

Consultation on petition P-04-335 The Establishment of a Welsh Cricket Team
Response from Michael Blumberg

National Assembly for Wales

Submission to Petitions Committee

Application Of Wales for Independent ICC Membership

- 1 The application is desirable, feasible and should be an imperative.
- 2 Welsh cricketers have the same opportunity to play Test cricket as Scots and Irish by playing for England. However Scots and Irish cricketers have a much greater opportunity to play International Limited Over Cricket and possibly to compete in World Cups. Should Ireland and Scotland achieve Test status one day then their advantage over Welsh cricketers will be much greater.
- 3 The barriers to establishing a Welsh International team are largely illusory except that they remain entrenched in the minds of several leading officials of Glamorgan CCC and Welsh Cricket Board. There is a financial adjustment to be made as a result of the Welsh Cricket Board and Glamorgan CCC separating which will not be made up by ICC until such time as Wales achieves senior Associate status and or reaches a World Cup. Sponsorship and Sport Wales may fill this hole. It may be that a phased reduction in the Glamorgan CCC/ECB support of Cricket Wales could be negotiated rather than a straight cut off.
- 4 If there is a good sport business reason for ECB to stage a Test match at Cardiff then surely they will wish to pursue this option. There are plenty of precedents of neutral locations staging both Test matches and ODIs eg Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Nairobi, Toronto, Tangiers. and recently England hosted a Series between Australia and Pakistan.
- 5 Wales has a much stronger and numerous recreational cricket sector than Scotland and Ireland combined. Indeed its recreational and youth cricket is comparable in terms of numbers with New Zealand and West Indies and not

far short of Sri Lanka. It is many times bigger than Test playing Zimbabwe. It has a well established coaching structure.

6 Wales has better facilities and infrastructure than any Senior Associate member of ICC. It already has one Test ground, several others that have staged 1st Class and Limited Over County Cricket. It has several hundred good club grounds as well independent school, some company and private cricket grounds as well as an MCCU.

7 Wales competed for a decade in the Triple Crown Competition with Ireland and Scotland and an England Club Cricket XI (sometimes called NCA, ECB, Amateur etc) . This side did not win the competition but performed creditably enough. This was in effect Wales 2nd XI as no Glamorgan Staff cricketer played.

8 Wales has already competed (without Glamorgan CCC players) in the 1979 ICC Trophy when Argentina was refused visas. Wales with Glamorgan players has defeated England in an ODI in recent years.

9 Wales already has a substantial cricket fan base in terms of spectators and TV viewers and Radio listeners far exceeding any Associate and probably matching New Zealand and West Indies. This provides a realistic basis for sponsorship and revenue leading to a potential sustainable full time professional set up to complement Glamorgan CCC.

10 The position of Glamorgan CCC remains unchanged whether or not Wales achieves independent ICC status. Glamorgan CCC is a member of and guarantor of ECB. It receives funding from ECB primarily for competing in ECB competitions. There is some funding supposedly for development which may be lost if Wales achieves cricket independence. Likewise Cricket Wales Minor County competes in the ECB Minor County Competitions and presumably will continue to receive a share of MCA's funding.

11 The status of the Cardiff MCCU may need to be reviewed but since its funding comes from MCC and not ECB not much need change here. There

may be an opportunity for expanding the facility under ICC and ECC auspices as it will be unique for an Associate to have such an institution and there could be a European Cricket element here.

12 There will need to be some agreement between Glamorgan CCC and an independent Cricket Wales/Welsh Cricket Association of which it will be a member to release Welsh players for ICC competitions. As the vast majority of ICC international competition takes place in the Northern Hemisphere Winter, independent Wales will add to the opportunities to play for Glamorgan players.

13 Local Glamorgan players will need to make known whether they aspire to play for England or Wales. Unless Wales was to achieve test status quickly England would continue to poach or 'borrow' any outstanding Welsh cricketers just as they have Scots and Irish.

14 This writer believes passionately that local cricket clubs whether just cricket clubs or multiple sports clubs are a very positive social force in every community that has one or more. Welsh youngsters, good at sport, are much more likely to persevere with cricket if there is a Wales National team than if the only National Representative team is England and thus grow to love the game whether they make it to the top or settle into club cricket.

15 England and Wales Cricket Board has always been an anomaly from its outset and its decision to call itself ECB. From a calligraphy point of view eliminating the W is madness as it allows much more interesting logo design. It also sends a signal that Wales is unimportant to ECB. ECB has done precious little to promote the game throughout Wales. ECB is indifferent to Welsh national aspirations at a time of mounting Welsh self awareness and pride.

16 An independent Cricket Wales/Welsh Cricket Association/Wales Cricket Board has the opportunity of seizing the momentum of Welsh Nationalism together with strong existing cricket activity at all levels to fast develop an

independent International team which will be at the forefront of senior Associates challenging for Test status.

17 The propensity of the Welsh people to support their national team augurs well for an independent Cricket Wales irrespective of whether they play Papua New Guinea or India.

18 An independent Cricket Wales/WCA/WCB provides both ECC and ICC with an additional country in which to play international competitions on grounds of outstanding quality compared with most senior Affiliates.

I do urge the National Assembly For Wales to support the application for independent membership of the the International Cricket Council and to support the new independent Cricket Board For Wales.

Michael Blumberg November 16th 2011

Michael Blumberg is the former editor and founder of Club Cricket Weekly Newspaper and, Club Cricket Monthly and Cricket World Monthly magazines as well as the website Cricketworld.com. He has played club cricket for fifty years in UK and also in some thirty plus other cricket countries. He is a member of the Cricket Writers Club.

One of his editorial specialities was ICC affairs and new cricket countries. He had a hand in many a new country's application to ICC from Vanuatu to Greece. He reported extensively on the former Triple Crown Competition in which Wales competed. He also help set up and reported on a Welsh Club Cricket sponsorship with Welsh Brewers. Throughout his 17 year tenure with Club Cricket and Cricket World he wrote on Welsh Club Cricket, Welsh Leagues, Welsh Club Cricketers, Glamorgan CCC and Glamorgan cricketers.