



The Academy of Learning

The A.O.L has been explicitly established by the Chairman to provide Young Cricketers and those seeking to repent with Knowledge, Purer Thought and Guidance.

The Chairman's stoic endeavour to halt the Decline in Moral Standards requires sustained vigilance and therefore the Academy of Learning will be continually fortified with invigorating and sometimes contemporary essays.

Young Cricketers are required to return to the Academy routinely.

What do they know of cricket who only know of cricket? - C L R James

World History Lesson No 1.

"The Unwritten History of the United States of America."

- By The Chairman

Cricket was once the national game of the United States. And one of the first outdoor sports to be played on American shores. An 1844 cricket match between teams from the United States and Canada was the first international sporting event in the modern world, predating the revival of the Olympic Games by more than 50 years.

In a diary he kept between 1709 and 1712, William Byrd, owner of the Virginia plantation Westover, noted, "I rose at 6 o'clock and read a chapter in Hebrew. About 10 o'clock Dr. Blair, and Major and Captain Harrison came to see us. After I had given them a glass of sack we played cricket. I ate boiled beef for my dinner. Then we played at shooting with arrows...and went to cricket again till dark."

The first public report of a cricket match in North America was in 1751, when the New York Gazette and the Weekly Post Boy carried an account of a match between a London eleven and one from New York City. The latter side won, though it is almost certain that both teams comprised residents of New York.

The rules of the game in America were formalised in 1754, when Benjamin Franklin brought back from England, a copy of the 1744 Laws, cricket's official rule book.

There is anecdotal evidence that George Washington's troops played what they called "wickets" at Valley Forge in the summer of 1778.

After the Revolution, a 1786 advertisement for cricket equipment appeared in the New York Independent Journal, and newspaper reports of that time frequently mention "young gentlemen" and "men of fashion" taking up the sport.

Indeed, the game came up in the debate over what to call the new nation's head of state: John Adams noted disapprovingly - and futilely - that "there are presidents of fire companies and cricket clubs."

Abe Lincoln reportedly turned out to watch Chicago play Milwaukee in 1849. By then, an estimated 10,000 Americans were playing the game and many more were watching.

In 1878, some 15,000 people in Philadelphia watched a local eleven hold the Australians, already emerging as a cricketing powerhouse, to a draw.

Fifteen years later, Philadelphia - then, as now, the crucible of North American cricket - beat the Aussies. "In its heyday, Philadelphia had more than 100 cricket clubs," says John Douglas, acting director of athletics at Pennsylvania's Haverford College, the only U.S. college or university that still has a varsity cricket team. "Every neighbourhood in Philadelphia had a cricket team, and all the teams supplied players for the famous Gentlemen of Philadelphia who toured England in the 19th century."

The greatest American cricketer, a witty but tough Philadelphian named J. Barton King, was one of the fastest bowlers of his generation, and on a 1908 tour of England he set bowling records that stood for more than 40 years.

The British themselves may have provided the coup de grace for cricket in the United States when, in 1909, the Imperial Cricket Conference was founded to govern the game. One of its first acts was to restrict international competition to "Members of the British Empire".

Primarily, this decision was made to exclude the United States of America and the influence of the unsightly, uncultured and ill-mannered baseball-like strokes were having on the game. These gentlemen made it their business to stamp their approval or disapproval on the various strokes available to the batsman. They came down heavily on the 'hook' and the 'pull', indeed any stroke that savoured of the baseball batter's cross-the-body swing.

The 'straight bat', aimed towards the off, was enshrined as the epitome of style and even as the "Hallmark of Moral Rectitude". "Young batsmen should not be allowed to practice the stroke; indeed they should be severely reprimanded if they show any tendency towards pulling!" Dr W.G. Grace wrote in his book of Reminiscences.

England didn't abandon her efforts to turn back the tide of baseball in the US. In late August 1872, for instance, the Secretary of the MCC himself a Mr RA Fitzgerald, led a touring party to Canada and the US with WG Grace was ridiculed for making the same speech at every port of call: "Gentlemen, I thank you for the honour you have done me. I have never tasted better oysters than I have tasted here today, and I hope I shall get as good wherever I go."

Then the team got into double trouble - first from the Philadelphians for rushing off to catch the train to Boston and from the Bostonians for missing the train and arriving a day late, too late to play a crucial match with influential Harvard.

The remaining Boston match was played, significantly, on a baseball ground which heavy rain, of the god of baseball, soon turned into a quagmire. A delicate hint was dropped by a local sports hero when he presented each member of the England team with a baseball, a gift dismissed by Grace in his memoirs as 'an interesting relic'.

The hardships involved in travelling back to Canada may have helped to decide WG not to tour the New World again. "As we passed through Maine we came under the veto of the famous Prohibition Laws and had the curious experience of being absolutely unable to get, for love or money, anything stronger by way of refreshment than thick soup washed down by tea!"

In 1965, the ICC changed 'Imperial' in its name to 'International'.

One can only ponder what the face of cricket might look like today had not the Imperial Cricket Council not been so short sighted.

World History

Lesson No 2.

"The Unwritten History of the United States of America"

- By The Chairman

His name was John Barton King, and he was seen by many critics, including Sir Donald Bradman, as the greatest bowler in the world, and the greatest of his generation.

The astounding thing was that he was not an Englishman, nor an Australian or South African. He was not even a New Zealander, for that matter.

He was an American.

The story of the first ever test match in 1877 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground between the touring England team and the Australian eleven is well known. However, what is not so commonly known is the fact that the first ever international game between two countries took place at New York in 1844 between the USA and Canada.

Cricket thrived within Philadelphia, which became the centre of game within the country from the 1890's through to the First World War. The USA, or perhaps more correctly, the Philadelphian Gentleman, undertook five tours of England and played tour games against most of the first class county teams. They recorded victories over many sides, including a number of defeats for Australian teams who played against them during their return from tours of England. Much of their success during this period can be traced back to one man, John Barton King.

John Barton King, or 'Bart' King as he became known, was born on the 19th of October, 1873. As with most of the children his age, Bart grew up playing the American national game of baseball in his home town of Philadelphia. He did not start playing cricket seriously until he was fifteen. He joined the Tioga Cricket Club, which was one of the major clubs within Philadelphia. The first recorded game that Bart played in was for the Tioga Juniors on 27th June, 1889. Throughout this season, Bart took 37 wickets for a total of 99 runs, a very clear sign of his potential.

He started off as a batsman, but the club quickly pushed him into bowling as even at age fifteen he was strongly built and over six foot in height. At this stage he primarily bowled just above medium pace, however over the next three years for Tioga Juniors he gradually built up his speed until he was considered to be genuinely fast.

The secret to Bart's bowling success can be largely traced to his ability to swing the ball in both directions. Whilst he was rated by his contemporaries as one of the first truly fast bowlers, his most dangerous ball was an inswinger. He referred to it as his 'angler' and he only used it rarely as he felt that the less batsmen saw it, the less chance there was for them to get used to it. His normal ball was an outswinger, but he commented that this merely increased the danger of his inswinger.

One of the first athletes to take his physical conditions seriously, King developed special exercises to strengthen his wrist and fingers, and he analysed his technique with scientific acumen. In his memoir, *The Angler and How I Bowled It*, King writes, "Pitchers were beginning to learn to throw what is called the 'hook,' that is, a ball that travels with very little curve until the last ten or twelve feet.... I began to experiment in order to develop the same kind of ball in cricket."

The unique component of his action was that in the final strides of his run, he held the ball above his head in both hands, much in the manner of baseball pitcher. In spite of this, there were never any claims that he threw, unlike other fast bowlers of the day, and he was renowned for his very high and pure action.

Bart's career for Tioga continued until 1896, when the club disbanded. He then joined another major Philadelphia club Belmont, before he finally finished with the Philadelphia Cricket Club in 1916 after the Belmont club was dissolved in 1913. During this extended playing career in the USA, Bart took a total of 2,088 wickets at an average of 10.47. In addition to this, he also scored 19,808 runs at a very good average of 36.47.

His score of 344 for Belmont in a Halifax Cup game against Merion in 1906 is still considered to be a record score within North American cricket. It would appear from anecdotal evidence that the standard of Philadelphian cricket was at least the level of minor country cricket in England at the time, and therefore his record stands as one of merit.

Ignoring all arguments surrounding the relative strength of cricket in the USA during this period, it is Bart's performances in international games that remains the outstanding aspect of his career. He was first selected to play in an international match in 1892 for the Gentlemen of Philadelphia against the Gentlemen of Ireland during his initial season in the senior ranks with Tioga. Still only eighteen years old, Bart took 19 wickets at an average of 13.53 in the three game series.

Following this success, he was selected for the USA in their annual match against Canada, and he responded by taking 3 for 6 and 2 for 15 in the USA's win.

The following year saw the Australian team play a series of games against the Philadelphian Gentlemen on their way home from England. It had been a long and arduous tour, and unwisely Australia agreed to play the Gentlemen on the day following the

conclusion of their rough crossing of the Atlantic. Winning the toss, the Gentlemen smashed an impressive total of 525. Bart batted at no. 11, but he scored a very quick 36 to help the Gentlemen to top the 500 mark. The Australian team was very rusty, dropping numerous catches and misfielding regularly. The game was to go from bad to worse for the tourists however, as Bart ran through the Australian top order to take 5 for 78. Australia were bowled out for 199, and then shot out again for 258 after being forced to follow on. Australia had been beaten by an innings and 68 runs by the Philadelphian Gentlemen, with a nineteen year old Bart playing a pivotal role in the victory. Whilst Australia won the return game by six wickets, Bart had been noticed and his fame was starting to spread.

Bart toured England for the first time with the Philadelphian Gentlemen in 1897. This was the first major tour of England planned by an American team. It was to last two months, and was composed of fifteen first class games against country teams. The highlight of the tour was the game against the full-strength Sussex side. The Philadelphian Gentlemen batted first and totaled 216, thanks largely to a 106 run partnership between the team's best batsman, John Lester and Bart, who made 58. The Sussex innings started off with Bart opening the bowling with a wind blowing over his left shoulder. This made his 'angler' deadly, and in less than an hour, Sussex were bowled out for 46. Bart took 7 for 13, including the prized wicket of Ranji clean bowled first ball. Sussex followed on with 252, with Ranji redeeming himself with 74. Bart's figures in the second innings was 5 for 102, giving him twelve wickets for the match, which the Gentlemen went on to win by eight wickets. In all first class games on the tour, Bart took 72 wickets at an average of 24.20 and scored 441 runs at an average of 20.1. He received many offers to play county cricket, however he chose to return home instead.

International games were few and far between back in the late 1890's and early 1900's, as a consequence of the distances between countries. Bart's next major performance was in 1901 against a touring English team led by the famous spinner B.J.T. Bosanquet. Bart took 23 wickets in the two games, including a best of 8 for 78, at an average of 10.3. His ability to swing the ball late, combined with his express pace, simply proved too much for the tourists to cope with. His place as the pre-eminent Philadelphian, and by default, United States cricketer had been established by now, and he continues unchallenged in this role until his retirement.

Bart toured England again with the Gentlemen of Philadelphia on 1903. There were 16 first class games between the Gentlemen and the high county teams. Bart took 93 wickets at an average of 14.91, and scored 653 runs at an average of 28.89. The two highlights of this tour were defeats of Surrey at the Oval and Lancashire at Old Trafford. As with any win by the Philadelphian Gentlemen, Bart's performances were central to both of these victories. Against Surrey Bart took 3 for 89 and 3 for 98 in the game, but his batting was the highlight for once. He scored 98 in the first innings before unfortunately being run out, however he followed this up in the second innings with his highest first class score of 113 not out. His bowling was again to the fore against Lancashire, taking 5 for 46 and 9 for 62. His chance of taking all ten wickets in the second innings was ruined by a run-out. In all the Gentlemen won seven games, lost six with the other three games drawn.

Once again, Bart's first class career came to a standstill, with no first class games for the next five years. He continued to play inter-club cricket for these years, reigning supreme with both bat and ball. He won the Batting Cup three times and the Bowling Cup four times between 1904 and 1908, revealing his dominance of his local competition. The absence of tours did allow Bart to concentrate upon games against the United States near neighbour, even though these games were not deemed to be of first class standard. He played eleven times for the USA against Canada from his debut in 1892. His performances were pivotal in the USA rarely being challenged in these games.

Bart toured England for the third and final time in 1908 with the Gentlemen. Despite being in his mid-thirties by this stage, Bart produced his best bowling performances in English condition. He took 87 wickets in only ten first class games at an average of only 11.01. This average was the best performance by any bowler in the summer, was better than any average for the previous fifteen years, and then was not matched for another forty years. Bart by this stage was balding, but still in magnificent physical condition. At six foot one and 178 pounds, Bart had long and loose arms, a powerful torso with strong shoulders and wrists. His team mate from the Philadelphia Gentlemen John Lester said that of Bart that "nature endowed this man completely with the physical equipment that a fast bowler covets". Bart's batting had dropped off a little by this stage, but he still managed to score 290 runs in the ten games, at an average of 16.11.

Bart King was regarded by many of his contemporaries as an affable person. The well-known English writer, Ralph Barker, called him the Bob Hope of cricket thanks to his quips and stories. King was also noted for making jabs at opponents, but leaving them laughing at themselves. The same held true when he would question umpires that turned down his appeals. He is said to have spoken for ninety minutes at a dinner during his last tour to England, punctuated every few seconds with laughs. The dinner guests were kept laughing even while King spoke with a dead-pan expression. One man who attended the dinner noted that King "told his impossible tales with such an air of conviction...that his audiences were always in doubt when to take him seriously. He made their task doubly difficult by sprinkling in a fair mixture of truth with fiction."

Bart's first class career was drawing towards a close following the 1908 tour of England, however he still had a few world class performances left. Playing against the Gentlemen of Ireland in 1909, Bart performed the amazing effort of bowling all eleven batsmen (G.A. Morrow was bowled off a no-ball and remained not out at the conclusion of the innings). This was one of three occasions that he took all ten wickets in the innings, however it was probably against the best opposition.

The last two international matches that Bart played in were against the much weakened 1912 Australian test team. In spite of the fact that he was approaching 40, Bart took match figures of 9 for 78 in the Philadelphian Gentlemen's victory by two runs in the first game, and 8 for 74 in the second game that Australia won by forty five runs.

For a golden period from the mid 1890's until the First World War, the Philadelphian Gentlemen were able to put forward a representative team that could match many of the best sides around the world.

Outside of cricket, Bart's first source of income was with his father in the linen trade. Later on, he worked as an insurance agent, a job that was supposedly obtained for him by members of a Philadelphian family who wished him to continue playing cricket. He married in 1913 to Miss Lockhart; a happy union that was to last over fifty years.

John Barton King was elected as an honorary life member of the MCC in 1962, and died on the 17th of October, 1965 just 2 days short of his 92nd birthday.

He remains the greatest of all American cricketers, and indeed the only player from the USA to ever be considered to be the best of his craft in the world.

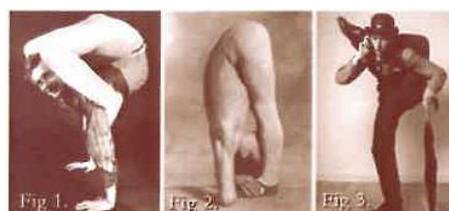
Career Statistics. As Bart was born in the United States he was not able to take part in test matches. His first class record is therefore composed of games primarily against touring international teams such as Australia, and matches against counties on the three Philadelphian tours of England. Bart played 65 First Class Games from 1893 to 1912.

Bowling Figures. Bart took 415 wickets at an average of 15.66. His best bowling figures were 10-53. He took five wickets in an innings 38 times, and ten wickets in a match 11 times.

Batting Figures. Bart scored 2134 runs in 114 innings at an average of 20.51. He scored one century, eight fifties and took sixty seven catches. His highest score of 113 not out.

Fitness Corner:

Introductory lesson F452



This is a special warning to all keen, young cricketers.

Today, there are too many fitness instructors employing modern techniques entirely unsuited to the top level demands of today's cricketing athletes.

Fig. 1, Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 (ABOVE) are all very good examples of what has happened to some aspiring young cricketers when these techniques have been foolishly applied.

The Chairman has formally requested that in light of these recent occurrences all Members be reminded that the only exercise required to stay in tip-top shape is a brisk walk, followed by a cold shower.

Cricket Hints & Tips: Setting the field

By Lord Blimp of Ventnor; author of "Blimp's Balls for School-Boy Cricketers," etc.

It is commonplace, among the Young School-Boy Cricketers in whose physical development I take a close personal interest, to regard Batsmen and Bowlers as the True Heroes of the Cricket Pitch.

The truth is, however, that however great a degree of Strength, Skill or Physical Attractiveness may be possessed by the fine strong Fellows who, clad in all the Vigour and Beauty of Young Manhood, do battle across the Wicket with Bat and Ball, the success of any Cricket Match is ultimately entirely dependent upon what I like to call "The Three 'F's": Field, Fielders and Fielding.

To this can be added a "Fourth 'F'": Free Movement of the Thighs. However, it is with the first three of what has now become "The Four 'F's" that we are presently concerned.



The Field is our field to-day. The Cricket Field is not just a Field; truly it is a Field of Battle, and in its own right a means of both Attack and Defence.

To quote that distinguished Soldier and talented Amateur Cricketer, the late Field-Marshal Fielding, "To field is to wield the field and the field is a shield to wield."

Visual Instruction for Manoeuvres on the field

*A smile of good humoured derision
As he waits for the first to come down.*

*A statue from Thebes or from Knossos,
A Hercules shrouded in white,
Assyrian bull-like colossus,
He stands in his might.*

*With the beard of a Goth or a Vandal,
His bat hanging ready and free,
His great hairy hands on the handle,
And his menacing eyes upon me.*

*And I - I had tricks for the rabbits,
The feeble of mind or eye,
I could see all the duffer's bad habits
And where his ruin might lie.*

*The capture of such might elate one,
But it seemed like one horrible jest
That I should serve tosh to the great one,
Who had broken the hearts of the best.*

*Well, here goes! Good Lord, what a rotter!
Such a sitter as never was dreamt;
It was clay in the hands of the potter,
But he tapped it with quiet contempt.*

*The second was better - a leetle;
It was low, but was nearly long-hop;
As the housemaid comes down on the beetle
So down came the bat with a chop.*

*He was sizing me up with some wonder,
My broken-kneed action and ways;
I could see the grim menace from under
The striped peak that shaded his gaze.*

*The third was a gift or it looked it-
A foot off the wicket or so;
His huge figure swooped as he hooked it,
His great body swung to the blow.*

*Still when my dreams are night-marish,
I picture that terrible smite,*

*It was meant for a neighbouring parish,
Or any place out of sight.*

*But - yes, there's a but to the story -
The blade swished a trifle too low;
Oh wonder, and vision of glory!
It was up like a shaft from a bow.*

*Up, up like a towering game bird,
Up, up to a speck in the blue,
And then coming down like the same bird,
Dead straight on the line that it flew.*

*Good Lord, it was mine! Such a soarer
Would call for a safe pair of hands;
None safer than Derbyshire Storer,
And there, face uplifted, he stands.*

*Wicket keep Storer, the knowing,
Wary and steady of nerve,
Watching it falling and growing
Marking the pace and curve.*

*I stood with my two eyes fixed on it,
Paralysed, helpless, inert;
There was 'plunk' as the gloves shut upon it,
And he cuddled it up to his shirt.*

*Out - beyond question or wrangle!
Homeward he lurched to his lunch!
His bat was tucked up at an angle,
His great shoulders curved to a hunch.*

*Walking he rumbled and grumbled,
Scolding himself and not me;
One glove was off, and he fumbled,
Twisting the other hand free
Did I give Storer the credit*

*The thanks he so splendidly earned?
It was mere empty talk if I said it,
For Grace had already returned.*