

Cricket Club hoping to expand after successful inaugural season

Written By **Brian Lockhart**

"Now we are official. Before we were just a bunch of guys playing cricket," explained Ahsen Siddiqui, organizer of the Shelburne Cricket Club, when speaking of his Club's success over their first organized season.

"Now it's an official cricket club registered as a non-profit organization with a proper president, proper vice-president, and operations manager - everything is properly founded."

The local Club played its first official season over this past summer fielding two teams who played a best-of-seven tournament.

The season came down to a final championship game with winner take all.

They followed up with an exhibition match against an experienced team from Barrie.

Now the Club is hoping to expand, adding more players and teams.

"We have 42 members now as well as some new youth," Mr. Siddiqui said. "We also have new coaches coming in. They're all Shelburne and Dufferin County people. We started with only seven people and I'm expecting things to grow next season. There are a lot of new settlers here and they are reaching out to us."

They are also reaching out to the schools to see about getting cricket placed on the list of sports for kids to play.

"A lot of good stuff is happening," Mr. Siddiqui said. "We're involved with the school board now to bring cricket in at a grass roots level."

The post season game with Barrie also brought a lot of needed exposure to the sport.

"The exhibition game was a success," Mr. Siddiqui said. "We lost the game, but everything then progresses. Because of that game we got a lot of sponsors, we've got schools involved. Those schools are reaching out to me and they want to be involved. We want to build some coaching so we can have students in grades four and above, involved."

There is a history of cricket in the region but it has not been documented very well.

During his research, Mr. Siddiqui contacted an Orangeville resident whose late husband first introduced cricket to the region in 1973. However, that league didn't last.

Mr. Siddiqui said he was surprised to learn that cricket has been played here in the past, because during his research he could find no mention of the sport being played anywhere in Dufferin County.

Traditionally the first week of October is the final week of cricket in Canada due to the weather.

The Club executive will now focus on promoting the sport over the winter and getting the word out that cricket is now here in Shelburne.

They are hoping that more people take an interest in the sport.

You don't have to be an experienced cricket player to become involved. League organizers will gladly teach you the sport and the

nuances of the game so you can play.