



**Note of meeting between France Cricket and ICC Europe,  
heldon Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at France Cricket's office  
4 Quai de la République, Saint Maurice, Paris**

Present:

- ICC Europe: Nick Pink (“**NP**”), Regional Development Manager.
- France Cricket Management Committee:
  - Prebou Balane (“**PB**”), president.
  - Sharkey Jayawardene (“**SJ**”), vice-president.
  - Asif Zahir (“**AZ**”), president of the Selection Committee.
  - Balaji Cardivelou (“**BC**”), vice-president and president of the Events Committee.
  - James Vajoumounien (“**JW**”)
  - Danielle Wielezynski (“**DW**”), president of the Ladies’ Committee.
  - PrethevechandThiyagarajan (“**PT**”), treasurer and president of the Sporting Committee.
  - Michael Selig (“**MS**”), president of the youth committee and coach of the U19 national team.
  - Deva Amirdalingame
  - Apologies from Miriam Romero (president of the Finance Committee), Joseph Oliber (FC Secretary-General), ShravanVilapakkam and Dawi Mariolibouban.
- FC General Manager: Mark Moodley (“**MM**”)
- FC Technical Director: David Bordes (“**DB**”)
- Secretary-General, South-West region: Peter Townsend (“**PTow**”): Note-taker.

The meeting opened at 18:35.

Various documents were made available at the meeting, notably:

- RFS Update & Adjustment
- USEP development program “flyer”
- Street Cricket “flyer”
- FC Projet de Développement 2014-2017
- Sponsorship package around the 8/2014 4-nation U19 tournament
- Details of the MBA tournament 9-11 May 2014.

1. **Prebou Balane** welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked his fellow-members of the Management Committee (Comité Directeur) for making themselves available to receive the visit of ICC Europe in the person of Nick Pink. There would be no formal agenda to follow but PB was sure that his colleagues would make good use of this opportunity to ask questions and to express their concerns and aspirations.

2. **Nick Pink** expressed his pleasure at being able to meet the Management Committee face to face, after several years during which he had become familiar at arm’s length with the





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dynamics of cricket in France. He stressed the role of ICC to support member countries and said that he was present to take note and to give support, rather than to criticise.

3. David Bordes (**DB**) prefaced his remarks with a reminder that France is, geographically, a very large country, and that its governance is quite special.

Quite recently, the national government has deferred previously committed grants and has notably changed tack on modifications to the programme for primary schools, which is of critical interest to FC's USEP programme. This has inevitably extended some of FC's timescales and modified where we will focus our activities; but happily, albeit paradoxically, the USEP programme is still making very good progress.

**NP:** With the USEP programme now 2½ years down the track, what is now the focus?

**DB:** We want to get closer to the schools than we were allowed to before; and we will leverage the English-language aspects of cricket. Plus, we will focus on a pathway into the clubs.

**NP:** How much sustainability does FC see?

**DB:** Need to keep in mind that the USEP organization sees sports on an 8-year horizon/timeframe.

**NP:** And where is FC with the creation of Local Development officers (LDOs)?

**DB:** There are 3 USEP teachers who, nearing retirement age, have expressed a very keen interest in continuing with the programme. These people, and any others of a similar interest, will need to be compensated in some form or another – we could be talking of €50 per person per day..... Specifically, FC should target 10 departments (counties).

In open discussion, DB agreed with **PTow** that the involvement of parents is vital to sustainability and that, over time, the designation by central government of cricket as a High-level ("Haut Niveau") sport is key.

**NP:** What linkage is there between USEP outputs and Street20?

**DB:** UNSS (sports in senior schools) is beginning to open up to us, thanks to our relationship with USEP. The children who "graduate" from USEP and want to continue with cricket in senior school will be our best ambassadors and help convince UNSS from the inside that cricket should feature in senior curricula.

4. Mika Selig (**MS**) provided a commentary to his PowerPoint presentation on Youth Development 2014-2021.

MS presented 3 main axes to the programme for which he is responsible:

1. Create links between the clubs & Street20; between clubs & USEP.
2. Use club youth sections to improve the infrastructure of the clubs themselves capabilities.
3. Institute player pathways for club junior players to reach the national squads.

MS proposes to concentrate in the first instance on the U15 age group, this being a natural fit with Street and easiest to "sell" to the clubs (the age closest to immediate assimilation into the





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playing strength of a club). The medium: U15 Open Days, once-monthly, with clubs being invited to participate.

Pilot clubs will be identified and fully supported by FC. Objectives in the form of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) will be agreed with the participating clubs, monitored and – hopefully- rewarded.

In the first instance, programmes will be Indoor-based, over the winter period, thus causing no conflict with Club summer activities.

Next will be a focus on the U18 age-group, with its natural feed into the national squads.

In all cases the vehicle will be individualized coaching, academy-style. Clearly, participating clubs will need to be skilled up and/or physically supported to execute this.

In the 2021 timeframe (and MS makes no apology for this elapsed time, which all agreed to be realistic) MS envisages some 600 licenced youth players.

He would expect them to be playing in 10-team championships, at each of U12, U15, U18 age levels. For MS, a team is a squad of 16 players, plus 3 qualified coaches.

**NP:** Congratulations on the content and structure of MS' propositions, which NP found highly promising and pragmatic. He saw analogies with the "Master club" concept already instituted in Denmark – which works!

One could say that 600 youth players in 2021 looks on the low side... But perhaps it is a realistic number?

**MS:** The number is based on around 30 participating clubs at period-end, each having a minimum of 16 youth players, but more likely 20. Hence 600.

**PT** observed that many Paris-region clubs already have intensive close-season indoor activities and therefore those clubs which are put up as pilot clubs will already be familiar with the necessary mechanics.

**PTow** informed the meeting that close-season Indoor activities are less widespread in the south-west. The two established indoor tournaments are seen rather as curtain-raisers to the main event – the outdoor season. However, pretty much every club will have access to an indoor facility of some sort.

5. Coaching.

**NP:** How does FC see the development of an appropriately-scaled coaching programme?

**MS:** It's true that historically France has not yet done enough to communicate with and develop its corpus of coaches, of which there are 74 Level 1's.

**PB:** In fact, we have a much better programme for our umpires, with a better visibility of their value.

**DB:** However, there is real evolution in evidence: many of the newer clubs show real signs of wanting to progress and have an awareness that coaching is key

**PB:** It is important to make our targets visible to all: ladies, juniors, umpires - and coaches.





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6. Pathway.

**DB** highlighted the presence of former U15 and U19 players in the current Senior side.

**NP** agreed the paramount importance of role models, the good side of competitiveness. He also agreed that the programming of suitable ICC regional tournaments and other events is an important factor in pathway. However, there will always be the question of financing....

On the question of ladies' tournaments, **NP** spoke of a possible drive towards a second-tier structure; but this is by no means certain and there is no timescale for such a development.

7. Player nationality.

**NP** explained the criteria which enable players of certain nationalities (South African, for example) to appear in certain national sides (Italian, for example). He also gave guidance on the "exceptional circumstances" (education outside home country; parents living in-country; etc.) which can enable certain players to avoid the 183-day rules.

**NP** invited FC to present specific cases for guidance and arbitration.

8. Player selection.

**Asif Zahir (AZ)** opened his contribution by saying that without objectives in place, nothing will improve. And FC's ultimate objective is to play in the World Cup.

**AZ** and his Committee see 2 major obstacles:

1. ICC funding all goes on salaried employees and office expenses, leaving nothing for for High Performance development.
2. France has no national ground, nor even a grass track on which to prepare our national players for international competition.

**NP** explained the reasons for ICC insistence upon salaried employees: in short, it is to ensure focus of attention in-country. He confirmed that the ICC is open-minded about the question of office accommodation and, having visited the FFBS offices, **NP** has no problems with an eventual co-location.

Replying to a specific question from **AZ**, **NP** said that the ICC can support a "skills transfer" session at Dreux for the preparation and installation of a grass track there.

Action by FC: Define the scope of what technical advice is required, with timescale, and submit to **NP**.

9. August 2014 U19 tournament (Paris & Dreux).

**NP** confirmed that he is very supportive of this initiative. He confirmed that the ICC can provide – and fund – 2 international-class umpires, to pair with 2 locals. Alternatively, FC might decide to give experience to 3 locals, with just the 1 ICC umpire. FC need to work this out.

**NP** recommended that FC think about sending additional umpires to the pre-tournament briefing, which will anyway be a good experience for those extra umpires.





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Replying to a specific question from **MS, NP** said that ICC can provide a standard ICC-approved set of regulations for a 50-over tournament.

Action by FC: Decide on whether ICC be asked to provide 1 or 2 umpires and make the request; plus formally request a copy of the regulations.

10. Competitive cricket in-country.

**PretheveThiyagarajan(PT)** explained the hierarchy of the Paris-region competitions: SuperLigue; LigueNationale; LigueRégionale; U19 (male); U15 (males U15 plus ladies of all age groups).

The national league is national in name only (see below); and the regional league is administered by the local FFBS organization, led by former FC president Olivier Dubaut. Alongside these T20-based competitions, in 2014 FC have re-instituted a 40-over format via a nationwide Coupe de France.

Under consideration is a day/night match.

**PT** explained a change of philosophy over the subject of persuading clubs to mobilise junior players. Historically, admission to the SuperLigue was dependent upon clubs entering one or more junior sides into parallel junior leagues. This rarely worked satisfactorily and usually turned into a numbers game only. The new policy is more geared towards encouragement and other forms of incentive. Marketing is much more important. Time will tell.

**PTow** gave an overview of the profiles of the clubs of the south-west region, where the original clubs of mostly Anglo ex-pat origins have learned to adapt to a wider pool of players. Retirees are now far outnumbered by people of working age and below. Several clubs have benefitted from a form of social work in offering playing opportunities to young people in refugee hostels. There are clubs whose playing membership is exposed to changes in industrial policy (Airbus employees and contractors is a prime example): when there are cutbacks, players go away. Until recently, every club had its own ground and this is still the norm. This helps to explain why most clubs are the sort of social club which NP would recognize: after-match relaxation; fund-raising; dinners; etc.

The distance between the clubs is a major logistical and cost concern (on the first day of this season one away side faced a 9-hour round trip by car....).

The geography is one reason why the south-west did not follow FC's lead in moving to T20: nobody is wanting to travel so far for one – or even two – T20 matches. We have stayed with the 40-over format and all our competitions are now separate from those of FC.

South-west participation in FC's Coupe de France may be possible; but our schedules are nailed down by end-December of the prior year, which does not fit with FC's agenda.

Furthermore, we have a long-term local sponsor, whose grant covers the running costs of our 3 competitions and most of the umpiring expenses (the rest are not claimed or are recovered via the government's tax credit scheme). We would not want to jeopardise this relationship.





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Replying to an earlier question by NP, **PTow** confirmed that he definitely wants to see the full “Frenchification” of cricket. Working on the board of the Aquitaine region of the FFBS, PTow sees baseball clubs which are entirely populated by French families; where none of the US-original aspects of the game have been lost or modified; where the traditions are respected; and where the junior leagues are seen as so important that parents and licenced adults are willing to pay a supplement in order to ensure that the juniors continue to have access to league matches and other tournaments. Cricket should surely be targeting to look like that in the future.

11. CricHQ implementation.

**PT** introduced James Vajoumounien, who has led the implementation of CricHQ for the Paris-region competitions. Overall, without major problems, and well received by clubs and players. **NP** emphasised the potential value to coaches of features such as the wagon-wheels. **PTow** explained that the south-west is not yet satisfied about the motivation of the company and will assess at AGM 2014.

12. Ladies' cricket.

**Danielle Wielezynski (DW)**: DW and NP had taken advantage of a moment before the meeting to become acquainted.

**NP** stated that the ICC is setting up a Ladies' cricket development group, ahead of the Berlin tournament in August, where there should be the possibility of evening sessions.

**MM** said that he would like to see smaller countries represented on this body. NP took note.

**NP** confirmed that Scotland and Ireland are willing to contribute to a skills transfer programme. France would need to cover their travel and hotel costs.

**PB** asked if there was any chance of an “exchange programme”. NP invited FC to make a formal request, which could produce the same result as already in place between Essex and Cricket España. Also, French ladies' umpires could receive invitations to stand in English matches.

Action by FC: Put the questions formally to the ICC.

13. Sponsoring.

**Mark Moodley (MM)**: Re-missioned by PB to change the focus of his sponsorship programme, to move away from a search for Institutional sponsors and re-focus on more local enterprises, and for smaller amounts. At the same time, to tie in with specific events, such as the August U19 tournament.

If the new model works out, FC will extend it to other “offerings”: SuperLigue, Ladies' cricket, etc.

Still in the preparatory stages, working up the propositions and defining what exactly the sponsors will get for their money. NP took note.





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14. Equipment.

**NP** advised that the ICC has broadened its base of supplier offerings. The May edition of the ICC Europe Newsletter will announce arrangements with 4 suppliers, who have been invited by ICC to offer the best deals possible to countries. The ICC will derive no income from this new arrangement: the objective is simply to give countries extra choice and the best range of deals.

15. Closing

**NP** advised that a decision is imminent on Division 1 for 2015. Details will be announced shortly; but it is likely to be a Round Robin of 6 teams, with the one top country qualifying for promotion.

**AZ** posed the question to **NP**: You have met us in person and heard from us. Now: what do you think?

**NP** expressed his satisfaction at the scope and outcome of the meeting, which had fully met his own objectives. He emphasised the importance of having a clear vision of where the country is going, which is why he approved the 2021 vision. **NP** urged France to focus on additional revenue sources and also to look carefully – and often – at what other countries are doing: learn from their best practices and avoid their mistakes.

In all circumstances, **NP** urged **FC** to pose questions and ask for guidance.

**PB** formally closed the meeting by thanking **NP** and those present for attending and contributing to a valuable exchange. With a special word of appreciation to **DW** for giving up the evening of her birthday to be present.

The meeting closed at 21h45.

Notes prepared by Peter Townsend.

Approved for publication by Prebou Balane.

May 2014.

