

# Sport

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**New Guernsey Cricket development manager:** Island batsman Ben Ferbrache takes on the



New, yet familiar surroundings: Island batsman Ben Ferbrache is the new Guernsey Cricket development manager.

(Picture by Adrian Miller, 23627254)

role vacated by David Hooper and is already making his mark in targeting player retention

# 'Ferby' excited by potential he sees in the youth ranks

CRICKET  
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ONE island player has taken over the reins from another in one of the most crucial roles in local cricket. Ben Ferbrache became the GCB development manager at the turn of the year, with the position having been vacated by David Hooper's departure to Ardingly College in Sussex – and for anyone who knows the man moving into the KGV office from Fletcher Sports, it seems like an ideal fit.

Thirty-year-old 'Ferby' is passionate about the sport and has been involved with some coaching locally alongside his playing commitments for a while. Unsurprisingly, he readily admits that he would have regretted not applying for his new post when the opportunity came up. 'My degree is in sports development and coaching, so that's something I was quite passionate about several years ago but never really had the opportunity [to use it] until now. So I'm quite excited by what could be ahead,' Ferbrache said. 'The next four years we have got quite an exciting plan for senior cricket, in which hopefully we can promote the youngsters through to the seniors.'

'The role has evolved slightly as Collette [Gooding] is moving now, so as well as doing the coaching side of it, I will be doing the admin and organisational side of it as well, which is probably more linked to the management side of my previous job. For me, that side of it comes quite naturally – the coaching I had dipped in and out of so I'm still in touch with it.'

By his own admission, Ferbrache takes on the role with 'a very good junior programme in place already', so it will be a case of just trying to take that particular aspect from strength to strength. In terms of the Guernsey age-



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Ben Ferbrache

Getting his feet under the desk: Ben Ferbrache began work in the GCB office at the start of the year.

(Picture by Adrian Miller, 23627250)

group representative sides, he will be joining head of cricket Ash Wright in the coaching and management of those groups. However, he knows there is key work to be done in player retention once they start getting into their mid-to-late teens and he wants a thriving domestic senior scene to be part of the attraction.

'The club cricket is actually being handed back to clubs now, they will take ownership of that,' he said. 'Hopefully what can happen

then is we can create more teams in leagues, going back to the old days of, maybe not eight divisions, but more than four and hopefully clubs will have more than one team and there will be a direct pathway from junior to senior cricket. 'So I will be trying to strengthen those links we've currently got in place and we can keep players in the system because we have got a fairly high drop-out rate at the moment – be it whether they go off to university or specialise in another sport or whatever.'

'It's trying to create that pathway that allows them to stay in the game as long as possible.' Ferbrache has already taken steps towards rectifying that as part of the work he will do in schools. 'We have certain schools in each term – at the moment we've got Blanchelande and St Mary & St Michael – and we have also set up a link with College. 'That is one of the first things I have taken on, which is to recreate the links with Elizabeth College, being one of the main cricket-playing schools. Also that's where we can hopefully bridge the gap of those falling out of cricket – from 16 to 18 – to keep them in the game and progress the route to senior cricket.'

'I think the junior stuff below 14s is really good, but then we lose a little bit in the next group, so it's trying to make that as strong as the 14-and-unders and then up to seniors where we are really strong again. That age group is the key one to keep engaged.'

The strength in the 14-and-unders is reinforced by a good-sized pool of coaches who can help out at Tots cricket and up into the Ravenscroft Future Stars before youngsters progress into age-group squads. Ferbrache revealed that the next aim is to get more people qualified at level two standard and working in the clubs to strengthen that side of local cricket. 'I have got some short-term aims – obviously a successful season would be nice – but until I find

my feet, it's more the long-term I'm looking at the moment,' he said. 'It may be by next summer we can say, "right, that's where we are really strong whereas that's what we need to work on". 'But it's nice that it's a bit of a blank canvas at the moment, open to me putting my stamp on it, seeing what works and seeing where we can strengthen what we have got or take away bits that aren't working and changing them for something else. 'That's quite nice because often systems and coaching are often set in place and that is the way they are, but this has a different feel to it and I feel I can do my own thing with guidance from Ash and Latts [Mark Latter]. 'The first couple of weeks have been great because I've managed to find my feet in the office, see how everything works and then the coaching will come on from there. 'The bit I find really exciting is how we could potentially have someone who is 14 who, you never know, might end up playing for Sussex or another county – maybe someone even younger than that – and obviously the long-term aim is to get them playing for Guernsey. 'That excites me – the talent you see there is in our junior set-up, which to me seems a lot stronger than when I was that age.' As for his own playing career, Ferbrache grins in the knowledge that the national coach is now the man he shares an office with. 'Obviously I'm still playing and hopefully that will last for a few more years... it all depends on selection, I suppose.'

## Doric Insurance Division One

# No change in title race as top three win

TABLE TENNIS

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THE top three all earned comfortable victories in Doric Insurance Division One last week. Whistlers B held on to their four-point cushion courtesy of their 9-1 rout of bottom-placed side Whistlers A. The result could have been closer, but Dawn Morgan needed to retire at 9-9 in the opening game of her first match of the evening against Matthew Casey, handing the league leaders three wins via walkover. Casey and newly-crowned Capelles Open champion Lawrence Stacey won their other singles matches over Ellis Tomlin and Sam Clark to make sure of the win. Ryan Gilson added a hard-fought five-set win over Sam Clark where he needed to save numerous match points in a fourth end which he pinched 16-14. He was unable to go unbeaten, though, as Tomlin came through in four sets during their encounter. Gilson teamed with Casey to win the doubles clash over Tomlin and Clark in four sets. Lions A continue the chase and earned a 7-3 win over fifth-placed



Phil Ogier was in good form for Lions B. (Picture by Peter Frankland, 23608774)

Whistlers C. Ryan Richard, Jamie Ferbrache and reserve Jez Powell all defeated Mark

Pipet and Charlotte Casey in singles action to make sure of the result. Richard and Ferbrache also

combined to edge Joshua Stacey and Casey 12-10 in the fifth end of the important doubles clash.

Stacey defeated all of the Lions players on the night, but he was tested by Powell, who went down in five sets after a well-contested match. Lions B are officially in third place, but have the same amount of points as their A side. They were also 7-3 winners, fourth-placed Lions C the defeated outfit. Phil Ogier was in good form for the victors courtesy of his trio of singles wins over Paul Hainsworth, Andy Gill and Corey Brouard. The clash against Hainsworth was the closest, but Ogier was always in control of the decisive fifth end and came through comfortably. Dan Collette picked up further singles wins for the victorious side over Gill and Brouard, but he needed to dig very deep against Gill, overturning a 7-1 deficit in the deciding game to come through. Second Division reserve Andy Ferbrache was a welcome last minute stand-in and he gained an impressive five-set win over Brouard, coming back from 2-0 down in the process. Ogier and Collette combined well to defeat Gill and Brouard in straight sets in the doubles fixture. Hainsworth overcame Collette in four sets and Ferbrache in straight sets in the other matches.



Ben Ferbrache batting for Guernsey in ICC competition. (Picture by Martin Gray, 23673835)