



USA CRICKET

ANNUAL REPORT 2019





CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

I am happy to present you with the USA Cricket 2019 Annual Report. 2019 was a year that I'm sure we'll look back on as a crucial stepping stone for the growth of cricket in the U.S.

I want to highlight our four biggest developments this year and talk about why I'm so excited about the future of cricket in America.

Firstly, this April, the US Men's National Team achieved ODI status. This is the first time since 2004 that the team is consistently playing ODI matches and it marks the dawning of a new day for cricket in America. ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 presents the national team with 36 ODIs against top quality cricketing nations and includes 12 matches played in the USA.

Yes, there is the importance of taking one of the three qualification spots from this league for the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier in 2022, but it's this regularity and certainty of top quality fixtures that is so crucial for the development of our Men's National Team. Win or lose, the experiences of playing against our peer group of Associate Member teams around the world is invaluable and will only help to bolster Team USA for the exciting future ahead.

Secondly, I'd like to highlight USA Cricket's long-term strategic partnership with American Cricket Enterprises. After a comprehensive search for a partner to launch a domestic T20 league of international appeal, we have partnered with American Cricket Enterprises. Their vision for cricket is impressive and they understand the importance of initiatives beyond just the development of a T20 league.

ACE really cares about doing things the right way and has a focus on growing the sport as a whole, not just at the professional level. We are still in the process of determining exactly how the relationship with ACE will work for the future but much work has already been done and we will be highlighting their plans in due course. In the meantime, you should know that cricket pitches are being built around the country, discussions are underway with many potential venues for the Major League teams, and plans are well underway for a Minor League to commence in 2020 as part of the pathway to getting professional cricket in this country up and running very shortly.



Thirdly, we have made crucial strides in the Women's game here in America. On the pitch, USA Women qualified for the T20 World Cup Global Qualifier with an impressive win over Canada in Florida, although we were unable to make the jump up to the global stage from the Qualifier in Scotland. In 2020 we'll be targeting large growth in the women's game across the country, as well as trying to uncover and nurture the next generation of women and girl cricketers around which appropriate pathways and programs can be built.

Lastly, we hired Iain Higgins to be the first CEO of USA Cricket. Iain has a wealth of experience in global cricket administration across all areas, spending more than a decade at the ICC as both its Chief Operating Officer & General Counsel. We are very fortunate to get such an accomplished individual to move from Dubai to the United States. I know that we were able to persuade Iain to make the move only because he believes in the opportunities that we have here in this country and that this really is the right moment in time to start laying down the plans to truly make cricket a mainstream sport in America.

The future of cricket here in America is bright. Today we already see children playing cricket in school yards, in clubs and in academies across almost every state in America. Perhaps one day those children will grow up to be the next stars for Team USA...

..so it is our duty to give them the opportunity to fulfill their dreams. If we get some of the basic things right over the next few years, I see America becoming a global cricket powerhouse, competing with the other top cricketing nations on the biggest international stages. The journey won't be easy, and like any worthwhile journey, it is going to take some time, but I am confident that the decisions taken in 2019 have put us on the right path for the betterment of cricket across the United States.

I would like to finish by saying a sincere thank you to everyone in our diverse and wonderful cricketing community, from Arkansas to Wyoming and every town or city where cricket bats and balls are picked up. It is you who help sustain the sport in the United States. Our clubs and leagues wouldn't run without your passion, commitment and love for the game. And on behalf of the USA Cricket Board of Directors, our thanks go to you all for your efforts during 2019; and we ask for your ongoing support in the months and year ahead.

I now invite you to read our Annual Report and see for yourselves what USA Cricket has done over the course of 2019.

PARAAG MARATHE

USA Cricket Chairman



Professional League Partner Selection

In November 2018, USA Cricket put out a request for proposals to find a partner to run a professional T20 league in the United States. We received more than 20 well thought out proposals, each sharing their vision of professional cricket in America.

Ultimately, we selected six proposals and invited them each to present their plans in detail. Those presentations were made to the USA Cricket Board in Santa Clara in February 2019. After thorough review, the Board of Directors decided that American Cricket Enterprises (ACE) had the best vision for the future of cricket in the United States and they were unanimously chosen as our partner. Over the course of the last nine months, ACE has been working closely in partnership with USA Cricket, among other things, to develop infrastructure and improve facilities at all levels further down the line.

In addition to setting itself up to be able to launch a successful professional league, ACE has helped provide additional resources to support the USA National Teams. Initially, this investment was focused on providing the men's national team with the best possible environment for them to build upon their attainment of ODI status and to seek qualification for the T20 World Cup in Australia. Moving forward, such resources will be used to support and increase the levels of professionalism and competitiveness at the top level of the game in order to ensure that the national teams can continue to progress.



CEO Hiring

In January 2019, USA Cricket partnered with global leader Creative Artists Agency to drive a search process that garnered interest from leaders around the world both from within and outside of cricket. During that search, hundreds of candidates were initially screened and nearly 50 of those were engaged in conversations. USA Cricket was very pleased to appoint Iain Higgins as the first CEO of USA Cricket in August 2019.

Iain has an esteemed sporting background, and is held in high regard by the international cricket community. Prior to joining USA Cricket, Iain was the COO & General Counsel of the International Cricket Council in Dubai. Crucially, having worked closely with the Project USA team since 2015, he has a good understanding of the challenges of developing the sport in the United States and has hit the ground running in his first months as CEO of USA Cricket.

Iain has been focused on bringing together the partnership with ACE and setting up the requisite staff and structures within USA Cricket to support the growth of cricket in the United States. As part of these new structures, Eric Parthen, Project Manager, and Wade Edwards, Project Officer, finished up with USA Cricket in December 2019. They both played pivotal roles in establishing USA Cricket at the outset and in guiding the performances of the national teams during their time with USA Cricket. Their departure was in line with the planned transition to the new leadership of USA Cricket from the ICC's 'Project USA' team; and there has been overwhelming interest in the job adverts that were placed towards the end of the year.



Associate Member Approval by ICC

In January 2019, USA Cricket was approved as an Associate Member of the ICC. Thanks to the hard work of passionate volunteers and the cricketing community unifying together across America, USA Cricket was formally recognized as the ICC's 105th member country.

Represented by Board Chairman Paraag Marathe, USA Cricket formally participated in the ICC annual conference last July in London for the first time. The conference represented an important opportunity to connect with fellow ICC members and identify ways to collaborate in the future.

The importance of USA Cricket's membership of the ICC cannot be overstated, and our continued good-standing with the ICC is critical. In December 2019, USA Cricket completed its first annual yearly membership review and our overall associate membership ranking across all of the relevant metrics is the highest that it has ever been.



MEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

2019 was a very busy year for Team USA Men's National Team, and it was a year of historic firsts for American cricket. Nearly 40 matches were spread across North America, the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East for Team USA.

The Men's National Team began their year in March in the Middle East on a preparatory tour of the UAE that saw the first in a number of 'firsts' for the year, with the first ever Twenty20 International to be played by USA. With the ICC decision to grant T20I status to all member nations in 2018, USA were entitled to play in their historic first T20I. The opponents were UAE at the start of the tour in Dubai, and USA were cruelly robbed of a maiden victory by bad weather having posted an imposing 143 for 7 from their reduced 15 overs. UAE were 29 for 2 in the 4th over when the rain came down to leave the Match Abandoned and the hosts took the spoils and the series in the 2nd T20I the very next day.

The remainder of the tour focused on the 50 Over format as Team USA built up for the critical ICC World Cricket League Division 2 in Namibia where 4 of the 6 sides would gain One Day International Status and a place in the new ICC Cricket World Cup League 2.

The remainder of the UAE tour was a strong success, with USA's first win over an English County in over a century as USA beat Lancashire comfortably. USA were then successful several times over UAE, the highlight of which a 9-wicket win inspired by Steven Taylor's 5 wicket haul and 68 not out.

In late April, Team USA flew out for Africa with Canada, Hong Kong, Oman, Papua New Guinea and hosts Namibia all battling it out for the 4 qualification spots. After a tense opening two matches, where USA lost to Oman before taking a stunning 2 run win over Namibia in remarkable circumstances as Ali Khan's 5 wicket heroics closed out a clutch win, USA knew two more wins would be enough to guarantee a top 4 place. First up was a comprehensive 10 wicket win over PNG, before Xavier Marshall's brilliant century, his first for USA, led America to the promised land of ODI Status with an 84 run win over Hong Kong.

There were scenes of great celebration from everyone in the Team USA camp in Windhoek as USA achieved what had been a long-term focus for the squad dating back to USA's World Cricket League 4 triumph on home soil in late 2016.



Three days after gaining ODI status, USA then played its first official One Day International since the Champions Trophy in 2004 as PNG took a 5 wicket win in the 3rd place-play off for the tournament. But the job was done as Team USA moved on to ICC Cricket World Cup League 2.

Having guided USA to ODI status, amidst a series of changes to the personnel around the national team, Head Coach, Pubudu Dassanayke resigned in July 2019 and former India wicketkeeper Kiran More was put in place as Cricket Operations Director. With aspirations of first qualification for a T20 World Cup, USA first had to get past the challenge of the ICC Americas Regional Qualifier in Bermuda in August. Unfortunately the combined old rivals of Canada, and the hosts, Bermuda, proved the undoing for Team USA who fell at the first hurdle and couldn't make the global qualifier. USA lost both games against Bermuda and Canada to finish 3rd in the table and fall to a disappointing exit. This was no doubt the most disappointing part of the year and many lessons were learned along the way, but we are fortunate to have another T20 World Cup to aim at very quickly, with another ICC Americas Regional Qualifier scheduled to take place in 2020.

The next 'first' for Team USA was just around the corner, as USA played host to One Day International cricket on American soil for the first time. Namibia and Papua New Guinea were the visitors in the tri-series.

And the very first ODI on American soil saw Team USA take a first ever ODI win with Aaron Jones' 77 and Elmore Hutchinson's late fireworks combining to help USA to a tightly fought win over Papua New Guinea. Two more ODI wins followed to get USA off to a perfect start in the new league before JP Kotze's stunning century for Namibia denied the American clean sweep in the final match in Fort Lauderdale.

There wasn't a huge break before the next engagement for USA, as Team USA returned to the Super50 again in the Caribbean. The tour served as the perfect build-up to the next scheduled ODI tri-series in the UAE in December as James Pamment stepped into the role as Interim Head Coach, with Kiran More moving on.

Although there were just 2 wins from the 8 group matches, coming against the West Indies Emerging Players, who went on to win the tournament, and Guyana Jaguars, the tour was brilliant for the continued development of the USA squad with new faces like Cameron Stevenson and Ian Holland performing strongly. Along the way, USA lost previous star Hayden Walsh Jr to an amazing opportunity to play for the West Indies, and Ali Khan elected to focus his time and energy on opportunities in the shorter format of the game.

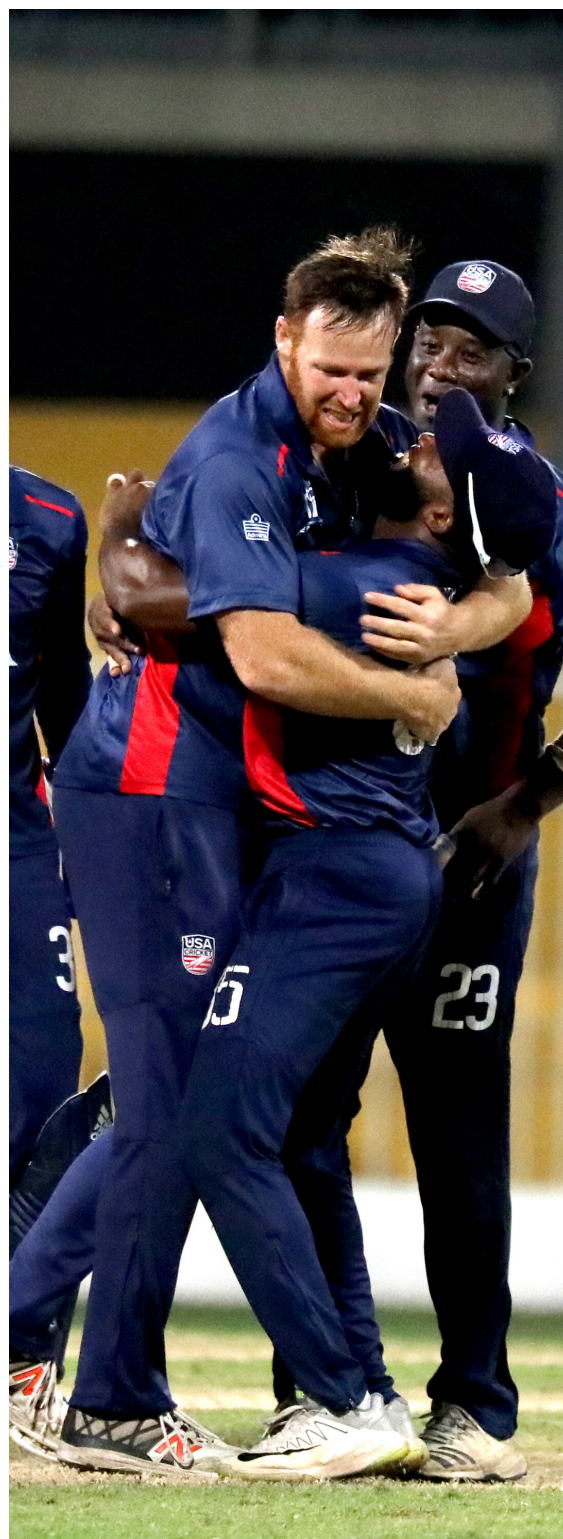
The preparation in the Caribbean paid off in spades in the tour of the UAE, as USA dominated the tri-series against the UAE and Scotland.

Three consecutive wins got the series off to a brilliant start with Aaron Jones making a USA record in ODI cricket score of 95 and captain Saurabh Netravalkar taking the first ever five wicket haul in USA colors in ODI cricket. They were tight-fought wins to start with over UAE and then Scotland, before a 98 run hammering of the hosts in Dubai.

The final international of the year gave USA the chance to do a remarkable double over Scotland, who themselves had been beating the soon to be world champions in England less than 18 months prior. Team USA were the better for much of the match, but Scotland pulled out all the stops to take a closely fought win and leave USA with 3 wins out of 4 for a second time in their two tri-series. Ending the 2019 calendar year on top of the table and in prime position to take one of the 3 qualification spots in the CWC Qualifier 2022 was good consolation for American fans.

2020 starts with the next ODI tri-series in Nepal, in advance of which USA will have a short preparatory camp in Mumbai, with three scheduled practice matches put on by the Mumbai Cricket Association with the support of the BCCI. And then it's back to Florida for USA where they will play host to Scotland and the UAE in Fort Lauderdale in early April.

James Pamment will finish his tenure as the Interim Head Coach after the tour of Nepal to continue his role with the Mumbai Indians in the IPL and USA Cricket will appoint a new permanent Head Coach in the first quarter of 2020 having advertised the position in December 2019.





WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

It was also a year of firsts for USA Cricket Women's National Team with the focus of the year being Twenty20 cricket and the quest to qualify for a first T20 World Cup appearance in Australia 2020.

First up was the challenge of Canada in a three-match series in the ICC Americas Regional Qualifier that would decide who would represent the region in Scotland at the end of the summer. May 17th in Florida was the date for both sides to make their first ever official T20 International appearance.

All players were making their T20 International debut but most eye-catching was 14 year-old Lisa Ramjit who made history taking 2 for 4 and becoming the USA's youngest ever official international.

Game 1 saw a dominant performance with the bat from Erica Rendler, who drove USA to a 10 wicket win, before USA sealed their place in Scotland the following day with a 37 run win to spark jubilant scenes in the Team USA squad. A 3-0 whitewash was closed out on the final day as captain Sindhu Sriharsha made 42 not out.

Following a preparatory tour of the UK after a summer of planning and preparing in the United States, USA arrived in Scotland in September with high hopes of taking one of the two qualification places on offer for Australia 2020 from the 8 competing teams. Very poor weather blighted the tournament with two of USA's group games having to be reduced in overs, and Team USA couldn't get the wins they needed to get out of their group. Losses to hosts Scotland, Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea meant USA were left playing for ranking positions and the dream of Australia was, unfortunately, extinguished.

Defeat to Netherlands in the plate competition meant the best USA could hope for was a 7th place finish, and Team USA saved their best performance for the final day of the tournament as USA's most comprehensive performance gave a 6 wicket win over Namibia and a positive end to a difficult tournament.

In the latter stages of the year, the focus turned to long term strategic planning undertaken by the USA Cricket Committee in allegiance with USA Women's National Team Head Coach, Julia Price.



It was determined that the overarching philosophy for the women's high performance program in 2020 ought to be more focused on identifying future talent and providing such talent with opportunities to mature and develop rather than continuing to invest all time and resources into the existing squad.

As a consequence USA Cricket will announce a series of talent ID camps across the US in the first quarter of 2020, which will be designed to try and identify as many talented girls and women as possible, not just for the future but also those that might have the potential to displace existing national team squad members. Once that talent ID exercise is complete and we have a better understanding of the true depth of the female talent pool, the women's national squad would be brought together in the next phase of their preparation for the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier in regional and national competitions, camps and competitive match practice.

A final first for 2019 came in the shape of Women's National Team Head Coach Julia Price as she became assistant coach of the Brisbane Heat Men's Team in the Big Bash League. Julia is the first ever female assistant coach in Big Bash history, and USA Cricket is proud of our continued engagement with Julia.

2020 will crucially see Team USA Women's National Team travel to Sri Lanka for the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifier, having secured our place with victory over Canada in the Regional Americas Qualifier in May 2019. This tournament is likely to be in the third quarter of 2020.





YOUTH CRICKET

The only other team to wear the United States color during 2019 was Team USA Under 19 Boy's team, who had also had dreams of going to a World Cup with the ICC Americas Under 19 Cricket World Cup Qualifier being the focus of the year in July 2019.

USA entered the tournament needing to break the streak of three consecutive 2nd place finishes as Canada U19 had triumphed over USA in 2013, 2015 and 2017. All of the Under 19 Cricket World Cup Qualifier matches were held in Toronto, Canada and the week started in perfect fashion as USA made it three from their opening three matches with wins over Bermuda, Argentina, and the Cayman Islands.

The highlight of these opening three wins was the remarkable bowling performance of Raj Vyas who took a USA youth record 7 for 10 as the Caymans were bowled all out for 29. So the tournament came down to a straight shoot-out on the final day after Canada had also won their first three games. The hosts' greater composure won the day though in a keenly fought final encounter as Team USA Under 19s were bowled out for 112 in 32.4 overs.

USA fought valiantly and gave Canada a big scare at 56 for 4, but Canada took the win by 5 wickets to qualify for South Africa 2020.

Towards the end of 2019, the USA Cricket Board started to put plans together to be able to provide more playing opportunities in 2020 for youth players of both genders and this will be a key strategic area of focus moving forward especially given the recent decision by the ICC to stage an Under 19 Cricket World Cup in the future.

We have taken important first strides in implementing structures for the roll-out of our world class Entry Level Program, the "Rookie League". In late 2019, we advertised for volunteer Youth Coordinators that will be appointed across the country to help in this endeavor and we have had a wonderful response to this. It is anticipated that with the appointment of the new Development Manager in early 2020, this enthusiasm for junior cricket and a world-class program can start to be rolled out across the country in order to support significant and tangible growth of boys and girls participation in the sport.

Board Governance

In 2019, USA Cricket announced the appointments of its Treasurer (Avinash Gaje) and Secretary (Suraj Viswanathan) and eleven different sub-committees made up of directors and other independent members.

During this election cycle, two board-level positions are being decided –one Individual Director and the Male Player Director. Venu Pisike and Usman Shuja have held these two positions to date and by the time of the AGM, the results of the election will have been announced.

During 2019, following an incredibly successful launch in which membership was provided free, we have seen a drop-off in the membership numbers of USA Cricket. There are a number of reasons for that, but USA Cricket is working very hard on its membership proposal, and will be launching an updated program in 2020 which we hope will allow us to grow significantly and to provide attractive and much needed benefits to our entire community.

A strategy for developing cricket in the USA

One of the most important aspects of the work done by USA Cricket came towards the end of 2019. USA Cricket began developing a strategy to support the growth and development of the sport across the United States of America.

This will help focus the efforts of the entire cricket community and align everyone behind behind a set of common goals and key initiatives. We anticipate being able to share this work with the community early in 2020.



Domestic Cricket – planning to launch a Minor League

Significant off the field progress has been made in tandem with our partners at ACE throughout the second half of 2019 in the development of a Minor League competition that will provide real substance and competitiveness to elite domestic cricket in the USA and form part of the pathway through to the Major League in due course and the USA national teams. The USA Cricket Board is scheduled to consider all of the Minor League plans at its February Board meeting and we expect to make an exciting launch announcement shortly after that.

Minor League Cricket will launch in 2020 and has been specifically designed to complement and not compete with the pre-existing domestic cricketing structures across America.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of USA Cricket is scheduled to take place on February 21, 2020 in New York City with members able to engage remotely.

During this meeting, in addition to presenting the 2019 Annual Report, we will discuss the latest developments, updates and plans for 2020.





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