

ATIF KAMAL INTERVIEW 2018

Optimists CC, Luxembourg became the first out of towners to win this year's Belgium National T20 Cup held in Antwerp. Former Malahide speedster Atif Kamal played a key role in the success taking 4/13 in 4 overs in the semi against Mechelen CC. And then putting in another economical shift in the final against Antwerp Indians CC

(full report: http://www.optimists.cc/newsstory/newsid_126190/default.aspx)

Atif moved to the Grand Duchy in 2016 where he now lives and works and plays cricket. He has now been capped a number of times for Luxembourg.

He last played for Malahide in 2015. The stats show that the opening bowler from Lahore played 116 times for the Village between 2011-2015, mostly for the seconds - 26 games in total for the firsts: best bowling = 4/20 for the 2nds v N County in 2015; for the firsts 3/15 v Balbriggan and 3/1 v Muckamore, both in 2013. Total wickets = 104. As well as being a fine bowler perhaps his lasting legacy in the Village was his willingness to play - average of 23 games per year is noteworthy.



OPTIMISTS CRICKET CLUB, LUXEMBOURG 2018
b/r: standing: 5th from left - Atif Kamal

FACTS ABOUT OPTIMISTS CC AND CRICKET IN LUXEMBOURG:

1. Optimists CC ("OCC") play in the Belgium League ("BL"). OCC itself is made up of small clubs within Luxembourg. Thus, OCC select the best players from clubs registered within the Luxembourg Cricket Federation ("LCF")
2. OCC began its life when the UK joined the EEC in 1973. Ex pats from the UK arrived for work and so a club was formed in the early 1970's. In the early years OCC used to play friendlies versus Belgium teams including the Royal Brussels CC - the only club in Belgium and Lux to have a proper cricket Pavilion. Also played friendlies v RAF teams located in various parts of Germany.
3. OCC have their own home ground called Pierre Werner Cricket Ground located in north Luxembourg city.
4. OCC have 3 teams, OCC1, OCC2 and OCC friendly side.
5. OCC1 plays in BL Division 2 and OCC 2 played in Division 5 this year. OCC 1 has now won Division 2 for the last 4 years in a row. OCC 2 this year won Division 5 and has now been promoted to Div 4.
6. OCC 1 cannot be promoted to BL Div 1 because under current Belgium sports ministry rules, the premier division of any sport in Belgium, football, rugby, cricket etc must only contain teams residing and registered within Belgium.
7. BL Division 2 has 6 teams - thus 10 league games in total.
8. This year has been called the Quadruple year for OCC, its most successful ever season: OCC 1 won BL Div 2 and the BL National T20 Cup which featured teams from BL Divs 1-4; OCC 2 won BL Div 5.
9. There are several clubs within Luxembourg and they play a 25 over format league. In addition to OCC Atif plays in Luxembourg for WOCC (Walferdange Optimists CC). Other clubs include Heritage CC, Star CC, Warriors CC, Communities CC. Each team has 8 core players and they cannot move within that season from one team to another - the remaining 3 players can be "borrowed". Sometimes games are played with 10 players. Batsman must retire if they score 50 but can return as last man.
10. The average round trip for OCC1 is 600kms. The nearest club in Belgium is 300kms.
11. This year 2018 is the first year when all cricket in the Belgium Leagues was played in coloured clothing and white balls.
12. Professionals are not forbidden in the Belgium League but few if any play in the league.
13. The Luxembourg Cricket Federation is now expanding and a team from the University is expected to enter LCF next year as Lux University has now approved cricket as an official sport.
14. LCF also organises an indoor league

Brian Gilmore