

*In the name of Allah the Most Gracious the most Merciful*

By the Grace of Allah the Almighty, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association of Australia participated in the Al-Masroor Cricket Tournament in London for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running. The preparations for this Tournament had started a few months prior to the tournament.

This year, players from all the Majalis participated in the trials with great zeal and enthusiasm. After the trials, players were short-listed and camps and practices were organized in Sydney and other respective States. The final 15 players' squad was asked to come for a camp a few days before the final departure for England.

The camp was organized in Sydney, where the team played two practice matches against two different teams, which were both won by the Ahmadiyya Australian team.

Initially the plan was to leave Sydney on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2010, but due to the temporary closure of England's airspace because of the volcanic ash, the flight was postponed till the 19<sup>th</sup> of May. However, the team had still gathered at the Bait-Ul-Huda Mosque on the 17<sup>th</sup>, where the presentation of the team jacket was made to Ameer and Missionary In-Charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Australia, Maulana Mahmood Ahmad. Dinner was served for everyone, including the President of the UK Tour Committee and other respected guests who were also present.



Ameer Sahib had a sitting with the players on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May just before departure where he spoke about the importance and real objective of the Tour and led the team in silent prayers.



By Allah's Grace, the team left on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2010 from Sydney airport and via Taiwan's Taipei airport finally landed at Heathrow Airport in London on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2010. The whole journey took 36 hours from departure time to the final destination with the journey being quite exhausting and gruelling. However, the team's fortitude was stronger than ever by being closer to the beloved Imam and Khalifa of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba).

All the teams stayed at Bait-ul-Futuh Mosque where the hospitality experienced was of the highest degree and the team was given the first row position in Friday prayers behind Huzur (aba).

The tournament started on Friday morning, but team Australia played their first match after Friday prayers against Germany at 1500 hrs (GMT). It was an 18-over match in which Australia won the toss and elected to bat first.



Team Australia's openers put on a remarkable opening stand of 100 runs before losing the 1<sup>st</sup> wicket of Junaid Abro, who personally scored 82 runs. This turned out to be the highest individual score of the tournament and this partnership was the highest partnership of the tournament.

Team Australia scored 171 runs at the end of the innings and Germany had to chase 172 to win the match. The Australian bowlers bowled well and made the target unreachable by Germany. This victory by Australia was quite impressive, because Germany was the tournament's favourite team.

The next match for Australia was against Pakistan, where team Australia lost the toss and were asked to field first. This was a crucial toss to lose, because the Australian players were tired from fielding at the last match and had no time to rest. Subsequently, bad light was going to be an issue in the second innings of the match. Nevertheless, Australia bowled well but the fielding was bit sluggish, hence Pakistan was allowed to score 130 runs in 15 overs. The Australian batting faced problems from the start of their innings and lost wickets at regular intervals. The bad light was one factor and exhaustion was another, but team Australia still managed to score more than enough runs to qualify for the next round even though the match was lost.

The Quarter-Final for team Australia was against England A, which was played on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2010. Team Australia won the toss and elected to bat first. No one knew or considered at this time that the pitch would play a major role in the outcome of the match, but it did. At the start of the first innings, the pitch had no bounce and the ball stayed low with uneven bounce. This was due to a lot of moisture present on the pitch. However, during the second innings the sunshine and heat of the whole day made the pitch dry and bouncy, which helped the English batsman as the ball was coming on to the bat nicely. However, Australia gave a tough challenge to England, but the game was lost as England reached the target of 133 runs in the 20th over.

On the same day all the teams had pictures taken and had an exclusive dinner with Huzur (aba). Huzur (aba) was also very kind enough to share his sweet dish with the Australian team from his own plate.

The final was played on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2010 between Germany and England, which Germany ended up winning on the 2<sup>nd</sup> last ball of their innings. It was a very closely fought contest, which a large number of spectators enjoyed in the company of Huzur (aba).

After the final match, prizes were distributed and a closing address was delivered by Huzur (aba). He spoke about the importance of sports in one's life in order to remain healthy, as a healthy body contains a healthy mind.

Huzur (aba) was generous enough to meet with team Australia on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2010, in which each player was individually introduced to Huzur (aba) and photos were taken with him. Huzur (aba) also blessed the team with many prayers and souvenirs.



In summary, the entire tour was a great experience full of blessings, as it was nothing less than a pilgrimage to a sacred place of the Ahmadiyya Community. Every player of the team felt privileged and honoured to take away the memories of this blissful tour.

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