



'The Friendship Cup' was an "idea" by a group of cricket enthusiasts here in South Florida. Their vision was to give the cricket lovers of South Florida a platform to play their favorite sport. Cricket is slowly gaining more popularity in USA. In the country we left behind it is the most popular sport. This group did not want to join the popular professional leagues in South Florida but wanted to play with players who like them had not played in years – amateurs! It was based more on the premise that anyone who wants to play should have an opportunity to play and compete in an amateur event. The existence of such a fantastic facility as the 'Central Broward Regional Park' – the Capitol of Cricket is the USA, in our backyard only added more excitement.

Vinod Gulati took the first step and the idea came to fruition when the first 'The Friendship Cup' inter-association amateur tournament was held at CBRP on March 14th, 2009. Vinod says –“ It all started with Shefali throwing a 50th birthday bash for her husband Raj at CBRP - it was a cricket theme party ! Thereafter I visited India and was witness to the first IPL tournament. An idea took shape” !

The idea behind this tournament was to bring the different associations of India in one place in a sporting arena to come together and compete at Cricket. Along with this the idea of including families and planning a day so that each one who was present would have something to enjoy. Together with Mr. Gulati - Mr. Raj Data, Mr. Arun Gidwani, Mrs. Manmeet Gulati, Mrs. Amita Singh and Mr. Vivek Swaroop put in a lot of effort in making this all come together. V-Ships was a major cash sponsor (\$1,000/-), together with Raj Data (\$ 1,000/-), Vinod (\$ 525/-), AP, Amita, Joji & Resolve (approx \$ 200/- each). Food, games, rides, raffles, DJ, awards, everything was included. IRCC, SCOF, Sindhi and Punjabi Associations were the four teams participating amongst all those invited to play in this tournament. Our first revolving trophy was sponsored by Avtar and Harvinder Singh of "Busy-Bees". 'The Friendship Cup' was taken home by the IRCC team – "The Royals". Our Chief Guest was the Mayor of the City of Lauderhill Mr. Richard Kaplan as we had a fantastic awards ceremony arranged by Amita Singh. There was a lot of pride and cherished memories connected with the sport that were brought forth. Everybody went home a winner just to have experienced such a fabulous day and experienced in such a "new unique" way.

This first tournament made the organizers realize that there was hunger for more of this kind of cricket and the players and guests from the public wanted to play more. Not just one tournament once a year. A Board was formed and ideas were brought to fruition as more games were arranged and a vision developed as to what the TFC would and should be. "thefriendshipcup" was registered as a non-profit amateur sports organization with the State of Florida in January 2010. Sponsor funds, tournament fees

less all the expenses from TFC I - \$ 1,230.56/- became the seed capital for the newly formed corporation. The TFC team "The Kings" were born.

Raj Data organized our first formal match where we hosted the "Washington Mavricks" visiting from up North. This match was played at Lauderhill Sports Park thru rain and shine. What a muddy game that was! Yet again, great memories. There was lunch and an awards ceremony – but the match was washed out!

TFC started a wonderful relationship with the 'Titans'. A team based in Lake Worth whose home base is John Prince Park. The "Titans" mission is in keeping with our own at TFC –

"Titans - TCC – was established in 2007 and is a not-for-profit corporation based in West Palm Beach, Florida, USA. TCC's mission remains to promote the game of cricket in the USA by engaging players of all backgrounds and ages with a special emphasis on youth development. To date our players backgrounds show that they were born in the following countries: Guyana, India, Jamaica, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago, United Arab Emirates and of course the good old USA.

We have players that range in age from 10 -70 years old. Several players have played for league all star teams and represented the Southeast Region of the USA on the adult, U19 and U15 levels. Our coach is currently also the coach of the Southeast Region U15 team and as such youth development is not only an emphasis but a real priority for our club.

A double wicket tournament was arranged by the Titans on 'Father's Day' in order raise funds for their youth programs. TFC players contributed to this cause. It was a shorter match series, competitive on a different level. Food and awards followed and our partnership and support grew then on.

As the future plans for TFC were being drafted, we realized that we were very short on funds. In spite of the few volunteers, monetary funds were needed. The idea was always to play cricket and let cricket lead to a bonding and camaraderie of players and families. What better way than to have food and drinks, and create the family spirit. We could charge a nominal fee and everyone could mingle and share. Vinod, Manmeet and Amita did all of the planning and cooking. Cars would be loaded but like they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. Different menus, desserts, pullaos, chicken, achaars and salads were tested. With this concept of donation from the threesome, the initial kitty was augmented and built up. A trickle but with every match we added to the TFC kitty. (It is estimated that the ladies sponsored food, etc. of approx \$ 500/-, not including their valuable time!)

The Titans with Paul Ramkisson at the helm, then offered a new series be played once a year between the TFC and the Titans during their off-season called the 'Pinks Series'. This was to be a 30 over match played over 3 weekends with a revolving trophy. Youth were encouraged to play. The first series was won by the Titans in 2010. Since then we have had our second series in 2011 – once again won by the "Titans".

More matches followed and before we knew it, the time had come to plan our 'TFC II'. Of course our dreams were bigger and we were better organized. Once again the President and the Board came

together and a decision was made to host the tournament final in the main stadium. An idea that could only be called a 'far-fetched' dream the year before. The TFC President formed the 'Cricket Council' to help with the rules and on field decisions related to the tournament. With the help of the many public and generous supporters of the game, our dream became a reality and we had six teams compete in this tournament. The tournament also grew now being played over a few days instead of the one day affair as we had at TFC I. SCOF, SAF, KACF, PASF, BAPS and SFTS participated. Again, a fun filled day with the family was envisioned. Clowns, bounce house, face painting, goodie bags, a half time show, a game day program with information and articles on cricket - much was added to draw the general public, families and children in and for them to experience and learn about cricket first hand. It was our great honor this time to welcome our Chief Guest, the well renowned and international icon of the sport of cricket, the great Mr. Clive Lloyd. We also had the Commissioner of the City of Lauderhill Mr. Dale Holness as a guest and speaker. The TFC was proud to be able to donate \$ 500/- to the "Lauderhill Sisters" towards the 'Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund'. Commissioner Mr. Dale Holness received this on their behalf. It was our way of giving back to a well deserved cause. This year our trophy was sponsored by the MAQ T20 Group. The award ceremony was a great success as SFTS took home 'the Friendship Cup' trophy this time. It turned out to be another great day of cricket and family fun all with the help of our growing public support.

As TFC grew from strength to strength, we encouraged more games be played between the TFC Kings and the different associations. We were invited by FCA – The Florida Cricket Academy - a youth cricket development organization based in Miramar/Hollywood, Florida. They are an affiliate member of USACA (United States of America Cricket Association). Florida Cricket Academy, under the directorship of Mr. Wayne Ramnarine invited us the TFC to play in the FCA T20 tournament - August to September 2010, at the Brian Piccolo Park. It was our first venture into playing in another tournament. Glad to say we made it to the finals and were the runner-up in the tournament – although many factors helped us along! The TFC sponsored the tournament fee.

More games were played at various cricket fields in different parks in South Florida including Miramar. Night games were also played.

"thefriendshipcup" donated \$ 200/- to the FCA – in support of youth cricket training in South Florida. A substantial amount of this being raised by the BAPS team players!

The FCA's mission statement:

"The Florida Cricket Academy was founded in with the sole purpose to bring all youth players in the Southeast Florida Region together to learn and enjoy the game of cricket we all love. We are a Not for Profit body that is committed to putting the development of our young players ahead of any issues or persons."

As "TFC III" was in the planning stages, 'Big League USA' entered the CBRP facility. 'TFC' and "BIG LEAGUE USA" under the leadership of Mr. Salman Ahmed, worked together. With their help and support in many ways, TFC was able to hold its third tournament final in March 2011 at the main stadium. Five

Indian Associations had now joined us in this tournament played over more days at more venues. In a competition between SCOF, SAF, BAPS, TASF and SFTS and TASF took home the trophy this time. Capt. AP and Jean Singh were our sponsors for the trophy in 2011.

Just as it happened after 'TFC I' and 'TFC II', the enthusiasm grew and players and their friends in the viewing public wanted more matches and more tournaments. Our 'Cricket Council Chairperson', Mr. Chummar Maly wanted to plan an 'Inter-Corporate Tournament'. At present we are in the midst of playing this tournament. According to the format decided upon, so 30 matches will be played. The tournament started end April 2011 and will end in August 2011. Youth from FIU University Cricket team were brought in to umpire and conduct the matches – a reasonable compensation being paid to these Students – to assist them in their education in some little way. Citibank has agreed to sponsor the TFC "C" cup.

The TFC family continues to grow. More than 200+ players from all races and nationalities - have mixed, mingled, competed and connected in our short history. We continue to provide a platform to further the game of Cricket here in South Florida – to foster amateur sports "cricket" competition!

As TFC goes forward, the President, the board and the committee is open to any ideas that encourage and further the sport of Cricket. We want cricket and the public to be the ultimate winners in this endeavor. A lot of hard work goes into planning the tournaments, conducting the various matches - but with the fantastic team on the TFC Board and the generosity of all our public supporters, we have grown beyond our small vision from not so long ago.

TFC is hoping to always be able to host 'The Friendship Cup' tournament every year - Indian Associations will be invited to compete. We also plan to have 'The Inter-Corporate Tournament' every year along with the 'Pinks Series'. More matches will be played over the year between different teams wherever and whenever there is opportunity and availability. TFC would also like to focus and encourage more of the youth of South Florida to learn and enjoy the game. All ideas to help us in this endeavor are greatly appreciated.

The TFC is funded by memberships and the generous support from the public and corporations. We thank everybody for their support in helping TFC come a long way. More work is required and we count on all our friends and supporters to join us in this journey!

The TFC's vision and aims have slowly evolved and at this time our aims are as follows: (from our By-Laws)

The purpose of this corporation is:

The objectives of TFC shall include:

- (i) To hold tournaments, promote and participate in the playing of amateur recreational cricket /or other sports competitively in the South Florida area amongst all Indian and other communities;
- (ii) To promote and advance the game of cricket / or other sports;
- (iii) To facilitate access to facilities and fixtures for the playing of cricket / or other sports;
- (iv) To provide or facilitate coaching and instruction in cricket / or other sports
- (v) To provide an opportunity for the community to have social and recreational sports activities.

The purpose of the TFC Organization shall also be to:

- Introduce the South Florida community to those sports that are popular in other parts of the world
- Teach to interested members of the public and their children how to play the games being conducted by TFC.
- Arrange amateur competition – matches and tournaments as necessary.

The initial mission of “thefriendshipcup” is to promote the game of Amateur Recreational Cricket within the South Florida area and to provide a competitive environment for individuals and the general public to develop and improve their game. The “TFC” pursues this mission by organizing games and tournaments, participating in various competitions and educating the general public as to the sport. By creating this organization, the “TFC” fosters recreational amateur cricket competition and enhances the surrounding Indian and other communities by enabling individuals who share the love for the game to come together and compete against one another and others. To insure that all cricket matches organized by or under the auspices of the TFC are conducted in accordance with the Laws of Cricket, the traditions and spirit of the game, and such rules and regulations promulgated by the ICC that apply to local, regional and international cricket. Outreach to the general public, as well as other organizations that promote cricket. Educate the general public by distributing information about the sport. Foster the development of youth Cricket programs. Work with reputable professionals and liaise with local and county officials on matters pertaining to the development of cricket and cricket facilities for the members of the organization, the general public and their children. Help and facilitate women to get more involved in sports and the benefits of keeping fit and to enjoy the Florida public parks.

The Future:

A TFC “K” Tournament – for KIDS

TFC - "BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS" - A cooperative "Public/Private/Community" partnership project to bring cricket practice cages/nets to the Central Broward Regional Park. The TFC has taken the lead here and will help design and facilitate the construction of the same – for the use of the Public & all Cricket lovers here in South Florida. The "BLUE PRINTS" for this project are being worked on at this moment.

Plan an Inter-High School Cricket Tournament – in the South Florida area.

Work towards setting up a First Class Cricket Academy at the Central Broward Regional Park. Our concept is that South Florida – especially CBRP, become the Premier Cricket training facility in the USA. Just as Tennis and Golf are - here in Florida! Study and seek County and Government grants to accomplish this and our other projects.

Facilitate the making of Cages/Nets at various facilities throughout South Florida – perhaps starting at the BAPS facility or suitable schools and public playgrounds.

As a long term plan – study the possibilities in cooperation with Cities/County Sports departments and existing Cricket Academies and non-profit organizations and private enterprises of setting up a Top Class Indoor Cricket facility.

Continue with the TFC "A" and the TFC "C" Tournaments – conducting and facilitating amateur competition.

Get the Ladies involved in outdoor sports activities.

Get more members of the public involved in the TFC and help us achieve our goals!