

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Three young Guernsey cricketers have been learning all aspects of the game with their counterparts from Sussex

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Desert trip was no fun in the sun for local trio



The three Guernsey players who joined their Sussex counterparts in Dubai. Left to right: Tom Nightingale, Naim Guilbert and Declan Martel. (Picture by Adrian Miller, 1006910)

THREE of the island's brightest cricket prospects are back on home turf and raring to go for the new cricket season, having learnt a whole lot more about the technical aspects of their game in a week-long trip with Sussex county hopefuls in Dubai.

Tom Nightingale, Declan Martel and Naim Guilbert joined six of the county's best youngsters between the ages of 13 and 15 for a week of tough analysis and coaching under the supervision of senior county coaches Keith Greenfield and Andy Cornford. And while in the emirate, the lads received an unexpected bonus of meeting one of the real legends of the game, the

recently-retired South African all-rounder Jacques Kallis, who was in a training camp ahead of the Indian Premier League.

Tom, the eldest of the trio and 16 next month, said they had all learned a lot.

'It was very good,' he said.

'My technique has improved a lot and also I learned quite a lot about the mental aspect of the game, not just for me, but captaincy for example.'

Tom has had several bows to his game, being a good batsman, seam bowler and wicket-keeper.

But he now sees himself concentrating more on keeping, as well as piling on the runs he hopes.

Declan, 15, is a leg-spinning all-rounder and said he, too, learned a good deal about his batting and bowling techniques.

'My front arm when bowling was one area, and also my batting stance.'

'I also quite enjoyed coaching the younger players.'

Naim, 14, said he 'really enjoyed it'. 'They spotted my stance and it has gone back to what it was a few years ago, which was more upright. It has become a bit wide.'

'Learning about the mental aspect was good too.'

'The general experience was great and meeting Jacques was a highlight.'

Dubai trip highlights

Over the course of the week the boys penned a blog for the Guernsey Cricket Board website. Here are some of the highlights:

Day one

At Gatwick we were greeted by Sussex EPP manager Grubby [Keith Greenfield] and later Pastie [Andy Cornford]. After a long wait we had our first interaction with the Sussex players and after another four hours due to a delayed flight, we boarded the Airbus A380 for Dubai International Airport.

Day two

A quick dip and stretch in the pool before breakfast and the variety of the breakfast options was very much cherished. A short bus journey and then we arrived at the Zayed Cricket Stadium. After the introduction and the nets we had to do a quick presentation on ourselves to get to know the others more.

Day three

A similar start to day two, however, the challenges for today were heavier as the nets got more intense. We relished the challenge and a lot more technical work was put in towards getting down to the nitty-gritty of the game as well as some mental awareness work about decision-making.

Day four

To start the day we had a classroom session talking about being part of a team and how a team functions at its best. We went on to discuss the Sussex values of Selflessness, Honesty, Respect, Enjoyment and Driver. These can be remembered by the acronym SHRED. We then went on to talk about what makes up a good captain and how it is vitally important that he knows everything about his team as much as he knows about himself.

Day five

It started with a classroom session on body language and

temperament. We were shown an example of this in Viv Richards. We went on to talk about emotions and how 80% of communication is body language and how only 20% is verbal. This shows how facial expressions and physique are so vital when playing the game. We then went outside and practised some hitting into the gaps off spin and more netting was completed.

Day six

The fast bowlers were given a rest much to their annoyance. We got a tad of a lie-in and a leisurely swim before we went to the ground. There was more talk about emotions and the best ways of dealing with the mental side of fast bowling and how when you progress up the ranks the game becomes much more of a back foot game. An article from Alec Stewart was read in which he wrote about how the batsmen run the pace of the game, not the bowler.