

# Age no barrier for Miton's up-and-coming Guilbert

AFTER quite a breakthrough year into senior cricket, Nairn Guilbert has been tipped to keep up his progression for Miton Optimal – and potentially Guernsey – in the years to come.

Guilbert is still only 14, but came of age for the eventual Guernsey champions on more than one occasion throughout the summer, including the league title decider with Cobo.

On that occasion, he held up an end superbly, but still scoring 39 not out from 104 balls, as his captain, Tom Kimber, hit a match-winning 95 at the other end.

It wasn't the first time that the teenager had dug in for his team and Kimber is full of praise for a youngster that he believes are few and far between in that regard.

Indeed, Guilbert hit a classy 63 – also against big rivals Cobo – to help his side to a match-winning total of 215 in their Premier League Cup final at the end of August.

'These days you see so many younger players, and in fact some senior players, that simply don't have the patience to dig in and grind out an innings,' he said.

'Most are willing to block out a few balls and stay there for a bit if it is tough, but then they seem to lose patience and play a "get-out" shot when they are bogged down.

'Nairn isn't like that and he is willing to bat all day for his team if he has to and can adapt to the situations he is faced really, really well, which he has proven.

'Make no mistake, he can play the attacking shots and he has many of them in his armoury to put away poor or average balls, but he is more than willing to battle through tough spells.

'Obviously a big advantage for him for his age is how big he is because, unless you knew, you would probably never believe that he is only 14.

'So this has been an important year for

him, as in the junior ranks he was smashing the ball everywhere and, in truth, he was barely tested.

'Because of that he needed to be playing senior cricket to develop his game and, to be honest, at the start of the season I was only expecting to play him here and there because we have a strong team.

'But he has come in and taken his chance with both hands, to such an extent that he is a key member of the side that won the league and played some important innings.

'You only had to look at the way he played in that game against Cobo, where he looked in control, even when Will Jenkins was steaming in from one end for them.

'It was a brilliant effort and I could play my own game with confidence, assured that he would be fine.'

Back in his under-13 days, Guilbert showed even then just what ability and potential he had with a stunning century for Elizabeth College against fierce rivals Victoria.

In that inter-collegiate match, he smashed his way past 150 to help his school to a comprehensive win against their Jersey counterparts.

On to the future and Kimber believes that Guilbert has everything it takes to be a senior island representative player in the years to come.

'I don't see any reason at all why not because Nairn is willing to learn and is developing his game all of the time, so he has plenty of years ahead still to learn.

'In terms of where I think he could and will play, he could perhaps play as an opener but personally, I see him more as a No. 3 or No. 4 in a batting order.

'He can adapt to a situation and play at the right pace to suit a game accordingly, so he would be a valuable asset somewhere in any team's top four.'



Nairn Guilbert during the Swoffers Premier Cup Final.

(6040290)

## Halftime Talk

This week cricketer **Nairn Guilbert** answers our questionnaire...

**Name:** Nairn Guilbert

**Age:** 14

**Nickname:** Unit

**School:** Elizabeth College

**Brothers or sisters:** One of each

**What would you like to be in adult life:** To be involved in professional sport

**Favourite TV show:** A League Of Their Own

**Favourite music:** Anything really

**Favourite film:**

**Favourite food:** Steak

**Favourite teacher:** Mr Brown

**Sports:** Cricket, hockey

**Positions:** Batter (cricket), centre-back (hockey)

**Clubs:** Miton Optimal (cricket), Yobbos (hockey)

**Best friends in sport:** Dan Martin and Will Thompson

**Sporting hero:** Muhammed Ali

**Sporting hero locally:** Lee Merrien

**Local sportsperson to watch out for:** Ant Stokes

**Least favourite professional sportsperson:** Luis Suarez

**Favourite local coaches:** Andy Good and Nic Pothas

**Favourite local sports arena:** College Field  
**Sporting highlights:** Scoring 185 not out for College against Victoria in the under-13s last year and then beating them home and away with the first XI this year

**Sporting lowlight:** Losing this year's 'Upton' with Miton Optimal

**Sports ambition:** To play professional cricket  
**Funniest moment in sport:** Playing cricket with Josh Watson

**What would you like done sport on the island:** More boys involved with UK sport, travelling away more often to face better opposition

**Teams supported:** Hampshire Cricket