

CYCLING RACING CRICKET

Fasttrack

Kongonis hit Cross Arrows for six in UK



Ex-Kenyan player Hitesh Modi (right), umpire Subash Modi (left), Kongonis duo Julien Inns (2nd left) and Derek Breed.

BY FEVERPITCH REPORTER

Cross Arrows 194 all out; Kongonis 196-6

Kongonis reversed the result of two years ago when they beat Cross Arrows by four wickets at Sheffield Park last month.

The match usually played at The Lords was moved to Sheffield because Lord's was closed in preparation for archery part of the Olympic Games. Many Kongonis were unavailable for the game but they restricted Cross Arrows to 194 all out in their 45 overs (reduced from 50) and eventually knocked the runs off quite easily in the 35th over.

Quite apart from travelling difficulties, there had been a number of late withdrawals from Cross Arrows side that necessitated a lot of late communication the day before the game. Two Arrows players had sustained injuries and one had an essential operation brought forward to the day of the game.

Thanks to some sterling assistance from skipper for the day, recalled from retirement to play his very last game for the Club, Neil Trestrail, who used his excellent contacts to fill the gaps created by the withdrawals, Arrows had a good side out.

Kongonis fielded first. Opening bowlers Toby Briggs and Ed Freeman (from Lymington, the club Neil plays for) bowled superb opening spells, moving the ball in the air and off the seam, Toby at some pace. The first three overs were maidens, with a wicket falling to Freeman in the third. When both took their sweaters after six overs each, the score was 20-1, Freeman 1-11 and Briggs 0-6. Toby was particularly unlucky not to have taken any wickets, beating the bat on many occasions. This laid an excellent foundation for the later victory.

All set for Guru Nanak Rally

The 34th KCB Guru Nanak Rally revs off in Naivasha this morning with 60 drivers embarking on what's indeed a massive 458 kilometre journey through the picturesque Suswa and Kedong terrain.

Yesterday was an equally busy outing for car crews and mechanics alike.

While drivers and navigators set off for an early morning recce, team managers and mechanics presented their rally cars for scrutineering which ran for the better part of day at Naivasha Sopa Lodge.

Rally youngster Quentin Mitchell was enthusiastic of his return to the cockpit for the first time since claiming a career best third overall position at the 61st KCB Safari Rally in Kajiado last July navigated by Rob-in Dimbleby.

Quentin- who starts off the ramp first from the Naivasha KCB Branch- will however tackle the penultimate KNRC event minus Dimbleby.

A CYCLING MILESTONE



TOP: Cyclists go through the lush Rift Valley tea plantations; MIDDLE: South Africa's trio take a break in Naivasha; ABOVE LEFT: Douglas Sidialo and John Mwangi in action; RIGHT: A cyclist crossing a stream. [PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ERIC NESBITT]

The Rift Valley Odyssey puts Kenya on world map only weeks after Cris Froome's victory in Tour de France

BY OMULO OKOTH

Just a few weeks after Chris Froome put Kenya on the global cycling map by winning Tour de France, the East African nation is again the focus of international attention.

This time, it is an off road cycling competition, the Rift Valley Odyssey, already gaining notoriety and popularity in equal measure, as among the most challenging in the continent.

The Standard Chartered Rift Valley Odyssey (RVO) took place over three days between September 20-22 and covered 260 km. This was Kenya's most challenging mountain bike race, an extreme adventure across the spectacular Great Rift Valley.

This fourth RVO was raced across both eastern and western escarpments of Kenya's Great Rift Valley, crossing challenging terrain along forest trails, animal trails, down exhilarating descents, up arduous ascents (peak race altitude was 2750m ASL), across pristine wilderness and open savannah teaming with wildlife.

The RVO was like a three-day journey through National Geographic, each day presented riders with completely different topography, from the verdant tea farms of Limuru, through indigenous forests of the Southern Aberdare Mountain range, past the natural steam vents of Hell's Gate National Park, along the serene shores of Lake Naivasha, ascended the now depleted Mau Forest escarpment.

All local communities welcomed riders with warm Kenyan hospitality, the diversity from pastoralists to small and large-scale cereal farmers proved a treat for all.

This was a team adventure for two partners. Entries were limited to 100 riders. With absolutely no course markings, each team had to depend upon their Garmin GPS for navigation. Team partners remained together throughout the odyssey as the route traversed remote wilderness areas, so having a teammate provided support in case of any mishap.

"The ethos of the RVO is adventure and aspiration; it is an extreme challenge for adventure-seeking cyclists. This was not a timed race per se; it was a fast-paced adventure that challenged every level of rider, from professional cyclists including national champions to brave undaunted enthusiasts. Completing the RVO is an extreme challenge, of the 98 starters only 74 completed, a 25% drop out rate," said Eric Nesbitt, the organizer.

The Standard Chartered team of David Kinjah partnered with current South African champion Max Knox, were the overall victors of 2013, finishing in a cumulative time of 15 hours 45minutes, followed closely by their Standard Chartered teammates Davidson Kamau/Joseph Kuriah in 15h:57m. Third was the Ethiopian team of Bert Ralf Ottens/Sander Bokelman in a time of 17h:46m

Kinjah is the undisputed national champion who also mentored Froome. Knox is also highly-competitive challenger in the World Championship series. They were supported by their Standard Chartered team members of Kamau/Kuria and Robin Bairstow/Dana Botha.

Douglas Sidialo, a blind cyclist riding a tandem bicycle piloted by John Mwangi, together represented the Standard Chartered "Seeing is Believing" programme. After being blinded by the devastating bombing of Nairobi's US embassy in 1998, Sidialo has journeyed through life with resilience, acceptance, courage, determination and belief.

He has become an inspiration to many around the world. Sidialo is one of the most accomplished African blind adventurers, believed to be the first blind African to summit Mt Kilimanjaro.

Longchamp Prix de l'Arc to be run today

BY THE SQUIRREL

The strength of a field likely to assemble for the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe in Paris on Sunday could be as good as any in its 93 year history. Even Dancing Brave and Shahrastani would have a tall order competing with this lot.

The first six home in Dancing Brave's Arc had an average Timeform rating of 129.1. Those engaged now are roughly 129, headed by Novellist, the King George winner, on 132. Orfevre, who scated with the Japanese Triple Crown last season before throwing away what looked like certain victory at Longchamp by drifting across the course, is next on 130.

Top nine horses in the betting, have all won at least one Group One or Grade One event, with 21

victories at the highest level, between them. Camelot, last year's Derby winner, Ruler of the World, and, Trading Leather, are also possible runners.

No American or Russian entries are present, but, an international edge is provided not only by Orfevre but also by Japanese Derby striker, Kizuna, who beat his Epsom counterpart, Ruler Of The World, in the Prix Niel. Leading Light might appear with The Fugue.

Al Kazeem is due to double up with James Doyle again. The pair enjoyed a terrific success at Royal Ascot. Treve has a spectacular way of quickening. She must be respected by all. Flintshire and Oco-vango will be declared if there is rain.

The class horse is Intello. Odds are really substantial as nothing stands out. Godolphin have Penglai Pavilion as their representative. How will

150 horses be balloted away? Such is the allure of this enduring magic!

Meanwhile, Racing last Monday, was interrupted by two horrific incidents ten minutes apart at Hamilton and Kempton.

At Hamilton, jockey Paul Mulrennan sustained a broken collarbone, broken ribs and concussion after he was fired to the ground in the closing stages of the 5f handicap. Ten minutes later, three horses were involved in falls in the second race at Kempton as the field thundered up the home straight.

Ted Durcan on Don Ottavio, Renato Souza on Silvercombe and Seb Sanders on Synonym all crashed to the ground.

Racing was delayed at both venues as medical teams and veterinary officers dealt with the incidents.