

HAVING mental strength 'rarely seen in Guernsey cricket' could help propel Tom Nightingale into the senior national team in years to come.

And with the flair that the exciting 15-year-old batsman also possesses, he has been tipped to be a match-winner at senior level in the future, too.

Nightingale is highly-rated within the representative set-up and is a key player in the Guernsey under-17 team, as he has made cricket his number one sport.

The multi-talented lad, who is also strong in swimming and football, has recently returned from Abu Dhabi where he was part of a Sussex development group that flew out for a training camp.

It is all part of the teenager's ongoing development and it is one that excites Guernsey's director of cricket Nic Pothas, who enthuses about some of Nightingale's strengths.

'Tom has the physical and technical characteristics that are needed, but most noticeable is the work ethic and mental strength that he has,' said Pothas.

'Both are assets that can be vital if you want to go a long way in cricket and his character is the one that we are looking to build our national teams around.'

'He works incredibly hard at his cricket and is not afraid of working hard. The support network he has is also incredibly important to his development.'

'The mental strength he has is rare for somebody of that age and even rarer for somebody of that age in Guernsey because too often over here, the sheltered lifestyle doesn't lend itself to mentally strong cricketers.'

'Last year, Tom scored two or three hundreds and whoever it is against or at whatever level, it shows me that he has the character to play big innings.'

'Like I say, that robustness and resilience comes a large part from the support he has and those around him, who support Tom immensely but without putting pressure on him.'

Pothas is also keen to point out that technically, Nightingale also has plenty of the

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assets required to be a success and that, assuming that hard work continues, he can be a fine batter.

One thing that Pothas will also not do is try to change the way that Nightingale plays, saying that those players with flair should maintain it within their game.

'One of the banes of my life is when players have flair coached out of them and are changed to be robotic cricketers, who don't necessarily score runs.'

'Robotic cricketers are easier to bowl to and it is all well and good having a lovely technique, but batting is about scoring runs.'

'If somebody has flair within their game that makes them hard to bowl to, then we should be encouraging them to express it, not try and coach it out of them.'

'It is always tough to predict the future and whether youngsters will go on to make it as top senior national players, so we have to be careful.'

'But if Tom works hard on the areas of his game that need working on, albeit there aren't any glaring ones, then I am confident he will be in the senior Guernsey national set-up within three or four years.'

'With the mental strength he has, as well as that flair, he can be a match-winner.'



Like a lot of talented young sportsmen, Tom has others strings to his bow and is a good swimmer. he is seen here competing in a 400m. freestyle race for Barracudas.

(Picture by Jon Guegan)



Tom Nightingale, the GCB U15 player of the year, batting for his club side, Wanderers, against Cobo.

(Picture by Adrian Miller, 1640684)