

History of DHS Old Boys Cricket Club - 1967 to present

By Grayson Heath

The Cricket Section of the DHS Old Boys Club remains the oldest and most enduring of the Club's sporting sections – oldest because it was formed when the Club first opened and it remains in action today, alongside the Running Section, as the DHS Rhythm Cricket Club based at the Old Boys Club. The Cricket Section's transformation from a section of the Old Boys Club closed to all but old boys of DHS to the present DHS Rhythm is probably a microcosm of the changing country in which we live.

In the late 1960's the Old Boys Club was opened to cater for 'selected' members that would strengthen the sporting sections and over time the economic benefits of accepting all and sundry as members became a reality and the stage was set for the Cricket Section to respond to the changing economic and social times and thus ensured its survival.

Not surprisingly, since DHS is probably the greatest cricketing school in the world, Old Boys cricket has always been strong and were perennial contenders for the League Title through to the late 1990's with players like Barry Richards, Vince van der Bijl, Dale Benkenstein, Chris Wilkins, Darryl Scott, Neil Harvey, Dave Orchard, Kenny Cooper, Ian Tayfield, Bomber Warman, Kevin Robinson, Kurt Donaldson, Geoff Griffin, Pat Schultz, Peter Dodds, Dennis Gamsy, Colin Wesley, Richard Dumbrill, Barry Moody, Grayson Heath gracing the team over the years amongst a host of other fine players ensuring their constant competitiveness for league honours.

In the late 1990's the Old Boys Club started to feel the economic pinch affecting most sporting clubs and cricket inherited the responsibility of maintaining the ground and preparing the wicket – tasks for which it was ill equipped having always relied on the Club to prepare for matches. This along with a couple of coincidental player factors led to the unraveling of the cricket section management and the imminent demise of Old Boys cricket.

When Grayson Heath, the then chairman of Pirates Kismet Cricket Club heard the news he, as a concerned Old Boy, arranged a merger which in effect became a takeover and the cricket section now became the DHS Pirates Kismet Cricket Club usually referred to as DHSPK. The club now became a truly multiracial entity providing an avenue to the first class game for the likes of Ashraf Mall, Wade Wingfield, Hashim Amla, Ahmed Amla, Imran Khan, Ross Veenstra, Gary Gilder, Andrew Tweedie, Sean Adam and Russell Symcox.

The management team, with Mohammed Timol at the forefront, transformed the Old Boys ground from knee high grass and sightscreens that had been crumpled by the wind and neglect, into a lush outfield with the grass cut into circular striping and sightscreens that rivaled Kingsmead. This of course could never have been achieved were it not for another concerned Old Boy, Howard Buttery, whose generosity enabled the club to employ a full time groundsman and to acquire the expensive equipment to prepare a pitch and outfield that was good enough to host a couple of First Class fixtures for the KZN B team at the turn of the century.

DHSPK had a sizeable Muslim membership who, for obvious reasons, did not make use of the Club facilities. To remedy this and to strengthen the first team, Grayson arranged a merger in 2004 with a local well run Challenge League club, the Rhythm Cricket Club and the final metamorphosis of the original Cricket Section was complete in the form of the present day DHS Rhythm Cricket Club. They will continue to call DHSOB home until the developer takes over in 2016 when Danfield Park will become the Club's new home.