
- The notion of engaging older youngsters in the coaching of their juniors was well received; they will need proper preparation for this, in the shape of accreditation. **A suivre (DB).**
- DB raised the possibility of FC organizing an U18 match at Damazan, making use of the on-site gîtes. Idea received with enthusiasm. **A suivre, with possible date(s) (DB).**

Other points arising:

- DJ raised the possibility of a S-W indoor tournament during the coming close-season. **A suivre (MD).**
- WH: SAC will gear up to make another approach to the Périgueux Foyer.

Age limits & surclassements in 2012

Replying to a question from DJ, it was confirmed that the FFBS has decided to dispense with surclassements as such. The FFBS has renamed the 3-year age brackets for licencing purposes and discussions are now concentrating on the upper and lower age limits for the several championships. It is possible that the lowest of the lower age limits might still be reserved to players already identified as actual or potential Haut Niveau.

FC decisions will be finalized on 19th November (the date of ACCSO's AGM).

WH and DJ both emphasized the importance to their clubs of young players having access to senior competitive matches.

Any Other Business

WH asked MM about the probable format of the Ligue Nationale in 2012.

MM said that the performance of France's international sides in 2011 proved that they lack the necessary experience of the twin international formats of T20 and 50-overs. FC has decided that both the LN and the SL will switch to T20 as from 2012; with a separate 50-over competition being added as from 2013.

The T20 format will include all the trappings: coloured clothing, white ball, black sightscreens, PowerPlay. ACCSO clubs are free to choose whether to participate in the T20 championship.

DB said that France's participation in a World Cricket League (50-over) event in 2013 calls for special attention and a 50-over tournament is being researched. In the event, a team from the S-W would be welcome. In the same vein, MM stated that he would personally welcome the participation of a S-W regional-level team in the full T20 championship of 2011, and then a similar team in 2013's 50-over

championship. AC registered this but noted probable problems of selection, synchronization with club fixture lists, and travel funding. **A suivre.**

Andy Crawford
President of ACCSO
2nd October 2011