

## No grassroots but lots of scaffold: a peek inside New York's cricket scene

### Level 3: Advanced

#### 1 Warmer

a. Match the sports with the countries in which they originated.

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. water polo | a. Canada    |
| 2. cricket    | b. USA       |
| 3. ice hockey | c. China     |
| 4. polo       | d. Scotland  |
| 5. kayaking   | e. England   |
| 6. triathlon  | f. Greenland |

#### 2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.



1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is an expensive flat at the top of a tall building in a fashionable area of a city.
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ is the way that a particular group of things is organised.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is income from business activities.
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a large group of people who come from a particular place and now live in different parts of the world.
5. If something is described as 'on \_\_\_\_\_', it is bigger, faster, stronger and more successful than something else.
6. A \_\_\_\_\_ is everything you can see behind the main thing you are looking at.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a flat area of ground for playing a particular sport on.
8. If something is described as \_\_\_\_\_, it is very bad.
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ sport is an amateur sport in which participants are not compensated for their participation.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ consists of the poles and board used to make the structure that people stand on when they work on the outside of a building.

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#### b. Use the words from task A to complete the following sentences.

1. The match was postponed because the \_\_\_\_\_ was in terrible condition after the heavy rains.
2. Professional sports teams' \_\_\_\_\_ consists of ticket and merchandise sales, broadcasting rights, and sponsorships.
3. She bought a \_\_\_\_\_ in one of the most exclusive buildings in the city.
4. The main objectives of \_\_\_\_\_ football are fun and camaraderie, instead of making money.
5. I have a very nice entertainment \_\_\_\_\_ at home; I've got an 80" TV, a gaming console, and a 7.1 channel audio system.

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*India and Pakistan – 'like the Super Bowl on steroids' – played each other in the T20 World Cup but most locals haven't a clue*

**Andy Bull**

**5 June, 2024**

- 1 Thirty million does not go as far as you might hope in Manhattan, where it will just about buy a single penthouse. But out on Long Island, where the International Cricket Council has spent its money, it has bought two weeks' exclusive use of all 1,000 acres of Eisenhower Park. It is an impressive set-up, especially given that it was built in six months. But then this is the city where they managed to build the Empire State Building in a year and 45 days.
- 2 The only trouble is that the ICC is not just paying for facilities; it is trying to buy America's attention too. It wants to develop new markets. Right now, 85% of its revenue comes from India, and it has identified the US as the one to go for – which makes sense. It already has an audience here among the South Asian diaspora, but as big as that group is, it is still only 5.5 million people, and they are scattered across an entire continent.
- 3 Overall, the US TV sports rights market is more than ten times the size of India's, but if the ICC is going to get a piece of it, it needs to prove cricket is not just for immigrants, which is where the big set-piece game between India and Pakistan comes in. "We had no idea what to expect," Ryder said, "but we're told it's like the Super Bowl on steroids." It is supposed to be the show that makes the locals sit up and take notice.
- 4 They have not noticed yet, but the odd thing is that all this focus on winning over the people who don't know much about the game means they seem to have overlooked some of the ones who already do. Most of the games are being played at 10:30 a.m. on weekdays because, as ever with ICC events, the desire to serve the local audience is second to the need to keep Indian TV companies happy—even if it means there are empty seats in the stadiums.
- 5 If the USA is going to be anything more than a backdrop for Indian TV, what cricket here really needs is infrastructure and facilities. Even the Chair of USA Cricket, Venu Pisike, described his job to me as "doing the best I can with the little resources and funding available". The Nassau County ground may not have permanent seats, but the other venues in New York, in the Bronx, do not even have pitches that are up to standard. In the beginning, the temporary stadium was supposed to be there too, until the local players pointed out that, if it were, they would not have anywhere to play this season.
- 6 "The first thing they need to do is create one good cricket field," one local club player told me. "Even one on a par with even the worst cricket field in London. You could play for the crappiest club in London, and your field is better than the best one we have in New York. We just need any kind of facility where people can practise, but there's no investment at all at a grassroots level." What they have got instead is \$30m of scaffolding and a promise from the ICC that, when it is all gone and the show has moved on, there will be a field left behind in Eisenhower Park.
- 7 Major League Cricket managed to develop its ground in Grand Prairie, which is also hosting games in this tournament, for \$21m. They are already developing plans for permanent venues in each of their existing host cities. The New York team hope to build theirs in Marine Park in south Brooklyn. You wonder whether cricket would not have got a lot more for its money by collaborating on a project like that. As it is, any New Yorkers who are converted to the sport during the World Cup are going to have to travel out of state to watch another game once the tournament is over.
- 8 Still, this is a grand project, and the one thing on which everyone involved in it agrees is that it is going to take a lot of time to get right. MLC is already expanding, and its investors say its success should be measured over decades. The ICC, too, is treating this tournament as a launch. It is only supposed to be the pop of the cork. The big question is how many people here want what they are pouring.

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#### 3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. How long did it take to build the cricket stadium on Long Island, New York?
2. What is the ICC's main intention in organising matches in the USA?
3. What audience for cricket is there already in the USA?
4. Where does most of the ICC's revenue come from?
5. How many South Asians live in the USA?
6. How does the Indian sports rights market compare with the American one?
7. Why are the matches being played at 10.30 in the morning?
8. According to the author, what does US cricket need most?
9. What does New York need most, according to one club cricket player?
10. What will New Yorkers have to do if they want to watch cricket after the World Cup has finished?

#### 4 Key language

a. Match the phrases from the text with their meanings.

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. on a par with          | a. pay attention to something               |
| 2. pop the cork           | b. the main target                          |
| 3. the one to go for      | c. the performance is over                  |
| 4. sit up and take notice | d. of the same quality or at the same level |
| 5. the show has moved on  | e. the moment of celebration                |

b. Complete the sentences using the expressions from task A.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ came after the winner was announced, officially kicking off the celebration.
2. If you're looking for a reliable car, the new Toyota model is definitely \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Although it is not \_\_\_\_\_ the football World Cup, the cricket World Cup is very big in some countries.
4. Even though the original cast was beloved, \_\_\_\_\_ with new characters and storylines.
5. The popularity of the India v Pakistan game really made people \_\_\_\_\_.

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#### 5 Discussion

**a. Discuss these statements.**

- "American sport is different from sport in the rest of the world."
- "There is too much sport on TV. Who needs another sport?"
- "You can't understand a sport unless you have played it yourself."

#### 6 In your own words

**a. Use an internet search engine to find information about three sports not mentioned in the warmer (task 1). Find out where and when they originated and how popular they are today.**

**b. Report your findings to the class.**