

GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM

There is a lot going on down Grand Duchy way – cricket wise that is.

Although the fixtures have yet to be finalised the men's national team will compete in the Valetta Cup in Malta, home series against Switzerland and in a number of other ICC approved international tournaments/matches during the summer. The pool of players eligible to play for the national team has increased to approximately 50 players due to the increased popularity of the game within the country.

The domestic T20 league has expanded to two Divisions, 1 and 2, with five teams in Division 1 and six teams in Division 2. Some clubs can now field two teams and in the case of Star CC, three teams.

Optimists CC 1sts and 2nds compete in Divisions 2 and 3 of the Belgium League (50 over ODI rules) on a home and away basis.

Star CC having won the domestic Pete Mitchel Cup represented Luxembourg in the recent 2023 T10 European Cricket League in Malaga competing against teams from Rome (Italy), Bucharest (Romania), Zagreb (Croatia) and Sporting Alfas (Spain).

Women's cricket is growing apace and has been transformed over the last 18 months. The ratio of female to male cricketers is one of the highest in Europe. And in September new ground will be broken when for the first time ever Luxembourg Women will play in an ICC recognised international T20 tournament in Corfu featuring teams from Serbia, Romania and Greece. And in another first, an all women's team competed in the 2022/23 Indoor League.

Speaking of Indoor Cricket, there is a vibrant scene during the off season and clearly is a reason for the overall development of the game in Luxembourg. As in the Outdoor League there are two Indoor Divisions, 1 and 2. The governing body (LCF) report on Indoor Cricket on their Facebook page

"2022/23 featured more players than ever (195 of which 16 were women and 12 aged under 17) more teams, more competitions, more excitement, more cricket."



Indoor League action

On the youth front Luxembourg recently hosted Switzerland and Belgium in its first ever International Junior Tournament (Under15). In March, the Under 13 national team travelled to Basel, Switzerland to compete in an indoor tournament.

The over 40's (Griffin CC) venture abroad annually.

Lot going on but there is a problemo!

Which is that effectively there is only one ground in the Grand Duchy namely the Pierre Warner Cricket Ground in Walferdange, Central Luxembourg. And thus, all Outdoor cricket, International, Mens (including Belgium League home fixtures), Womens, Youth and friendlies are played on the mat at Walferdange. During high summer sometimes there are three T20 games featuring six teams played on a weekend day. And the kids will play in the early morning.

Truth is there is a dire need for another ground or two in the Grand Duchy.



Pierre Warner Cricket Ground

Due to the increased profile of cricket in Luxembourg, including exposure on the airwaves of national broadcaster RTL, a number of communes (local authorities) are now looking at the possibility of providing playing facilities. Nothing definite to date but there are grounds for optimism!

Brian Gilmore 2023