

# Exploring cricket development in the North-West Province

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## **ABSTRACT**

Developing cricket in the South African landscape is a unique opportunity and challenge. The North-West province falls under Cricket South Africa's mandate. To develop cricket in South Africa, certain transformation targets need to be met, and financial struggles need to be overcome. The primary objective of this study was to assess the development of cricket in the North-West with an in-depth investigation, by means of a literature survey as well as an empirical study. The main aim was to obtain a better understanding of how to develop cricket within South Africa and in the North-West province specifically. Specific reference in the literature study was made to CSA's mandated development of batsmen and bowlers in the North-West province and to cricket development structures in Australia. Talent identification, with specific reference to talent identification within the North-West province, was also referenced. These are some challenges facing cricket administrators in the North-West province.

The research methodology assumed the form of a qualitative study. Semi-structured interviews were scheduled on the Zoom platform. Interviews were conducted with specific professional cricketers all plying their trade or who used to ply their trade in the North-West province. Due to the exploratory nature of a semi-structured interview response, respondents could give their own opinions and be allowed to give valuable insights into the development of cricket in the North-West province. It was concluded that 10 main factors play a critical part in the development of cricket in the North-West province. The factors are present in the current structure, to some extent. The respondents did indicate that an improvement or better utilisation of the elements is needed. The elements of the North-West structure players identified as the most important are mental processes, quality coaching, communication and planning, the North-West University, opportunity/ quality of opportunity, Discipline/dedication, transformation schooling infrastructure and bottleneck after school.

Practical recommendations were made to further develop maintain and improve these elements in young cricketers' lives. An identified action plan was designed to implement and further develop the cricket structures within the North West Province.

It was further derived the overwhelming majority of players within the North West Province are satisfied by the elements provided to them, they do feel they can improve,

but they do not feel that they are not provided with the necessary tools to make it as professional cricketers

The major barriers found in the structure were identified with the transformation system being the primary one. The study found that the basic needs of the players were being met, but individual needs were not.

**Keywords:**

Cricket development, North West Province, talent identification, Cricket South Africa, Dragons, transformation in cricket, action plan, mental health, coaching, high performance

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CSA Cricket South Africa – The organisation that is responsible for governing cricket in South Africa.

NWC North-West Cricket – The governing body of cricket within the North-West province.

POC Players of colour – Players that are not deemed ethnically white.

BLM Black lives matter

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (HEADING 0)

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>IV</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>V</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY (CHAPTER)</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Background of the study</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.3 Key concepts</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1.3.1.1 Semi-professional/Amateur .....	2
1.3.1.2 Franchise.....	2
1.3.1.3 Cricket South Africa (CSA) .....	3
1.3.1.4 North-West Cricket (NWC) .....	3
<b>1.4 Problem Statement</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.5 Objectives of the research</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.5.1 Primary objectives .....	3
1.5.2 Secondary objectives .....	3
<b>1.6 Scope of the study</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.6.1 Field of the study .....	4
1.6.2 Sector to be investigated .....	4
1.6.3 Geographical demarcation .....	5
<b>1.7 Research methodology</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1.7.1 Literature study .....	5
1.7.2 Empirical investigation.....	5
1.7.2.1 Research design.....	5
1.7.2.2 Target Population .....	6
1.7.2.3 Assessable population.....	6
1.7.2.4 Sample .....	6
1.7.2.5 Collection of data.....	7
1.7.2.6 Analysis of data .....	7

1.8	Ethical considerations .....	7
1.9	Limitations of the study .....	8
1.10	Layout and chapter division .....	8
1.11	Chapter summary .....	9
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW (CHAPTER 2).....</b>		<b>10</b>
2	<b>HEADING 1 WON'T PRINT. DON'T DELETE – DOING SO WILL LEAD TO INCORRECT NUMBERING. ....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	10
2.2	Developing a cricketer .....	11
2.2.1	Developing a batsman.....	12
2.2.2	Developing a bowler .....	14
2.3	International structures .....	15
2.3.1	ICC development of cricket .....	16
2.4	Australian cricket development .....	17
2.5	Formal cricket structures in South Africa .....	18
2.6	CSA's mandate .....	19
2.7	Affordability of cricket .....	20
2.8	Development structure of North West Cricket.....	20
2.9	Talent identification.....	22
2.10	North West Cricket development plan.....	24
2.11	Talent identification.....	25
2.12	Talent identification in the North West Province .....	28
2.13	Future trends in cricket.....	30
2.14	Chapter summary .....	31
<b>CHAPTER 3 EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION (CHAPTER) .....</b>		<b>33</b>

<b>3</b>	<b>HEADING 1 WON'T PRINT. DON'T DELETE – DOING SO WILL LEAD TO INCORRECT NUMBERING.</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Research methodology</b>	<b>33</b>
3.2.1	Research design	33
3.2.1.1	The target population	34
3.2.1.1.1	Sampling	34
3.2.2	Validity and credibility of the data	34
3.2.3	Data collection method	34
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Interview schedule</b>	<b>35</b>
3.3.1	Section 1 Early development and highest-level reach	35
3.3.1.1	Findings from section 1	37
3.3.2	Section 2 Evaluation of the development structure	37
3.3.2.1	Findings from section 2	40
3.3.3	Section 3 Challenges and changes	40
3.3.3.1	Findings from section 3	44
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>44</b>
3.4.1.1	Mental processes	44
3.4.1.2	Quality coaching	44
3.4.1.3	Discipline/dedication	44
3.4.1.4	Opportunity/ quality of opportunity	45
3.4.1.5	Infrastructure	45
3.4.1.6	Transformation	45
3.4.1.7	Schooling	45
3.4.1.8	Communication and planning	46
3.4.1.9	The North-West University	46
3.4.1.10	Bottleneck after school	46
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>46</b>
	<b>CHAPTER 4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION (CHAPTER)</b>	<b>47</b>

<b>4</b>	<b>HEADING 1 WON'T PRINT. DON'T DELETE – DOING SO WILL LEAD TO INCORRECT NUMBERING.</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Main findings from the study</b>	<b>47</b>
4.2.1	Mental processes	47
4.2.1.1	Recommendations	47
4.2.2	Quality coaching	48
4.2.2.1	Recommendations	48
4.2.3	Communication and planning	48
4.2.3.1	Recommendations	48
4.2.4	The North-West University	49
4.2.4.1	Recommendations	49
4.2.5	Opportunity/quality of opportunity	49
4.2.5.1	Recommendations	49
4.2.5.1.1	Tournament rules	49
4.2.6	Discipline/dedication	50
4.2.6.1	Recommendations	50
4.2.7	Transformation	50
4.2.7.1	Recommendations	50
4.2.8	Schooling	50
4.2.8.1	Recommendations	51
4.2.9	Infrastructure	51
4.2.9.1	Recommendations	51
4.2.10	Bottlenecks after school	51
4.2.10.1	Recommendations	51
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Limitations of the study</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Critical evaluation of the study</b>	<b>53</b>
4.4.1	Primary objective	53
4.4.2	Secondary objectives	53
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Recommendations for future research</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>54</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY (TOC_HEADING)</b>	<b>56</b>

<b>ANNEXURES (TOC_HEADING).....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>APPENDIX B ETHICAL CLEARANCE.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>APPENDIX C PERMISSION LETTER .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>APPENDIX D DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING.....</b>	<b>63</b>

**LIST OF TABLES (HEADING 0)**

Table 2-1: This is the title of the table. (CaptionTop\_Tbl\_Fig)..... 9

Table 2-1: CA talent development (My Cricket Community, 2021).  
(CaptionTop\_Tbl\_Fig) ..... 18

Table 2-2 CSA STRUTURE..... 19

Table 3-1 Reason for selecting cricket (Own Compilation, 2021) ..... 36

Table 3-2 Most important aspects of development (Own Compilation, 2021) ..... 38

Table 3-3 Specific needs met (Own Compilation, 2021)..... 39

Table 3-4 What would you change? ..... 42

Table 3-5 Barriers to success (Own Compilation, 2021) ..... 43

**LIST OF FIGURES (HEADING 0)**

Figure 2-1: This is the title of the figure. (CaptionBot\_Tbl\_Fig) ..... 9

Figure 2-1: ICC World Cup Structure (Malcolm & Fletcher, 2017)  
(CaptionBot\_Tbl\_Fig) ..... 16

Figure 2-2 NWC Development..... 22

Figure 2-3 Factors leading to international success (De Bosscher *et al.*, 2006) ..... 23

Figure 2-4 Different levels a player needs to progress through (Cricket South  
Africa, 2016)..... 29

Figure 4-1 Action plan (Own Compilation, 2021) ..... 53

# **CHAPTER 1 NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY (CHAPTER)**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Cricket is a game played by two teams of eleven players each. It originated in England and is now being played across the world (Abhishek Choudhari, 2010). In this study, an in-depth investigation is conducted on how to best develop cricket. This will be done through the means of an empirical investigation and a literature review.

The study focuses on the development of cricket primarily in the North-West province and investigates the current effectiveness of the development plan and offers suggestions on how to improve it. If this study can unearth some of the barriers to success in cricketers' lives, an action plan can be drawn up to help them to excel.

The North-West province is home to the North-West Dragons, an A division side in the current CSA structure (Stevens, 2022). This study investigates current developments in the structure of NWC.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

The South African public loves sport (Gillion & Keim, 2020). The essence of the rainbow nation was built on a 1995 Rugby World Cup triumph (Ricknell, 2022). The iconic image of the late Nelson Mandela hoisting the William Web Ellis trophy above his head will be ingrained in South African history. This begs the question as to why cricket stadiums are empty.

Cricket is a spectator sport with no spectators, in South Africa. Cricket South Africa has set a clear mandate for playing players of colour at all levels (Cricket South Africa, 2016). This means an opportunity and obligation exists to grow the game of cricket in the North-West community. The present study is not an investigation into the validity of transformation plans or the implementation thereof. It is, however, an assessment of how cricket can be developed in the North-West community.

South Africa finds itself in a unique position. As the only international team in the world with demographic restrictions with regards to selection, the marketing of cricket needs to be allocated in accordance with the demographic needs of selection (Penrose, 2019). Cricket is the second most popular sport in the world; only football enjoys more support worldwide than cricket (Else, 2021). However, Cricket South Africa is struggling to get

any crowds in, never mind filling stadiums (Naicker, 2020). The love of sport does exist, but it is not transformed into cricket, or into cricket spectators (Naicker, 2020).

Doing a study on a spectator sport seems simple enough. In South Africa, perhaps, it is not that simple, because the demographic of this country plays a significant part in actual crowd attendance and participation. Getting a full stadium is easy when the Proteas play Australia. Full stadiums are, however, also needed when large franchises like the Lions play the Dolphins.

To recruit more fans, more young players are needed. Combined, the issue of attendance and the mandate to play together with transformational sides can produce a common solution: to develop cricket in the rural community.

As is the case with much research, the essence of the problem under investigation is to explore what is being done that is not working. A different perspective is needed, and a mind shift must therefore be made. The desired outcome of this study is to contribute toward creating everlasting passionate cricket lovers.

The development at the grassroots level will lead and is leading players, but does not really translate into spectators, and hence the problem under investigation.

### **1.3 Key concepts**

In this section, key concepts with regard to this dissertation are defined.

#### **1.3.1.1 Semi-professional/Amateur**

In the context of South African cricket, an interesting term arises, amateur cricket. All sporting codes have amateurs, but in cricket the definition is different. In other sports, amateurs could be considered non-professionals, for instance, in golf. In cricket, the amateur level is also called semi-pro and cricketers at this level can be considered to be career cricketers. At the amateur level, 11 players are contracted and even though many of them may still be at university, they are regarded as a fully professional set-up.

#### **1.3.1.2 Franchise**

South Africa's premium cricket competition is based on a franchise system; these franchises have 20 contracted players, and each franchise has two amateur sides that feed them.

### **1.3.1.3 Cricket South Africa (CSA)**

CSA is the governing body for cricket in South Africa.

### **1.3.1.4 North-West Cricket (NWC)**

NWC is the governing body for cricket in the North-West Province

## **1.4 Problem Statement**

The problem that is investigated in this study is the perceived clear tracking of cricket development in terms of the players in the community of the North-West province. This includes all different formats of cricket, 20 over list A and first-class cricket. This lack of development or tracking of development can contribute towards other issues.

NWC follows the CSA directive when it comes to development. The CSA transformation plan sets out the broad parameters for cricket development in all provinces (Cricket South Africa, 2017).

In this context lies a problem as well as an opportunity. The aim of any sporting program ultimately is to win. The teams that play against the Dragons follow the same development protocols; this means the winner will ultimately be the province with the most talent. This state of affairs contextualises the main research concern, namely the development of cricket from the early years.

CSA has a clear mandate to develop transformed cricket playing sides (Yanga Sibembe, 2020). Vahed and Desai (2021) argue that this mandate has not been highly successful in light of recent events. Instead, focussing on individual player development and their specific needs can help alleviate this issue.

## **1.5 Objectives of the research**

### **1.5.1 Primary objectives**

The primary objective of the study is to assess the development of cricket in the North-West province.

### **1.5.2 Secondary objectives**

The secondary objectives of this research are to:

- Investigate how to further the game of cricket in the North-West community by researching its current structure and considering its results.

- Determine what the most important factors are in developing a first-class cricketer.
- Assess the major challenges in the cricket structure and what players perceive as threats to the system.
- Provide a clear plan on what changes can be made to the current system, which includes the ages at which players need to receive one-on-one coaching.
- Identify the reasons for a lack of a local fan base; and
- Provide an action plan to improve the development of cricket in the North-West.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

The study focuses on the development of cricket in the North-West province. It is important for a cricket programme such as NWC to assess its structures and compare them with best practices. This will ensure the longevity of success.

### **1.6.1 Field of the study**

The study has two primary focus subject areas: marketing and business development. The goal for NWC is to grow the game of cricket, creating more fans, which ultimately means marketing the game. To grow the game, more people need to play it, especially from the previously disadvantaged community because this is the largest population group in the country. NWC needs to develop these cricketers in order for them to develop a love for the game and become supporters. This is a way for NWC to grow its business.

### **1.6.2 Sector to be investigated**

NWC is a government-funded organisation that falls under the umbrella of CSA. NWC can, however, obtain private funds from sponsorships, rent of facilities and ticket sales. The mandate to develop cricket is clearly stated by CSA, and this development will benefit NWC in two ways.

- 1) Creating a larger pool of players and supporters.
- 2) Obtaining extra funding from CSA for results from development.

This mini-dissertation also sets out to address the unique relationship between sound business practices and social justice.

### **1.6.3 Geographical demarcation**

The research is conducted on one selected province in South Africa, namely the North-West province.

## **1.7 Research methodology**

This section deals with how the research is conducted. The literature study is followed by an empirical study.

### **1.7.1 Literature study**

The literature study reveals current trends and best practices. In the context of research, a topic that is well-documented will be a waste of time (Bryman & Bell, 2014), but within the development ecosystem, exploring what has happened in the last few years makes a great deal of research sense.

The first aim of the literature study is to assess what the current development plans are, specifically with reference to CSA and North-West Cricket. Some literature will be collected directly from North-West Cricket, and CSA's website is another source.

Literature from Northern Cricket (Gauteng) and Natal Cricket (Kwazulu-Natal) is reviewed to confirm the benchmark in South Africa. Internet searches on sports development as a whole will help identify concepts that are not currently in cricket and could be used. The development structures of cricket in India, for example, need to be assessed as they are the world leader in the field. Sports scientific frameworks and talent development are also surveyed.

### **1.7.2 Empirical investigation**

This section discusses the elements of the empirical research being done, including the method used and the research participants.

#### **1.7.2.1 Research design**

Research can be done in either qualitative or quantitative designs. Quantitative research refers to the study of numbers or the analysis of data. It is the testing of a theory (Bryman & Bell, 2014).

This study uses a qualitative design because interviews are crucial to ascertain the development paths of senior players in light of the present problem being studied. New ideas are needed and insights from the participants are vital to the research.

The study consists of a literature review and an empirical study. The research approach, therefore, is comparative and exploratory by nature, and the design is qualitative.

#### **1.7.2.2 Target Population**

A research population generally comprises a large collection of individuals or objects that is the focus of a scientific enquiry. It is for the benefit of the population that research is conducted. However, due to the large sizes of population, researchers mostly cannot test every individual in the population, because it is too expensive and time-consuming (Otzen & Manterola, 2017).

The population that will benefit from this study are the relevant cricket structures in the cricket franchises of South Africa, with the greatest benefactor being NWC.

#### **1.7.2.3 Assessable population**

The accessible population is the population in a study to which the researchers can apply their conclusions. This population is a subset of the target population; it is also known as the study population. It is from the accessible population that researchers draw their samples (Asiamah *et al.*, 2017).

Being a cricket coach, the cricket community of the North-West province is accessible to the researcher.

#### **1.7.2.4 Sample**

A sample is simply a subset of the population. The concept of a sample arises from the inability of researchers to test all the individuals in each population. A sample must be representative of the population from which it was drawn, and it must have a good size to warrant statistical analysis (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

The sample of the present study includes the following role-players or stakeholders: the development coaching staff of North-West Cricket; all senior and academy contracted players of North-West Cricket; the director of cricket and head coach of the North-West University cricket programme. The benchmarks are the Titans and Natal professional franchises.

The CEO of NWC contacted the players, and those willing to participate were interviewed. Time slots were set up and participants chose convenient times. The

researcher did not know who the participants were. The researcher only refers to participants as responded 1, 2 and so forth.

Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique where samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected (Sharma, 2017). Consecutive sampling is the form of non-probability sampling that was used in this study.

Consecutive sampling is very similar to convenience sampling, except that it seeks to include all accessible subjects as part of the sample. This non-probability sampling technique can be considered the best of all non-probability samples because it includes all available subjects. That renders the sample a better representation of the entire population (Naderifar *et al.*, 2017).

#### **1.7.2.5 Collection of data**

Semi-structured interviews were used to gain new insight and expertise (see Appendix A).

#### **1.7.2.6 Analysis of data**

The researcher used thematic analysis as the analytic tool for this study. Interviews were recorded and additional notes were taken. The data from interviews was mined through Atlas.ti software and coding were deduced. Common themes were identified and reviewed. Themes were defined and named (Bryman & Bell, 2014). The resultant Word Cloud was also drafted in the process. The number of interviews was guided by the point of data saturation with due consideration to the notion of data richness.

Data has been stored in a password-protected computer that can only be accessed by the researcher.

### **1.8 Ethical considerations**

This research project does not directly benefit participants but is for the common good of the cricket community in South Africa. Specifically, cricket in the North-West Province may well benefit, and this can then indirectly benefit those who participated in the study. Very few, if any risks were involved in this study, as all participants were informed that they participated in this study voluntarily and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. They were also informed that any questions or complaints could be directed to me as the researcher.

A process of convenience sampling was followed. The CEO contacted players and those willing to participate. Interviews stopped as soon as data saturation was reached. All the players were fully professional, and growing the game is a common cause.

The interviewees were assured of confidentiality and were requested to give informed consent that interviews could be audio recorded. These recordings were typed into a Microsoft Word document, and keys were generated and formulated to determine the results.

Relevant COVID-19 protocols were adhered to. The necessary social distancing, sanitizing protocols and PPEs were applied. Where necessary, interviews were done online on the Zoom platform.

Ethical clearance was obtained, and the present study was found to present minimal risk (see Appendix B).

### **1.9 Limitations of the study**

The limitations of a study refer to those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the findings from one's research. They are constraints regarding generalizability, applications to practice, and/or utility of findings. These emanate from the design of the study, the method used to establish internal and external validity, or the result of unanticipated challenges that emerged during the course of the study (USC Libraries, 2020).

The sample used in the present research study may not reflect the opinion of every member of the population. A limited amount of literature is available on the development of cricket in previously disadvantaged communities. The honesty of participants was critical to the findings.

### **1.10 Layout and chapter division**

Chapter one presented the context, problem under study, as well as the aim and objectives of the study. A literature review follows in Chapter two; both South African and international studies are surveyed. This is followed by the empirical investigation that is presented in Chapter three. The study concludes with final recommendations and conclusions, as well as avenues for future research in Chapter 4.

## **1.11 Chapter summary**

In Chapter One of this study, a brief contextualisation of the study was provided. The importance and relevance of the problem under scrutiny were explained.

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## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW (CHAPTER 2)

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#### 2.1 Introduction

Cricket is the second most popular sport in the world, but in terms of spectatorship, South Africa has been lagging (Naicker, 2020). This reality affects all provinces, including the North-West province, which is the focus of the present study. This begs the question: How can one develop cricket in the North-West province? This question has become of increasing relevance since Cricket South Africa's decision to dismantle the franchise system and refer to an A and B division system. North-West Cricket has been selected in the A division (Cricket South Africa, 2021). This change in the system and the promotion of North-West Cricket puts extra emphasis on the development of cricket in the region, as North-West Cricket need to develop players for the international arena, and not for franchise duty as was the case in the past.

It is important to note that developing cricket in South Africa, or the North-West has unique challenges not faced by most of the great cricketing nations. Inequality and poverty are two of the major challenges in the South African economy (Group, 2018). Cricket South Africa has placed increased emphasis on breaching these gaps by introducing transformation targets in selection as well as providing increased funding for the development of cricket in low-income areas (Cricket South Africa, 2016). The CSA action plan does not give a clear definition of what low income means. For purposes of this study, the definitions by Patte (2019) are used, i.e., an area in which the majority of the residents are not earning much money. In most cases, these areas are the township or rural areas, and in the North-West a prime example would be Ikageng, the township associated with JB Marks Municipality that includes Potchefstroom.

The North-West Province has a higher unemployment rate than any other province in South Africa (Witten *et al.*, 2020). This means that extensive research needs to be done to develop cricket amongst a variety of cultural and income groups. Research conducted in the present study aims to breach a gap that is currently in the South-African cricketing community by focusing specifically on how to develop cricket in the lower-income communities of the North-West Province.

It is essential to know what has already been researched as this provides a clear understanding of what needs to be done to formulate better questions. Knowledge of extant literature also assists with making recommendations. The literature review also indicates current trends in cricket development.

## **2.2 Developing a cricketer**

Cricket has three components: batting, bowling, and fielding (Passi & Pandey, 2018). Batting and bowling are scored and given nominal performance results for each participant. This makes it an individual sport within a team environment. It follows that to develop a cricketer could mean developing a batsman or a bowler as separate sporting code. This does not exclude the possibility that these two skills can be developed simultaneously.

The development and career paths of bowlers and batters can also differ, according to (Brown *et al.*, 2022). They note that batsmen who become professional, show a significantly higher performance output between ages ten and 19 than batsmen who do not become professional. No clear performance indicator could be found when comparing the results for the same period, with reference to professional and non-professional bowlers,

According to Warmenhoven *et al.* (2020) it takes a village to raise a cricketer. There are many aspects and different forms of support a cricket player would need to be successful. These aspects include financial support and physical support as well as coaching and diet. These different aspects are unfortunately not available to all members of the North-West community. The mandate of the North-West Cricket programme is to provide as many of these aspects to the cricket playing community as possible (Warmenhoven *et al.*, 2020). They found that parents, whether both father and mother or only one of the two, can provide the necessary financial and emotional support. Mentors like coaches and more experienced players play a vital role in sports-specific information exchange with lesser experienced players. It was found that elite athletes' early age professional coaching, as well as sibling participation, play a vital role in the development of skill and belief in one's abilities (Warmenhoven *et al.*, 2020). It is important to note that according to the study noted above, elite athletes' support structures would include more than one support system; for instance, parents would provide emotional and financial support. Siblings may provide competition or play with

them, and a mental coach would provide sport-specific information. (Warmenhoven *et al.*, 2020) state that an athlete needs more than one base of support. This does not mean that a specific person cannot fulfil more than one role. Parents can give financial, emotional, and informational support, and a sibling can, for instance, also be there for emotional and/or informational support. The umbrella under which these aspects fall can be seen as social support and is seen as critical to the development of cricket players (Ahmad *et al.*, 2020). These factors are important to acknowledge when in-depth analyses are done later in this study.

Bowling and batting are two very different skills and should therefore be researched separately.

### **2.2.1 Developing a batsman**

Batting is one of the three main components of cricket, with the other two being fielding and bowling. Batting can be sub-categorised into specialist positions such as opening batsmen, middle order, or finisher (Izadi & Narula, 2018). It is a general rule that opening batsmen should have a very specific technique. In many cases, this includes being able to miss the ball when it is moving around as it is still new. Many teams prefer to have their best batsmen walk in to bat at number 4 (Izadi & Narula, 2018). This position in many cases has the most unknown aspects because it is determined by aspects beyond the batsman's control. This means that the number 4 batsmen need to be highly adaptable. Numbers 5 to 7 would normally be attributed to having at least one batsman who can clear boundaries and one that is adept at playing spin. The modern-day norm also suggests that one of the top seven batsmen will be the wicketkeeper, and at least one would be able to bowl (Chakraborty *et al.*, 2018).

According to Phillips *et al.* (2010), an important part of batting is a batsman's ability to steer the ball into a gap or away from fielders. Batsmen should be able to do this irrespective of what delivery is bowled. The centre of excellence (CEO) in Australia developed a test to quantify the importance of gap hitting in batting.

The batting test was completed by 124 players, divided into three groups.

- 1) Elite - Cricket Australia contracted players.
- 2) Emerging - COE scholarship holders.
- 3) Junior – National U/18 talent camp participants.

The batting test may not be an indicator of talent, but it does provide further evidence that gap hitting is an essential part of batting and improves the higher the level of the

player. The results showed the elite group scoring better in every aspect of the test, followed by the emerging and the Junior.

Along with the ability to find gaps, anticipation plays a crucial part in batting at an elite level (Brenton, 2018). They found a significant increase in the ability of elite batsmen when compared to a club or junior batsmen, in that they can anticipate delivery outcomes following visual clues. Elite batsmen are also at a higher level than junior batsmen at the club level, which could provide evidence of experience playing a role. Anticipation and gap hitting are two aspects of elite batsmen, and technique is another aspect that is highly coachable.

Weissensteiner *et al.* (2009) conducted a study on the development of a cricket batsman. Male cricket experts, specifically batsmen, as well as coaches and administrators, were interviewed using a semi-structured approach to generate an expertise model of an approach in batting. The study interviewed elite performers in the Australian setup. The following were concluded as the most salient things a cricketer need.

- Support from family and friends or peers, access to facilities to practice and play, conditions that promote observational learning, and creative and deliberate play form part of the essential aspects of development.
- Strong self-belief and confidence along with mental toughness and resilience are essential mental attributes. These attributes combine with intense work, sound work ethic, proper preparation, and a high level of self-regulation to present the psychological attributes of elite batsmen.
- Anticipation and visual perception, as well as the ability to pick up visual cues from the bowlers to predict outcomes are important.
- Balance, manipulative skill with the bat, front and backfoot aptitude in shot execution, speed of foot movement and bat down wing are categorised as the most important technical abilities.
- Intrinsic motivators identified as important are enjoyment, self-challenge, desire, passion, commitment, and camaraderie.
- Interviewees pointed to competitive play, in the backyard or the park as essential to the development of problem-solving skills.

The study provides evidence that not all aspects of elite level batsmen are developed in the nets or at the training ground. Some of the aspects cannot be developed in a “crickety” sense and form part of the personality of a person as well as his context. The

mental attributes of players need to be identified at an early age to develop them further.

There are three main theories concerning bat lift (Noorbhai & Noakes, 2018), namely:

- A) Straight towards the stumps or wicketkeeper.
- B) Towards the first or second slip; or
- C) In a looped or lateral technique.

According to Noorbhai and Noakes (2019b), C also known as a lateral back lift (LBBT) is an effective back lift for batsmen. A is seen as the most used method and is a mixture of the two, but more common than C Noorbhai and Noakes (2016) did a descriptive observational study of the 65 best batsmen of all time and found that more than 70% did not subscribe to the traditional backlift but uses the LBBT. Research by Noorbhai and Noakes (2019a) suggests that LBBT is an important part of playing at a higher level. The study does not illustrate whether batsmen at higher levels performed their best while using an LBBT or if coaching at the level changed their back lifts, meaning they got to that level using a different back lift.

A batting technique has many different aspects, and non-have been more researched than the back lift, suggesting it can be the most important part of the bating technique. Further investigation into other aspects of the technique is needed to develop a sound understanding of what is to be focused on when working with young players.

The need for a deliberate action plan is highlighted by Jones *et al.* (2020). Jones has found that accumulative hours of practice are not a precursor to success. Bad practice can cause regression, and thus having a clear concise and effective plan for training is essential.

### **2.2.2 Developing a bowler**

Bowlers are categorised into two major groups, namely seamers and spinners. Seamers can be subcategorised as fast, medium-fast, or medium. Fast bowlers typically bowl more than 130km/h(Phillips *et al.*, 2010).

A study was concluded on the development of fast bowlers by Phillips *et al.* (2010). Eleven international fast bowlers were interviewed using open-ended and semi-structured questions. The qualitative data analysis was utilised to identify key areas of development.

Key areas of significance identified from the data were:

- Support networks.

Coaches, siblings, parents, and other family members can all play different roles in a support network. The different forms of support within the network were all perceived to be important factors.

- Senior teammates and competition.

Interviewees pointed to early exposure to competitive club cricket as crucial to development. Club players would, in some cases, be seen as monitors or player coaches, and aid the development of young players.

- National idols

The presence of strong role models growing up was important to the participants. A strong national side leads to a hunger to play.

- Unstructured practice.

The role of backyard or other fun unstructured forms of cricket was seen as vital by participants.

- Participating in multiple sports

Amongst the participants, a common trait was the involvement in multiple sports codes.

The different sport codes help to develop different skills and a competitive mindset.

The parameters set out as crucial to the development of bowlers in the study can be traced to measures in other areas. Not all the elements can be found in the North-West system, but action plans can be made to create systems that will lead to more players being exposed to these elements

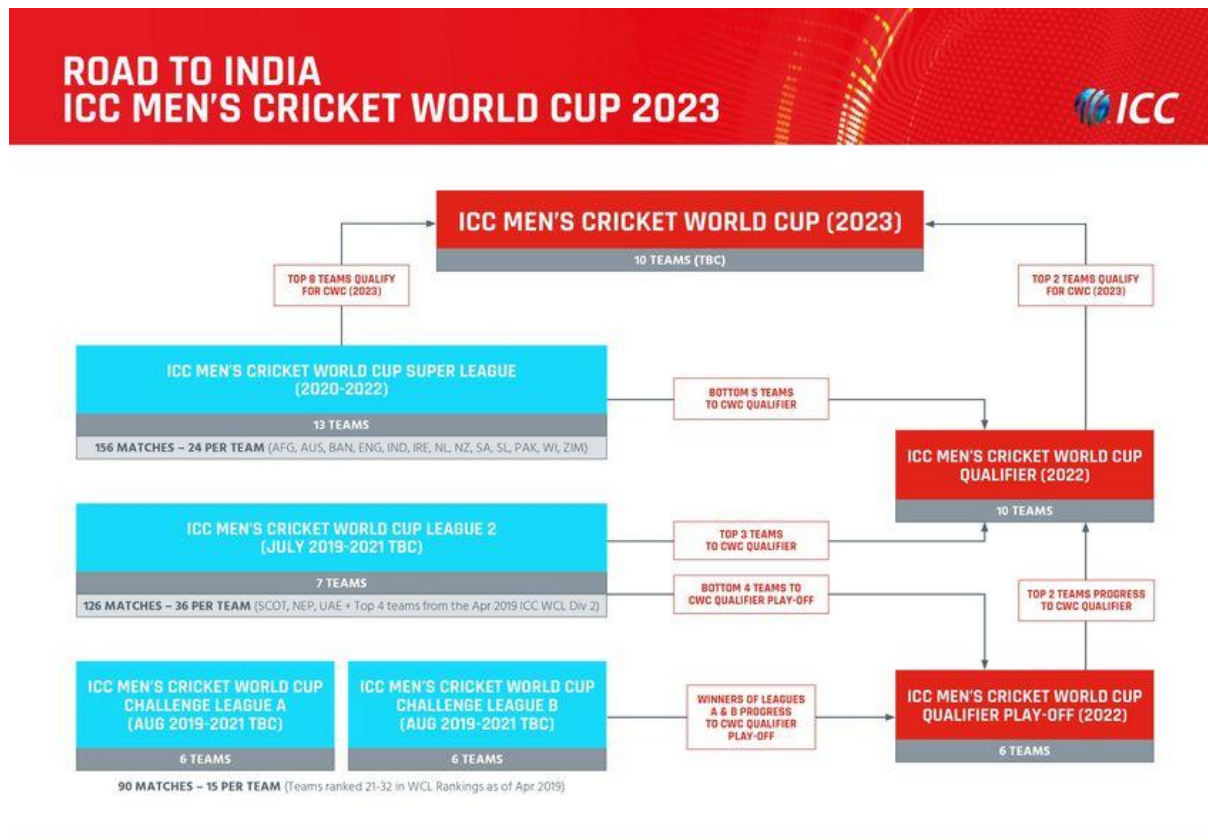
## **2.3 International structures**

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is the governing body for cricket in all formats. It is responsible for the organisation and planning of the international schedule as well as the terms of the code of conduct to which all members must adhere. The International Cricket Council has 12 full members, all full members are allowed to play test cricket, South Africa forms part of this list (Malcolm & Fletcher, 2017).

The development of world cricket is done at the associate level. Associate teams are governing bodies that form part of the International Cricket Council but do not play test cricket. These members work towards test status. The International Cricket Council currently recognises 92 associate nations (Malcolm & Fletcher, 2017).

The Cricket World Cup is the pinnacle of limited-overs cricket. It is at this level that the associate nations have the opportunity to compete against the full members (Malcolm &

Fletcher, 2017). Below fig. 2.1 shows how the World Cup final roster is decided. It also serves as an indication of the different levels in the international game.



**Figure 2-1: ICC World Cup Structure (Malcolm & Fletcher, 2017)**  
(CaptionBot\_Tbl\_Fig)

The ICC has a mandate to develop cricket on the global stage, and funding is provided for that. The section below will discuss cricket development under the mantle of the ICC.

### 2.3.1 ICC development of cricket

The ICC has a development team that is based on five continents. The development team aims to grow the global game by improving the standard of cricket within the 92 associate nations. The assistance can be in many forms (Slattery, 2019).

- Governance
- High performance
- Growth at the grassroots level
- Marketing
- Communication
- Development of commercial strategies

The growth of cricket has seen 1.5 million participants outside of the full members' participants (Slattery, 2019). Thus, the competition to be amongst the elite will become greater. This places extra emphasis on the South African cricket structure and its longevity.

**2.4 Australian cricket development**

Australian cricket (CA) is steeped in tradition; it is one of the giants of the game (Bhalla, 2021). Australia has been at the peak of the cricket mountain for many years, and even in the years, they struggle, they remain a formidable opponent. CA follow a three-pronged approach to talent development.

- Foundation.
- Talent
- Elite and mastery

The foundation phase entails getting as many players as possible involved, and emphasis is placed on fun. Children should play games while doing skills training. Some structured gameplays should happen between the ages 7 and 12. In this phase, junior clubs are important as they allow the player to be tested against similarly talented opposition (My Cricket Community, 2021).

The talent phase is focused on performances in the different leagues. This phase only starts after the age of 12. Elite and mastery are seen as playing for Australia

The development of different skills in cricket can happen at different rates and could require different plans.

A cricket player requires a variety of skills to be successful; furthermore, a bowler and a batsman are completely different and need to be developed with their unique requirements in mind.

<b>Elite and mastery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Australia teams</li> </ul>
<b>Talent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Breakthrough</li> <li>● Strong performances</li> <li>● Skill and determination</li> <li>● Potential is identified</li> </ul>

<b>Foundation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing and competition</li> <li>• Learning the skills</li> <li>• Get moving</li> </ul>

**Table 2-1: CA talent development (My Cricket Community, 2021).  
(CaptionTop\_Tbl\_Fig)**

## 2.5 Formal cricket structures in South Africa

The South African cricket structure has undergone major changes in 2021 (Cricket South Africa, 2021). The franchise system has been abandoned and replaced by a two-tear system comprised of 15 provinces, 8 in the A division and 7 in the B division. The mayor change to the setup has seen North-West Cricket and Boland Cricket essentially be promoted to the franchise level (Stevens, 2022). Below table 2.2 illustrates the current division set-up.

Division A
1. North-West Cricket
2. Gauteng Cricket
3. Western Province Cricket
4. Northerns Cricket
5. Boland Cricket
6. Free State Cricket
7. Eastern Province Cricket
8. Natal Cricket
Division B
1. Easterns Cricket
2. South West Districts Cricket
3. Natal Inland Cricket
4. Border Cricket
5. Northern Cape Cricket
6. Limpopo Cricket
7. Mpumalanga Cricket

## **Table 2-2 CSA STRUTURE**

Cricket South Africa provides the funding for domestic cricket and places the obligation of developing young players on the development programs implemented in the different provinces.

The Cricket South Africa action plan provides clear structures to follow, although some of these structures will change the development leg should they remain the same (Cricket South Africa, 2016). Cricket South Africa created a cricket services strategy document (The Plan). This was done to identify, create and retain talent between the ages of 8 and 12, and forms part of the cricket services department (Cricket South Africa, 2016).

The cricket services plan is seen as the pathway to the ultimate goal and is implemented in every province. The cricket services plan is part of the CSA transformation document (Cricket South Africa, 2016). The transformation document sets out every aspect and goal of cricket in South Africa. The cricket service plan deals directly with the development of cricket and serves as a bluer print for all provinces to follow. It tracks the development of all players in the systems from mini-cricket to hardball cricket. It includes the various provincial age-group tournaments, the talent identification programme (TAP), club cricket and semi-professional cricket (Cricket South Africa, 2016).

The semi-professional level is not in effect anymore. In February 2021 CSA announced a structure change (Stevens, 2022). This means that, officially, NWC will play at what was known as the franchise level, and cub cricket will be its feeding ground.

This provides the backbone of the structure for North-West Cricket, within these parameters North-West Cricket needs to find margins that can help gain a competitive advantage.

### **2.6 CSA's mandate**

The current South African action plan in terms of developing cricket also needs to be thoroughly studied together with the protocols currently in place within the North-West province. This will be done to better understand which goals are being achieved now, as well as what could be changed in the future. A linear mandate in the Cricket South Africa action plan would provide clear direction on which empirical investigation needs to be completed. The final aim of this dissertation would be to provide an action plan for

Cricket South Africa, for North-West Cricket, and/or any other province and/or area in South Africa. The hope is that these bodies will implement the plan and put it into action, and as a consequence hopefully, be able to improve the development of cricket in the country as a whole. CSA has put clear emphasis on the development of cricket (Cricket South Africa, 2017).

The hub programme is used to develop cricket in rural areas. In 2017, CSA spent R 6 million on the hub programme (Cricket South Africa, 2017). CSA spent R100.7 million on various developmental phases for the year 2015/2016. However, poverty and a lack of infrastructure are obstacles that CSA and NWC face in the development process.

## **2.7 Affordability of cricket**

The affordability of cricket equipment is a factor in developing it in low-income areas, especially with reference to batting equipment. Therefore, it is more challenging to develop young batsmen in areas of low income where a bowler only needs a ball. A batsman needs batting gloves, batting pads, a protective box, a helmet, thigh pads and a cricket bat. To have constructive training session, nets, and pitches - whether it be concrete with synthetic mats or turf - will also be needed. To provide these is costly and according to Patte (2019), poverty often leads to high crime rates, meaning these facilities would need to be guarded.

Rugby and football are two of the major sporting codes competing for the affection of young talented sports people (Coetzee *et al.*, 2021). They are different from cricket in that these sports need only a ball to be played (and, at older levels, boots). This makes rugby and football more assessable to a low-income community. The onus lies with cricket administrations to implement better infrastructure to draw young players to the game.

## **2.8 Development structure of North West Cricket**

The base of the North-West Cricket structure is the Senwes spinners or mini-cricket programme. This is the market development phase in which North-West Cricket focuses on getting as many young players as possible to play cricket. After this, the goal is to keep these players playing at their schools and develop to such an extent that they can play at the provincial level.

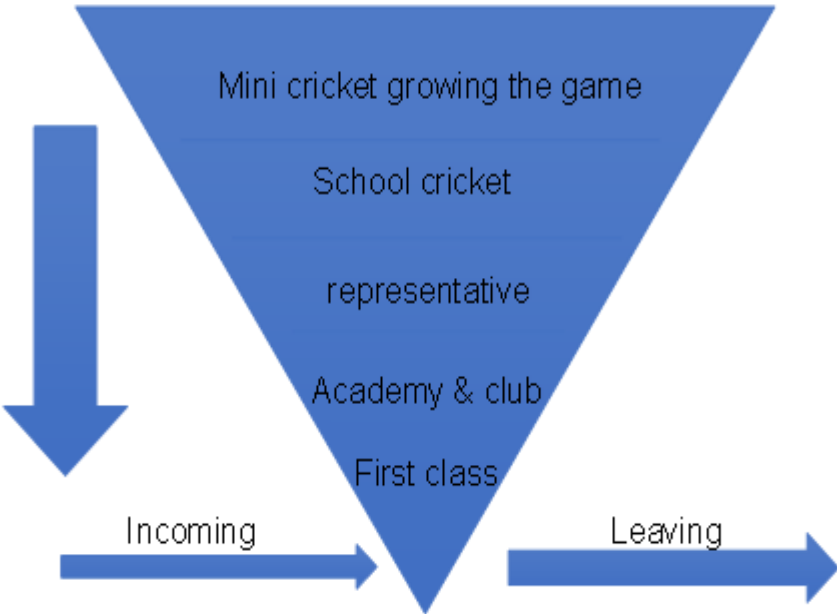
North-West Cricket picks an age group to represent sides each year. These sides are u/13, u/15, u/17, and u/18 and they play in a national week across the country against

other provinces. At the national u/18 week, the SA Schools side is picked and later a U/19 side is picked which can be made up of any players in the required age bracket. The players on these sides form part of the high-performance group and receive coaching from coaches at North-West Cricket. The North-West u/19 has not won the tournament or ranked in the top 3 in the last 5 years (web sports, 2021).

Post-matric is the only official programme from North-West Cricket for players in the North-West Cricket academy. The academy aims to bridge the gap between school cricket and the senior provincial side. Players who want to keep playing but who are not part of the academy can join local club sides or the university club that has three sides in the premier league (web sports, 2021). It is important to assess how many players who have played at the u/18 level makes the transition to the academy and ultimately the senior provincial side (web sports, 2021). This will show the extent to which talent falls to the wayside and how many opportunities are missed.

The structure of NWC is based on casting a wide net at a young age, then identifying talent and developing that talent to produce first-class players. At the first class or academy level, players will join from other provinces or leave to other provinces or franchises.

The figure below shows the funnel effect of player development. This is also a clear indication that talent identification plays an important part in player development, and a thorough examination of the current protocols is needed.



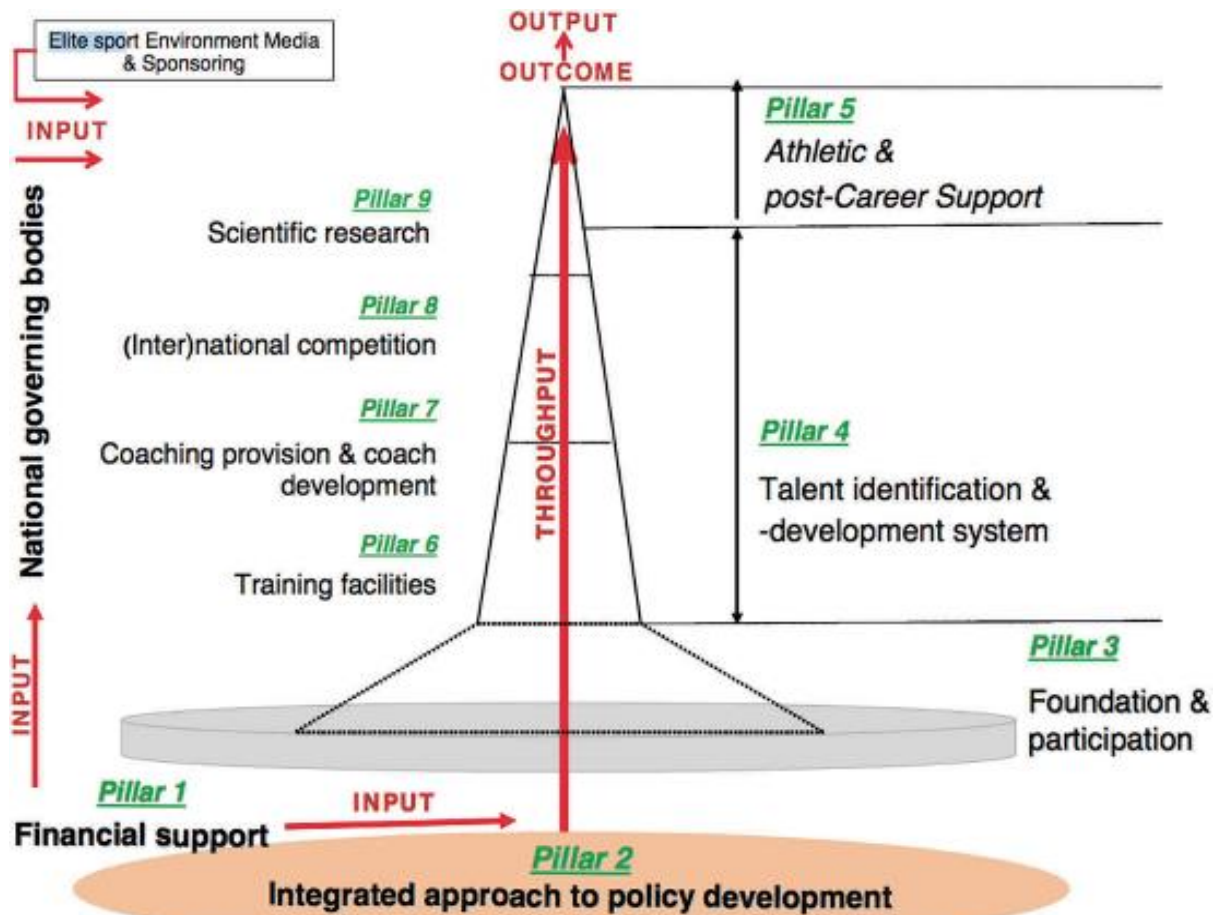
## **Figure 2-2 NWC Development**

To further evaluate the development plan, the talent identification process needs to be examined.

### **2.9 Talent identification**

Different elements contribute towards talent development. This can entail learning design, also known as task and the environment (Lascu *et al.*, 2020). Cricket coaches are required to develop or provide these elements to provide an effective early learning experience. Evidence suggests that the different factors needed to be an elite cricketer can take time to develop, further establishing cricket development as a non-linear process (Lascu *et al.*, 2020). Having the perfect technique is no longer seen as the most important aspect of a cricketer. Rather, the ability to interpret visual information and adjust to reach the desired outcome is the most desired trait (Lascu *et al.*, 2020). In cricket, the opposition will use whatever they have at their disposal to adversely affect an opponent's performance. A batsman can walk around the crease, premeditate a shot, and bowlers can bowl different types of deliveries or change the field. The player who reacts best to these cues will be the most successful

Below in figure 2.3 De Bosscher *et al.* (2006), illustrate the pillars that are needed for the development of cricket players. The figure clearly demonstrates that the governing body plays a crucial part in the development of a cricket player. The governing body provides the major inputs such as financial support, scientific research, and training facilities. Governing bodies are also responsible for talent identification as well as high-performance programmes.



**Figure 2-3 Factors leading to international success (De Bosscher *et al.*, 2006)**

The non-linear nature of talent development in cricket is discussed by Dove, 2018 who does distinguish between different stages of development:

- 1) Initiation (early years),
- 2) Development (middle years), and
- 3) Perfection (later years).

For players to transition through the stages, learning ability and task accomplishment are seen as the contributing factors. In this regard, no linear or chronological order could be found.

To establish how North-West Cricket should go about talent development, further investigation needs to be conducted. Evaluating international practices and determining what can be transferred to the Cricket South Africa model constitute an essential step in the investigation process. The leading cricket nations are currently Australia, India, and England, and it is possible that much can be gleaned from best practices there.

## 2.10 North West Cricket development plan

From the North-West Cricket structure, it can be seen that mini-cricket or the Senwes spinners programme is the earliest category of development. The focus of the mini-cricket is on fun and cricket development and growing the number of participants is the main goal (Cricket South Africa, 2017).

After the spinners programme, the school is responsible for further cricket development. Schools play a vital role in getting players to the u/17 level. Cricket South Africa does have some focus schools that receive funds to help the development of the sport (Cricket South Africa, 2017).

The high school development plan at North-West Cricket is based on the selection process, as it is from the selected teams that players are identified to hone and improve their skills. Selected players who are deemed to be financially challenged can also be provided with new equipment. A number of u/17 level are included in the Talent Acceleration Plan (TAP). These players attend high-performance camps to further hone their skills and form part of the u/19 selection pool (Cricket South Africa, 2017).

North-West Cricket has set out clear selection criteria for their respective teams. These are the same for all age groups and are summarised below.

Factors in selection:

- Levels played at: The relative strength of competition where a player has competed – as well as their performances at that level – are taken into account.
- Form and performances: It is important to note that form and performance encompass a player's performances throughout matches, potentially spanning several seasons, playing at CSA National Weeks and/or regional weeks. In other words, one does not look at a single performance. However, the current season form is of the greatest significance.
- Team balance: The squad is selected with regards to team balance, both concerning the spread of batsmen, all-rounds (bowling/batting) and bowlers in the team – including the type of batsmen and bowlers in the team – as well as a wicketkeeper(s). The area in which the Cricket Week is hosted also guides the selection process.
- Attitude and commitment: A personal interview may be conducted with each of the nominees to determine their attitude towards the team and North-West

Cricket culture, as well as their commitment to attending training sessions, planned programmes and team-building activities.

Looking at the different age group teams, one can track the progression of each player over an extended period. A player who plays u/13 in 2015 is eligible for selection at the u/15 level for the next two years ahead. This is, unless they are selected at the u/13 level before they are that age, but this should be alleviated by the fact that they will play u/13 cricket for more than one year. The same reasoning can be applied to other age groups. The purpose of age-group cricket is to develop an academy and first-class players. As previously stated, cricket can add value to a player's life without it this being directly related to the sport.

The u/15 side of 2016 should correlate with the u/19 side of 2019. Looking at these names can indicate the effectiveness of the talent identification and development process.

Out of the 14-players selected in 2016, five played for the u/19 side (35%). In terms of the academy level, out of the 19 players selected to play u/19 level, four were included in the North-West Academy (21%) (web sports, 2021). This is a small sample size, but not a good conversion rate.

To breach the gap between the academy and high school, the club system is used. At the moment, the only club that attracts young players is the university. This causes a bottleneck effect in cricket development.

## **2.11 Talent identification**

The talent identification process in cricket is complicated (Singh & Bhatt, 2021). Talent identification in any sport can be seen as very subjective, and little research is available on the matter (Johnston *et al.*, 2018). The degree to which someone can improve is subjective but not infinitely so, and thus natural ability and the efficiency with it is identified remain an important aspect in sport (Jacob *et al.*, 2018). Performance in sport can also be determined by internal and external factors (Utamayasa, 2021). In many cases, external factors such as parental support and facilities are easy to determine, but internal factors such as dedication can take longer to identify.

To determine whether or not a player is talented, he needs to be measured against other opposition. A batsman, for instance, may be able to hit the perfect cover drive or, for that matter, any other cricket shot, but not be able to do it at the pace or degree to which their level would require them to do it. This means that talent identification can be

subjective and should be an ongoing process. One way to eliminate subjectivity would be to have a panel of selectors with sound criteria for selection. However, in order to establish these criteria, further research is needed.

Cricket requires certain physical and mental attributes, but simply measuring these does not give a clear indication of talent. Physical attributes such as running fast, jumping far, or being strong or tall could all benefit a cricketer. Being mentally conditioned for sport also helps, but once again, these do not necessarily translate into the player batting or bowling better. With regard to batsmen, it is important to note that cricket performances are result-driven. This means that a player that can play a less-than-perfect shot and still score a boundary from the ball, where another player might play a perfectly executed shot but get nothing out from it (Phillips *et al.*, 2010). This applies to bowlers as well. A bowler might be able to bowl extremely fast but not as straight -, and this is ineffective – while some bowlers may be extremely accurate, but they do not have the pace to trouble top batsmen. What this implies is that talent identification in cricket is about more than raw attributes. Ahamad *et al.* (2015) designed a web-based talent identification programme that incorporates 30 attributes associated with talented cricketers. These attributes are listed below.

- Speed
- Agility
- Endurance
- Stress
- Self-motivation
- Upper body strength
- Lower body power
- Reactions
- Flexibility
- Fatigue index
- Bowler accuracy
- Over-arm throw accuracy
- Under-arm throw accuracy
- Catching ability
- Ground fielding
- VO2 max
- Body Mass Index

- Hand-eye coordination
- Creativity
- Decision-making ability
- Self-control
- Self-monitoring
- Will power
- Self-confidence
- Integrity
- Work ethic
- Shoulder flexibility
- Dynamic balance
- Static balance
- Concentration and focus

This is a comprehensive list of attributes many of them cricket related. Web-based talent identification refers to that a talented cricketer, consist of more than just runs and wickets.

The system is designed to alleviate bias in selection and help players to obtain recognition for their talents. The system works with algorithms that award a baseline score and group players performance into five categories, namely:

- Extraordinary talented
- Very much talented
- Much talented
- Moderately talented
- Not talented

This system can also help to identify weaknesses in players. It is designed to work in areas where it is difficult for all players to reach the base of the coaching operations. At the moment, no clear consensus exists as to which attributes at a young age will translate into elite performance at adults. However, it remains important to have and implement a clear talent identification programme. Cricket South Africa's transformation plan Cricket South Africa (2016) does not set out talent identification criteria. It does, however, refer to these as a very important part of the programme. To date, the only talent identification plan available is the web-based system by Ahamad *et al.* (2015). This is a possible area for further extensive research.

In terms of talent identification in other sports, New Zealand rugby can be seen as a benchmark. New Zealand rugby regards the player's character as a salient dimension of a player that needs to be assessed (Rosevear & Cassidy, 2019). For example, Sherwood *et al.* (2019) state that decision-making is an essential character trait of a sportsperson's talent package. Another study on talent identification in New Zealand rugby has also highlighted the importance of character. This illustrates that the characteristic of being a team player constitute a salient part of the selections process. Important characteristics to look for when identifying talent is done are so-called "uncoachables" (my term). For example, the New Zealand rugby team can be seen as the leading team in world rugby, but football is the most-watched sport in the world. Therefore, theories relating to talent identification in football cannot be ignored.

## **2.12 Talent identification in the North West Province**

To better understand how talent can be identified, the concept of talent must first be defined. Talent in terms of a dictionary definition refers to a natural ability (Simpson *et al.*, 1997). Synonyms for talent, according to Dictionary (2002), are gifts or genes. This definition of talent limits it to an ability that not learned but given to someone. The popular slogan, "Hard work beats talent until talent decides to work hard, points to the importance of hard work as a part of talent" holds true.

The talent identification process in the North-West province is based on the national process of which North-West is part. In figure 2.4 below, the different levels a player needs to progress through to become a Protea, the ultimate goal, are represented.



**Figure 2-4 Different levels a player needs to progress through (Cricket South Africa, 2016)**

The present study focuses on the development level of the Talent Acceleration Programme (TAP) to the semi-professional level, as that is the highest form of cricket being played under the North-West Cricket mantle.

The model followed by all provinces has three main elements:

- a) The Cricket Player Pipeline
- b) The Coach Education Pathway
- c) The Match Officials Pathway

The cricket player pipeline forms part of the focus of this study. It has been set out by Cricket South Africa (CSA) that:

- The objectives of the player pipeline are more than simply producing players. The first objective is to provide access to the game of cricket to as many players as possible. This will grow the game, which is an integral part of the objectives of Cricket South Africa.
- The next objective is to ensure that the identified talent is nurtured and developed.

- Following these, the talent must then be retained and a “brain-drain” in the cricketing sense must be prevented. The talent in the system needs to be used to produce elite players that will help make South Africa the best cricket playing side in the world.
- Lastly, Cricket South Africa aims to create opportunities beyond the cricket world, to add value to the players' life (Cricket South Africa, 2016).

The current talent identification model is most beneficial to early bloomers, and thus late developers could struggle to compete. This is especially true in areas where coaching and facilities come at a premium. Therefore, at present, early developers will be well established in the system and receive premium coaching and equipment, while late bloomers are left behind. This talent identification model therefore needs to be measured against international standards. To do that, future trends in cricket and talent identification need to be examined to determine the best international practices.

### **2.13 Future trends in cricket**

The future of cricket is at a delicate place. The young fans seem to adore the fast-paced T20 game, while traditionalists believe that test cricket is the only proper reflection of cricket.

Twenty over cricket was initially seen merely as entertainment; a marketing exercise (Sturm, 2015). It has, however, grown into a major part of international cricket and has even become the most-watched version of cricket (Sturm, 2015). Many countries are now hosting domestic T20 leagues to which the best players and coaches flock. The most prominent leagues in the world are.

1. Pakistan Super League (PSL)
2. Caribbean Premier League (CPL)
3. T20 blast - England
4. Big Bash League (BBL) - Australia
5. Indian Premier League (IPL)
6. Mzansi Premier League (MSL) – South Africa
7. Bangladesh Premier League (BPL)

(CRICKET IS LIFES, 2020).

The most famous league of these is the IPL, and it was also the first one. These leagues prove that money in cricket lies in the shortest format of the game. It follows

that coaching trends will have to shift increasingly towards the fast-paced version. The basics of the game will no longer be the forward defence or playing with a straight bat. Instead, young players will be taught how to hit the ball hard, and technique will likely become secondary.

It is also foreseen that cricket coaching will become more mentorship-based. One-on-one sessions that became the norm during the Covid-19 pandemic are set to become the norm, as this approach has yielded great benefits on and off the field (Venugopal, 2021). These one-on-one sessions can facilitate players and coaches building relationships beyond cricket, which can help players to develop players emotionally.

As regards the future of foreign leagues, the trend is foreign coaching that enhances local players. India, for instance, has always been known for their ability to produce spin bowlers and batsmen who are adapted to playing spin. However, the traditional Indian teams struggled to face fast short pitch bowling, especially on the fast-paced pitches found in South Africa and Australia. The foreign influence of the IPL has changed that, and India now has some of the best fast bowlers in the world. Also, the batsmen are more adept at playing fast bowling. Thus, the important thing is that their traditional strengths still exist.

Using an overseas pro system to tap into foreign knowledge can therefore give one a leg up on the competition.

## **2.14 Chapter summary**

The chapter explored various cricket structures in the world of cricket. It has been established that relatively little literature is available on the identification of talent in cricket. There is also a paucity of recent literature on cricket development, and the need for a clear talent identification plan has become apparent. A clear distinction can be made between developing batsmen and bowlers, and development plans should indicate that.

North-West Cricket follows the same structured approach as all the other unions. The system was designed by Cricket South Africa and passed through to the unions. The broad structure cannot change much, because it fits into the bigger picture at Cricket South Africa. However, Cricket South Africa does not determine selection policies and processes. The ethnic representation of the selected side is determined by Cricket South Africa, but that is the full extent of its involvement. By staying within the bounds of

Cricket South Africa, selectors have more than enough room for innovation when it comes to the criteria of selecting their final teams.

An all-inclusive approach that is not based solely on the outcome can be created inclusive of raw attributes found by studies to be crucial to long-term success in cricket. These can be directed to where they are most effective.

Following the literature review, an empirical investigation has been conducted. This data is used to establish which of the important factors in developing cricket that came to light in the literature review were present in the cricketers currently in the North-West system. This exploration, combined with crucial elements unique to the North-West setup, was used to develop a blueprint for cricket development in the North-West Province.

## **CHAPTER 3 EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION (CHAPTER)**

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#### **3.1 Introduction**

The objective of this study is to analyse the development of cricket in the North-West province. The previous chapter dealt with the literature regarding cricket development and NWC. The present chapter discusses the method of research and the design used for the empirical study.

#### **3.2 Research methodology**

This study was based on a qualitative research approach. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore meanings and insights in a situation. It allows for in-depth discussion regarding complex issues (Mohajan, 2018).

##### **3.2.1 Research design**

A research design can be seen as the blueprint for qualitative research (Nayak & Singh, 2021). The present research is exploratory by design. Exploratory research allows for substantial insight into a specific topic (Nayak & Singh, 2021). Players' personal experiences and opinions were needed to answer the research questions, and thus an exploratory approach was deemed appropriate (Basias & Pollalis, 2018).

A semi-structured interview process was followed. The interview protocol consisted of 16 questions as a framework. All interviews were conducted via the online platform Zoom, as this allowed all Covid-19 protocols to be observed. A permission letter was obtained from the CEO of NWC. NWC also provided internet facilities to the interviewees for online interviews. Once the data has been collected it was captured in Atlas.ti for analysis. The outcome enabled the researcher to provide an action plan for the development of cricket to NWC.

### **3.2.1.1 The target population**

#### **3.2.1.1.1 Sampling**

The target population consisted of all cricketers in the North-West Province. The sample used in this was contracted NWC players. Players formally from the North-West province who have continued their cricket at other provinces were also interviewed, because they have an in-depth knowledge of the structure within the province. Due to the specialised nature of the data required, purposeful sampling was used. This means that all participants had certain key characteristics (Luciani *et al.*, 2019). In this study, all interviewees were professional cricketers. Purposeful sampling is a form of non-probability sampling (Opoku *et al.*, 2016).

In total of ten respondents were interviewed.

### **3.2.2 Validity and credibility of the data**

The interview protocol was checked and amended, after which it was approved by the promoter of the present study, Prof Ronnie Lotriet. The researcher set up a dummy interview in order to familiarise himself with the Zoom platform as well as the expected duration of the interviews. It was established the interviews would last between ten and fifteen minutes each. A semi-structured interview protocol was followed to obtain all data. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The data was coded and analysed on Atlas.ti. Data is kept on a password-protected laptop and can be provided upon request.

### **3.2.3 Data collection method**

Data for this study was collected through qualitative semi-structured interviews. All interviews were conducted online using the Zoom platform. This measure ensured that Covid-19 protocol was being followed, and also for the convenience of players who may have been on tour.

Semi-structured interviews are widely used because they allow for an in-depth discussion regarding complex matters. The researcher can ask the interviewee to follow up questions and use the interview protocol as a guide (Evans & Lewis, 2018). In the present study, this approach gave rise to in-depth discussions on players' personal opinions and experiences.

As regards ethical aspects, participant consent was obtained from all interviewees. The Zoom meetings were recorded and then typed out in Word. Word documents were transferred to Atlas.ti where they were coded and processed to use for interpretation.

Ten interviews were concluded, by which data saturation was reached. Data saturation Braun and Clarke (2021) is reached at the point where no new information or codes are being generated from the interviews. The data collected from the interviews allowed the researcher to gain new knowledge and to answer the research question. As such, data richness was achieved (Aitken *et al.*, 2018).

### **3.3 Interview schedule**

The nature of a semi-structured interview entails that not all participants will answer questions in the same order. In many cases, one question leads to a discussion in which four or five questions are answered.

The researcher contacted contracted players to set up Zoom sessions. Interviews were conducted with these players and the interview protocol was followed. All players who participated in the study are contracted to either North-West, North-West Academy or played for a major part of their careers in the North-West province.

The interview schedule was divided into three sub sections, as noted below.

Section 1 Early development and highest level reached.

Section 2 Evaluation of the development structure

Section 3 Challenges and changes

#### **3.3.1 Section 1 Early development and highest-level reach.**

The questions that speak to this section are question 1 to 4 (see Appendix A)

1. At what age were you first introduced to cricket?
2. At what age did you receive your first one-on-one?
3. Why did you pursue cricket?
4. What is your highest level played at?

It is relevant to determine whether or not NWC or a CSA-sanctioned programme was the first to introduce cricket to these players, because this will speak to the reach of the development plan. It became clear in during the interviews that all players participating in this study were introduced to cricket at home between the ages of four and seven. The first introduction to the sport was thus not made at school or in any professional

cricket setup. Ten, or 100% of respondents, played cricket with friends or family before being formally introduced to the game.

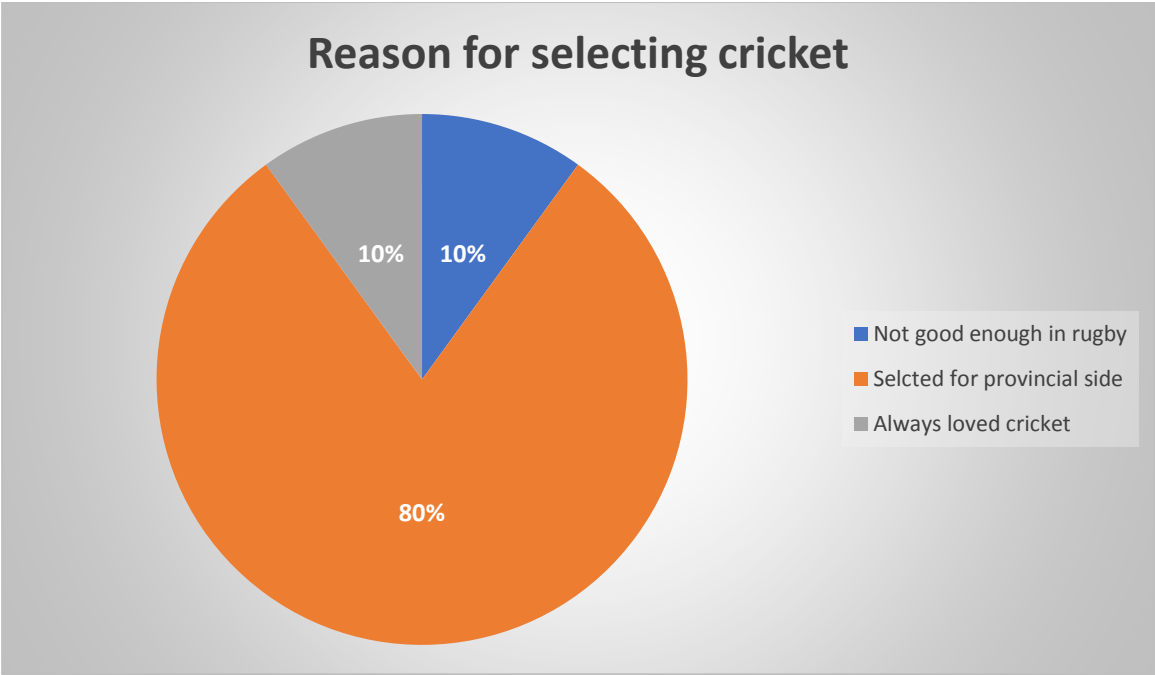
Thirty per cent (three out of the ten) of respondents did not receive one-on-one coaching while growing up. These three respondents all felt that this was a major hindrance in their development. One responded had only one private one-on-one session while in school. These respondents cited financial issues as the reason.

Respondent 8:

*“I have been playing for like 20 years, and had my first one-on-one 5 years ago, that makes a massive difference. The individual attention that a coach gives to just you as a kid you can’t replace that.”*

Only one respondent choose cricket as their first love or choice at the time. However, all respondents confirmed that cricket soon became their favourite sport. Rugby was mentioned as the first love by nine out of ten respondents.

Respondent 6, for example, said: *“Not good enough in rugby, so I choose cricket.”* The majority of the respondents (70%) chose cricket because they were selected for the age group provincial sides.



**Table 3-1 Reason for selecting cricket (Own Compilation, 2021)**

The lowest level played by respondents is U/23 franchise academy. One respondent has played international cricket. The remaining eight respondents listed first-class cricket as their highest achievement to date

### 3.3.1.1 Findings from section 1

Players were introduced to cricket at a young age through formal play. The age at which players receive one-on-one coaching for the first time is perceived to be very important. The common wisdom is, the younger the better. Players were overwhelmingly attracted to cricket through the opportunities that the game provided to them. Being selected for a provincial side at a young age is a crucial factor in creating more cricketers. Finally, rugby was initially regarded as the preferred sport by most respondents.

### 3.3.2 Section 2 Evaluation of the development structure

In section 2 of the interview protocol, questions pertaining to the strengths and weaknesses of the development structure were posed. These are questions 5 to 8 on the interview schedule.

5. What was the most important aspect of your cricket development?
6. How did the development structure cater to your specific needs?
7. Where did the development structure fail to meet your needs?
8. Where in the development system were most young players lost through faults in the system?

Question 5: What was the most important aspect of your cricket development?

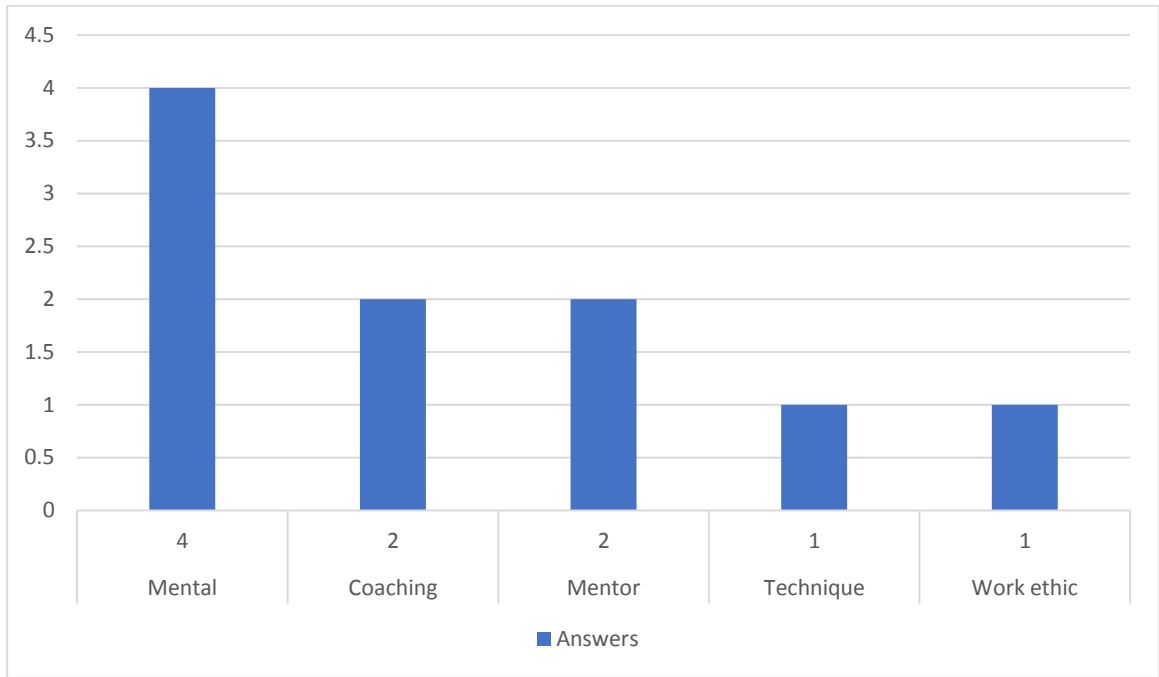
Respondents had different answers to this question, with the mental side of the game and good quality coaching being the most common. One respondent believes a sound foundation in technique to be relevant. Two respondents specified that the presence of a specific coach or mentor in their development was an important aspect.

Respondent 3: *"It's a mental thing and I think that's the biggest thing, especially now it's just more mental and anything else."*

Respondent 6 mentioned a coach who helped him deal with disappointment and which made a significant impact on his development:

*"I think I was about 16 and I didn't get picked for a North-West u/17 side. I had a coach who basically, come to me just often sort of change my mindset around it. Sort of rather than feeling sorry for yourself, setting goals for the next year, and working harder than the guys around you."*

Table.3.2 below shows a visual representation of the respondents' answers.



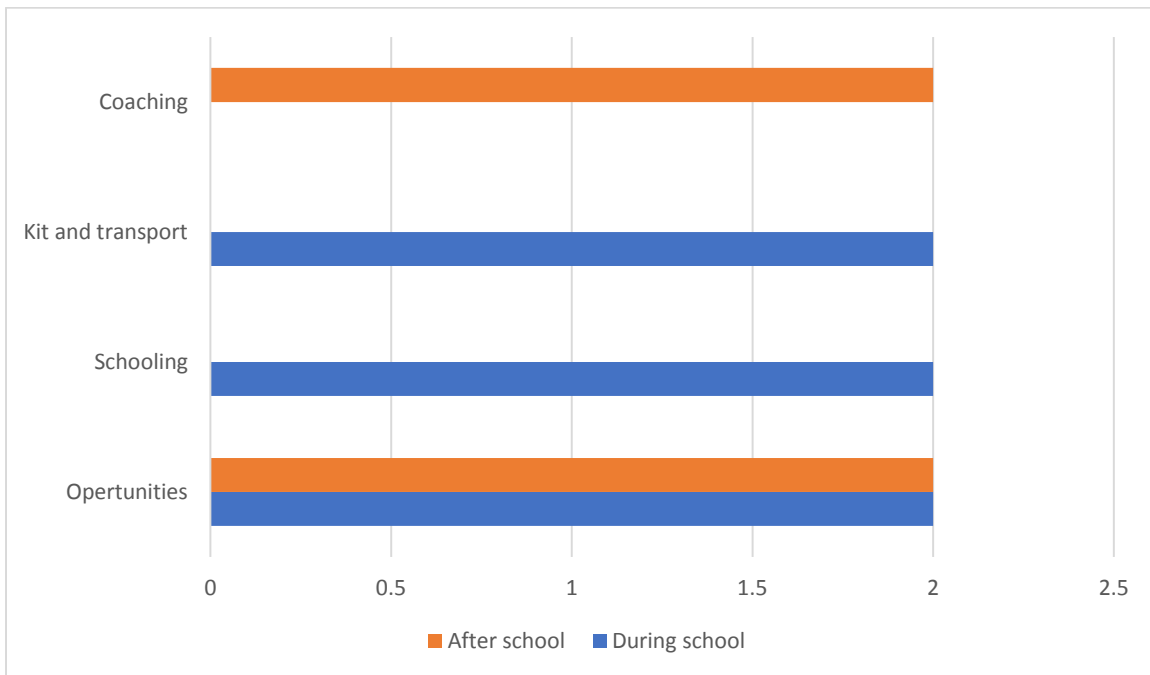
**Table 3-2 Most important aspects of development (Own Compilation, 2021)**

Question 6: How did the development structure cater to your specific needs?

The respondents answered this question by looking at different stages of development. Some regarded it as turning a club player into a professional, while others believed this to belong to earlier stages in their development. The respondents who answered the question looking at their development while in school stated three primary needs that were met:

1. Private school coaching provided them with the required skill sets (2)
2. NWC provided the necessary kit and transportation (2)
3. Opportunities to play (2)

The other respondents mentioned to the time period just after school when they went to varsity. These four respondents had a 50/50 split in the aspects provided, with half of them referring to opportunities and the other half stating coaching as the needs that were met. The table below illustrates the needs that were being met at different stages of each player's career.



**Table 3-3 Specific needs met (Own Compilation, 2021)**

The following question was used to assess weaknesses within the cricket development structure.

Question 7 Where did the development structure fail to meet your needs?

The respondents were positive about their needs being met, and felt they had what they needed to achieve their goals. They offered a number of suggestions of ways to address needs that could have been met for a better end product. Four respondents indicated that more consistent opportunities in match situations would have been beneficial. Three respondents needed individual coaching in order to thrive. Two respondents indicated that better communication in terms of role definition and career path was needed. One respondent felt completely satisfied with the product being delivered.

Respondent 1:

*“To be honest, I wouldn’t fault the unions. Some ting you could fault is coaching wise. The coaching wasn’t really focused and direct to me as an individual.”*

Question 8 Where in the development system were most young players lost through faults in the system?

This question led to longer discussions, because many respondents have experienced friend or teammates not making it through the system. Sixty percent of respondents pointed to after school when players need to join universities or academies. The main reasons given for this spillage were:

1. Not all players can afford to attend a university, and if you don't get a bursary, you have no place to go.
  2. Bottlenecks caused by the gap in quality between high school and first-class cricket:  
*"As an 18-year-old you walk into a system with established guys there, they know what they are doing so you feel like you can never catch up, or you only have a year or two before you need a job."* (Respondent 2)
  3. A lack of communication with young players about where they are and where they should go. They are unclear with regard to realistic goals for them:  
*"You get out of high school, and you walk into this system, and you just get lost you have no idea what to do to be seen and if someone is looking, you need a coach to sit you down and tell you what is the short- and long-term plans."* (Respondent 7)
- One respondent suggested that young cricketers should attempt to attend larger schools in the cities in search of better opportunities as soon as they reach high school.
- Three other respondents pointed to a boring mini-cricket programme not capturing the attention of potential players.

### **3.3.2.1 Findings from section 2**

It has become clear that the mental aspect of cricket has not been focussed on enough. Respondents mentioned this as the most important aspect of their development. The term coaching has also been mentioned, but emphasis was placed on quality coaching. A bottleneck effect happened when players leave high school and are not yet prepared to play first-class cricket. The main consequence of this is that players are lost to the system. Players that feel more individual attention is needed during the development phase, with a need for mentorship being expressed. It can therefore be seen that the system meets the basic needs of developing players but falls short with regard to specific individual needs.

### **3.3.3 Section 3 Challenges and changes**

In this section, questions 9 to 13 are discussed.

9. What was the biggest challenge in your cricket development?
10. What would you change in your development phase?
11. What would you suggest going forward?
12. What were the barriers to success?

13. Is there anything you would like to add?

Question 9: What was the biggest challenge in your cricket development?

The respondents mentioned different challenges through different phases of their careers. Below are answers ranked in order of importance.

1. Dealing with the mental side of professional cricket. This include being dropped and dealing with non-selection.
2. Breaking through. This was seen as the second toughest challenge. It entails the ability to move from club cricket and be successful in first class cricket.
3. Being able to adapt to different conditions and different formats in a short space of time.

Question 10 What would you change in your development phase?

Mental development was again a major issue in answer to this question. Some players would change life decisions, and some would make technique changes.

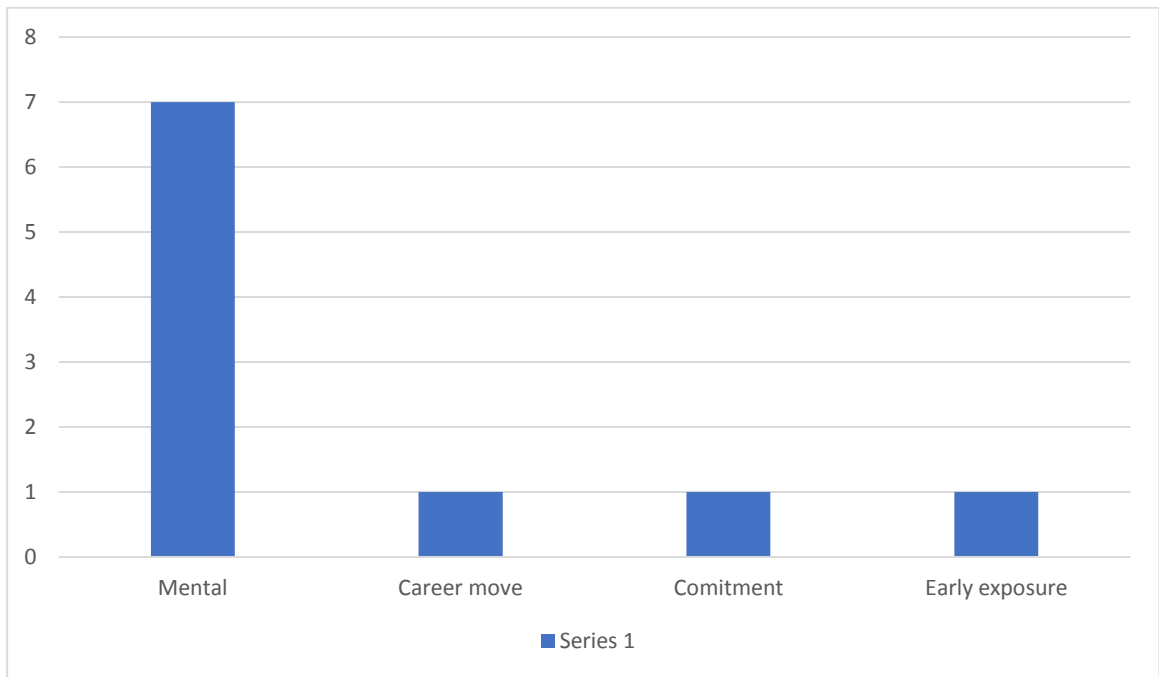
Respondent :1 *“Mentally, in the beginning”*

Respondent 3: *“Just more working on the mindset and game awareness or match awareness”*

One respondent spoke about being picked in sides and not being given a real opportunity to perform. This had a negative effect on his self-confidence.

Respondent 9 indicated that a higher level of commitment was required. Another respondent would make different career choices.

Table 3.4 below indicates the importance of mental development.



**Table 3-4 What would you change?**

(These changes also happen at different stages of careers.)

Question 11 What changes would you suggest going forward?

The interview process unearthed five critical changes that respondents would make. The changes are, in many cases, things that have been mentioned more than once in this chapter.

1. Mental coaching
2. Mentorship
3. Focus on life after cricket
4. Improve quality of coaching
5. Improve implementation of transformation plan

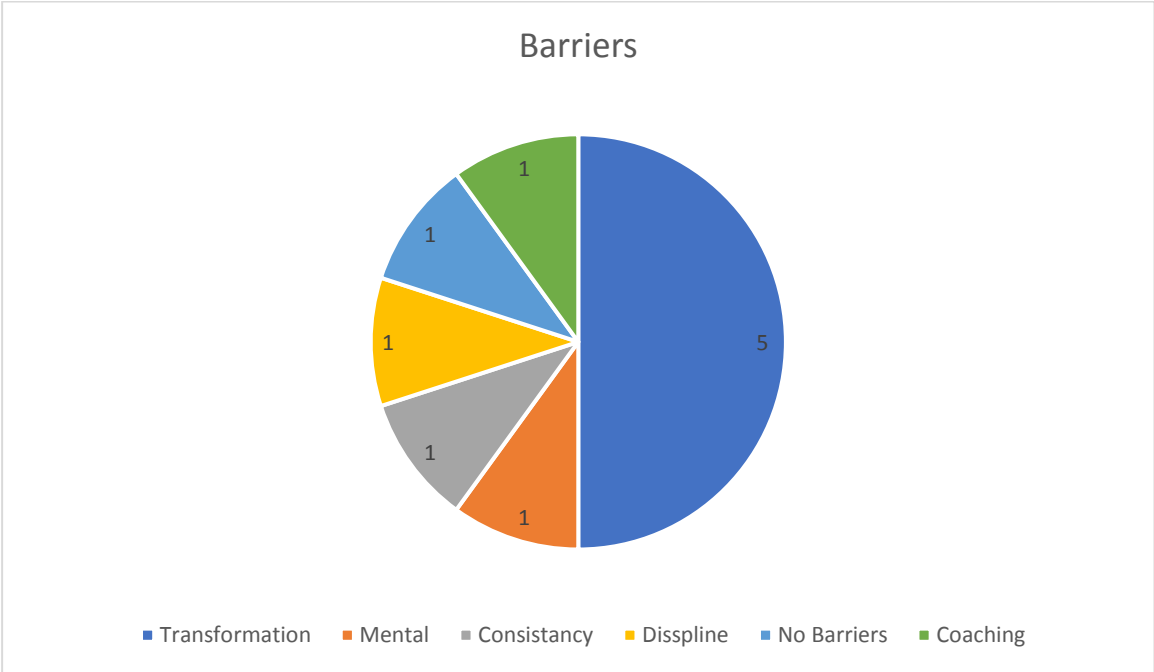
The respondents again indicated that the mental aspect of their cricket needs more attention from an early age: *“I think we need to start talking more mental side of things”* (Respondent 1)

The implementation of the transformation issue was also criticised as respondents feel it is not being utilised in the right way:

Respondent 2 said: *“Yes, we know that transformation is a thing in our country and if we are going to carry on with it, I think we need to change how we get this thing to work.”*

Cricket players can retire at a relatively young age, and respondents have voiced the need to emphasise developing a second skill. In line with earlier themes, the need to improve the level of coaching received in the North-West province was highlighted.

Question 12 What were the barriers to success in your career?



**Table 3-5 Barriers to success (Own Compilation, 2021)**

Respondents felt that the implementation of the transformation system has been the main barrier to success. Fifty percent of them agreed with this statement. Respondent 2 said: *“Same, the transformation system and the way that is being applied in terms of those strict targets.”* One respondent felt that too many excuses are being made, and that there are barriers to success in the current system.

Respondent 4 noted this: *“Barriers to success? No, no. I’ve never thought about it. Because I think there’s a lot there are way too many victims out there.”* The mental aspect of cricket was again mentioned.

Question 13 Is there anything you would like to add?

This was an open-ended question which allowed respondents to mention key points that might have been missed. The first piece of advice from respondents was to keep enjoying the game, not to lose the fun factor. Respondent 4 stressed the importance of being patient, stating: *“You have more time than you think”*, while also pointing out the trend of older players making Protea debuts in the last couple of years of their careers. Respondent 8 emphasised the importance of mental health and being able to control one’s emotional through ups and downs.

The respondents in this study have all shown willingness to contribute towards the better development of cricketers in the North-West province. The elements identified through these interviews can contribute towards a more effective development plan that will benefit all stakeholders.

### **3.3.3.1 Findings from section 3**

Section 3 presented a critical analysis of the current development structure and looked at what can be improved. Mental development was one of the most important aspects that emerged. There was general consensus that not sufficient mental coaching was and is being done. The transformation plan has been identified as a barrier to success in 70% of respondents.

The NWU has been identified as a strength in the system a can be leaned on. Players would like to see a great increase in the number of matches played, in school and just out of school, where a bottleneck in their development has been identified.

## **3.4 Discussion**

During the in-depth conversations that took place between the interviewee and interviewer, the following aspects were identified as crucial elements to success. These aspects are listed below in order of importance

### **3.4.1.1 Mental processes**

Respondents indicated that the lack of clear mental coaching or even acknowledgement of its importance is an important concept to grasp in cricket.

### **3.4.1.2 Quality coaching.**

The presence of a good quality coach or coaches is regarded as essential to development.

### **3.4.1.3 Discipline/dedication**

The ability to work hard and graft at their trade was mentioned as a factor in success. Some players felt that at a young age, they did not grasp the opportunity or the size of the opportunity that was afforded to them.

#### **3.4.1.4 Opportunity/ quality of opportunity**

Players referred to the number of games played at NWU as a contributor to success, and felt that by contrast, the lack of cricket games at the school level was a detractor. Respondents also identified the importance of the quality of the opportunity. Factors to consider with regard to quality of opportunity that emanated from the interviews are the following:

- Is the opportunity afforded in the players identified role?
- Is the player capable of utilising the opportunity at that level?
- Can the opportunities be granted over a significant period?

#### **3.4.1.5 Infrastructure**

The necessary infrastructure needs to be built in the rural areas of North-West. Respondents indicated a lack of trust in the hub system and the level of coaching received there. Indications were that talent is lost through a lack of development in these areas.

#### **3.4.1.6 Transformation**

Respondents identified the Transformation Plan as a barrier to success, and it is a challenge in their development experience. In some cases, the results of the process required by the plan has led to negative experiences or even long-term damage to players' development. It is important to note that most respondents understood and agreed with the need for a transformation plan, and that the negative associations were felt with regard to the implementation of the plan. In short, the Transformation Plan was perceived to be more of a selection process than a development process.

#### **3.4.1.7 Schooling**

Attending an academically inclined school that has a good cricket development programme in place has contributed to the level of success that respondents reached. The importance of obtaining the necessary grades to go to these schools and to be able to study or obtain a qualification outside cricket has also come to light.

#### **3.4.1.8 Communication and planning**

Respondents indicated a lack of communication regarding their futures or what was needed for them to succeed. No clear individual plan was laid out to respondents for them to know how to become successful.

#### **3.4.1.9 The North-West University**

Respondents identified the NWU cricket programme as a key point of difference in their careers. The professional coaching and quality of opportunity provided was identified as the most important contributors to success.

#### **3.4.1.10 Bottleneck after school**

Although some respondents believe that players lose interest at a young age due to a lack of quality coaching or quality opportunities, the majority of them indicated that from ages 19 to 21 most players were lost. The young players moving into club cricket or to university face a great many new external factors. Also, competition for places means that players have to wait a long time for opportunities. The absence of a clear plan for individuals may lead to the abandonment of the cricket dream.

### **3.5 Summary**

The primary aim of this chapter was to critically investigate the development of cricket in the North-West province of South Africa empirically. Semi-structure interview protocols with current and previous players who had links with NWC were followed to gain new insights. Professional cricketers were interviewed, and insights and opinions were shared regarding the development structures within NWC. The respondents had an overwhelmingly positive experience of the NWC structure.

The interviews provided valuable insights into the struggles and strengths of cricket under the NWC mantle.

The following chapter, chapter 4, presents recommendations emanating from the study and a final conclusion

## **CHAPTER 4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION (CHAPTER)**

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#### **4.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapters of this dissertation, a literature review and empirical investigation were conducted. The primary goal of the study was to critically analyse the development of cricket in the North-West province. The main aspects regarding cricket development in the North-West province are dealt with below with reference to the empirical investigation. The findings below indicate the successful completion of the primary research goal.

#### **4.2 Main findings from the study**

The empirical investigation identified ten key aspects towards the development of cricket.

##### **4.2.1 Mental processes**

Mental processes include game plan psychological factors. Mental development, according to Hazra and Biswas (2018), can be seen as a linear process – it follows that older players may tend to be more mentally capable. The importance attributed to the mental side of cricket means that it should be seen as a competitive advantage. Therefore, one should refrain from picking young players for older age groups because they may not be mentally prepared for this. Such a step could hurt their confidence and, as such, their mental growth.

##### **4.2.1.1 Recommendations**

The NWC Dragons should employ a sport psychologist to further grow the mental games of senior players.

Representative teams should attend mental coaching sessions in the same way as they practice nets or fielding sessions before tournaments

Coaches must receive training in mental coaching, for them to better convey how to mentally prepare for cricket.

A mentorship programme for players needs to be instituted. Once a player turns 14, he should be assigned to a coach or senior official within NWC. The player will form part of that coach's mental group for the next four years. This will build a bond between coach and player; and the coach will be able to better understand when players are ready for opportunities and how to better help a player to achieve goals. Senior Dragons players can also be used as mentors.

#### **4.2.2 Quality coaching**

Players do not simply need to be coached; they need to be coached by well-qualified, dedicated, and motivated cricket coaches. All coaches in the NWC structure should be level 2 qualified

##### **4.2.2.1 Recommendations**

Regarding coaches' development programme, a clear pathway needs to be created for players to join the coaching infrastructure - whether it be while they are still playing or after. New coaches that want to grow within the structure need to start in the rural areas and be assessed on their performance to become an age group representative coach. The added benefit of succession planning for active players can be accomplished by this. Coaches need to be pressured to perform, and a competitive approach to the coaching needs to be adopted. Coaches hone their skills while working with younger players, and the lessons learned coaching junior cricket will be invaluable later on.

#### **4.2.3 Communication and planning**

Players need to see a blueprint to success. This means that players need to understand that things may happen because of the natural succession of events, meaning they may have to keep working a year or two before they get recognition. In order to ensure that players understand the processes and patterns of development, these should be made clear to all players

##### **4.2.3.1 Recommendations**

This can be accomplished by the same mentorship programme that was suggested under 4.2.1.

#### **4.2.4 The North-West University**

Respondents acknowledged the importance of the NWU in their cricket development. The geographic location of Senwes Park has enabled an easy working relationship with NWU. NWC should further explore this advantage to ensure that all benefits from this relationship are utilised. The university can provide total person development, developing the player and the person.

##### **4.2.4.1 Recommendations**

The university can provide more than players, and games. Using the young players who are waiting for opportunities to coach and mentor school players can be beneficial. These players can, in turn, be mentored by senior Dragons players. Young coaches should join the NWU for two-week periods to gain valuable experience in the coaching setup.

#### **4.2.5 Opportunity/quality of opportunity**

Respondents bemoaned the current lack of consistent and quality opportunities. Players need to be constantly playing at a certain level to be able to express themselves. They also need to be given the opportunities when they are ready and not because they tick a box.

##### **4.2.5.1 Recommendations**

The current national weeks are for the following age groups, u/11, u/13, u/15, u/17 and /u19. The recommendation is that a player can only play at an age group once, this will give more play opportunities. The remaining age group i.e., u/12, u/14, u/16 u/18 will play in an NWC skills accelerator tournament.

###### **4.2.5.1.1 Tournament rules.**

- 50 over cricket
- Only the top five batsmen to bat on any given match day.
- Each batsman must face 60 balls regardless of dismissals
- All players in the squad of 15 will bat twice during the week
- Normal scoring to be applied, to obtain a winner at each match

- Batsmen averages are to be calculated according to the number of dismissals. If a batsman scored 50 in their 60 allocated balls but was dismissed twice, they will have an average of 25
- Six bowlers to be allocated before the match (non-batsmen) can each bowl a maximum of eight overs with two being awarded nine overs.
- Captains to be changed for each match.

The tournament aims to give a clear equal opportunity to all players to express themselves.

#### **4.2.6 Discipline/dedication**

Many young players lose focus and discipline when the external factors of post-school life hit them. This phase of life coincides with the bottleneck effect at NWC, and the combination ends careers.

##### **4.2.6.1 Recommendations**

Clear communication channels accompanied by the suggested mentorship programme will help young players to remain focussed. A mentor can help the young player not make the same mistakes they made.

#### **4.2.7 Transformation**

The execution of the Transformation Plan has been criticised by participants. Much has been written about the ineffectiveness of a quota system (Dove *et al.*, 2021). NWC does not have the authority to change this concept, however. The only change they can make is in how the plan is implemented.

##### **4.2.7.1 Recommendations**

To change the Transformation Plan from being perceived as a selection process to a development plan, all steps of the action plan can be followed. The action plan is designed to develop cricketers if implemented in rural areas it will in turn develop, more players of colour.

#### **4.2.8 Schooling**

The importance of a school with an effective cricket programme has been made clear. Respondents noted the coaching they received at school as key to their success.

Primary school provides the essential base of skills development, and skills such as hand-eye coordination together with a basic understanding of the game. Secondary school, in turn, provides opportunities in the form of matches against other schools. Players should participate in as many games as possible. This is where larger schools can provide strength versus strength competition.

#### **4.2.8.1 Recommendations**

The coaching development structure can be implemented at school level. Currently, NWC can educate coaches at the schools. Implementing full cricket programmes at schools that do not offer cricket at the moment and appointing a head coach from the pool of talented coaches is the next logical step. This will allow young players to experience the pride of playing for their schools.

#### **4.2.9 Infrastructure**

The Potchefstroom-centralised approach has had a detrimental approach on the infrastructure. Picking talented players and moving them to Potchefstroom or to train only at Senwes reduces the probability that late bloomers can be picked up.

#### **4.2.9.1 Recommendations**

The plan suggested in 4.2.8 will contribute towards addressing this issue. A Dragons on the move programme can be launched using contracted players and coaches to drive to different towns and townships to further the game. This should take place on a weekly basis and should be made part of the expectations for first-class players. The North-West province is divided into four districts. The Dragons players will be divided into four squads so that each squad can work with a district. Matches between districts will build camaraderie and will ensure that players take the coaching seriously.

#### **4.2.10 Bottlenecks after school**

Most players are being lost in this period of development. The competition for places means that a player can be very far from their dreams, and this will leave them disheartened.

#### **4.2.10.1 Recommendations**

NWC should launch an under 20 league to ensure that players have playing opportunities while they are making their way out of school. Clubs are also needed to be

incentivised to enter u/20 teams in the league. The mentorship programme can help to calm players down who feel they are not moving fast enough.

A figure depicting the nature of the action plan and a discussion of its multi-level effectiveness follow below.

**Effectiveness of the action plan:**



## **Figure 4-1 Action plan (Own Compilation, 2021)**

### **4.3 Limitations of the study**

The study was located in the North-West province of South Africa. The results can therefore not be accepted as the norm in any other provinces. The respondents are all professional cricket players and have made it through the system. The results can, however, not be taken as representative of all cricketers in the North-West province. The relatively small sample size needs to be considered when examining the results. The participants in the study had extremely good knowledge of the system, but also a positive view of the study.

### **4.4 Critical evaluation of the study**

The resolve and accomplishment of the study are discussed below and measured by the achievement of the respective primary and secondary objectives, as discussed in Section 1.5 of the study.

#### **4.4.1 Primary objective**

Assessing the development of cricket in the North-West.

The findings have shown the successful attainment of the primary objective. The ability to present findings with the accompanied recommendations is proof of that.

#### **4.4.2 Secondary objectives**

The secondary objectives of this research are the following:

- Investigate how to further the game in the North-West community by researching the current structure and its results will be taken into consideration

The empirical investigation provided the information needed to complete this objective. Question 11 in the interview protocol in particular speaks to this objective. The following suggestions were made:

1. Mental coaching
2. Mentorship
3. Focus on life after cricket
4. Improve quality of coaching
5. Improve implementation of transformation plan

- Determining what the most important factors are in developing a first-class cricketer.

Crucial elements that were researched are noted below:

- Assessing the major challenges in the cricket structure and what players perceive as threats to the system.

Barriers to success were identified and tabled in Table 3.5.

- Providing a clear plan as to which changes can be made to the current system, and this plan should include the ages at which players need to receive one-on-one coaching.

An action plan was created to be in the recommendations. It was also found that the earlier one-on-ones take place, the better.

- Identifying the reasons for a lack of a local fan base.

Rugby was identified as major problem. Most players were found to like rugby more than cricket at a young age. This can only be changed by sustained success by the national cricket side.

#### **4.5 Recommendations for future research**

The research was aimed at players who were all active players in the North-West province. This is a relatively small sample size. This study speaks to what the current successful players see as crucial to success. The representative size cannot be seen as all cricketers in the North-West, and it is largely players based in Potchefstroom. The respondents have been largely positive regarding the NWC structure, which could be expected as they have been afforded the dream of playing professional cricket by the structure.

Future research should focus on those individuals that played representative cricket at school but never played first-class cricket. These players can provide insights into why they were lost in the system and whether or not it can be prevented.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In chapter 4, conclusions and recommendations were made following the evidence from chapter 3. An illustrated action plan was provided to ensure the future development of cricket in the North-West province. The action plan is aimed at continuing and improving the current system.

The semi-structured interviews led to the required information necessary to draw up the action plan.

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## **ANNEXURES (TOC\_HEADING)**

### **APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. At what age were you first introduced to cricket?
2. At what age did you receive your first one-on-one coaching session?
3. Why did you choose to pursue cricket?
4. What is the highest level you played at?
5. What was the most important aspect of your cricket development?
6. How did the development structure cater to your specific needs?
7. Where did the development structure fail to meet your needs?
8. Where in the development system were most young payers lost through faults in the system?
9. What was the biggest challenge in your cricket development?
10. What would you change in your development phase?
11. What changes would you suggest going forward?
12. What were the barriers to success in your career?
13. Is there anything you would like to add?

## APPENDIX B ETHICAL CLEARANCE



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY  
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Economic and Management Sciences Research  
Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

1 October 2021

Prof R Lotriet  
*Per e-mail*  
Dear Prof Lotriet

**EMS-REC FEEDBACK: 26032021 (Round Robin)**  
**Student: Fokkens, W (23628790)(NWU-00042-21-A4)**  
**Study leader: Prof R Lotriet – MBA**

Your ethics application on, *Exploring the development of cricket in the North West Province*, which served via Round Robin, refers.

**Outcome:**

Approved as a minimal risk study. A number **NWU-00042-21-A4** is given for one year of ethics clearance.

Please note that the ethics approval of this application is subject to the Covid-19 protocols.

Kind regards,

**Prof Mark Rathbone**  
**Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)**

## APPENDIX C PERMISSION LETTER



BUSINESS SCHOOL  
BESIGHEIDSKOOL  
SEKOLO SA KGWEBU

### Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

#### NWU Business School

Assessing the development of cricket in the previously disadvantaged community of the North West Province

Research conducted by  
Mr. Walter Fokkens (23628790)

Cell: 0826468408

Date: 30/06/2021

North West Cricket

I would like formal permission for the employees of North West Cricket to participate in a research study conducted by Walter Fokkens, master's in business administration student from the Graduate School at the North- West University Potchefstroom Campus. The purpose of the study is to assess the development of cricket in the previously disadvantaged community of the North West Province.

Please note the following:

This is an anonymous study survey as your players names will not appear on any document. The answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.

- The interviews will take 10 to 15 minutes
- Players are welcome to leave at any point and choose not to part take
- Please contact my study leader, North West University, Professor L Lotriet on 079 492 4775 if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.

YES

Date of consent: 30/06/2021

Name: HP Prinsloo

Title: CEO

# APPENDIX D DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

## Declaration

This is to declare that I, Dr. L Combrink

Language editor and translator

have language edited the study

with the title

**Exploring cricket development in the North-West  
Province**

by

**W Fokkens**



*L Combrink*

*12 Dec 2021*