

# Glory Gardens I Glory in the Cup

Bob Cattell

*Random House Children's Books*

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Cricket Commentary

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Also by Bob Cattell

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## About the Book

Hokker, Azzie, Erica and the rest all play cricket in their spare time, but they've never taken it very seriously until now. Kiddo, one of their school teachers, suggests they form an official team and play proper matches - and GLORY GARDENS C.C. is formed. Hooker, as captain, soon finds out that cricket teams aren't built in a day: some players squabble, some can't catch, and some have tantrums and go home at half-time! So will Glory Gardens go all out for victory ... or will they be out for a duck?

# GLORY IN THE CUP

BOB CATTELL

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# Chapter One

THIS IS GLORY Gardens C.C. before it all began. The picture was taken by my sister, Lizzie. It's not bad for her.



*Back Row: Marty, Tylan, Cal, Jason and Ohbert  
Front Row: Frankie, Jo, Hooker, Azzie and Erica.*

That's me in the middle with the cricket bat. The one wearing the Ritchie Richardson sunhat is Azzie Nazar who's our best batsman. Our wicket-keeper with the pads on is Frankie Allen. And Calvin Sebastien is the big guy on the back row. Everyone thinks he's a fast bowler but he's not, he's an off-spinner.

My name is Harry Knight but they all call me Hooker - that's because my full name's *Harry Oliver O'Neill Knight*. Don't ask me why - ask my mum and dad. I'm the team's

all-rounder and captain of the Glory Gardens Cricket XI. But I wasn't when this picture was taken.

I'll start at the beginning. You know, of course, that XI means eleven and so you may have spotted our first big problem. Only ten in the picture! But it's worse than that because Frankie's sister, Jo, is only interested in scoring and 'Ohbert' Bennett is hopeless at cricket. I mean really hopeless. That leaves eight and one of them is Erica Davies. Erica's a good cricketer - as good as any of us - and she loves playing. But some people - especially Jason Padgett - say we shouldn't have a girl in the team.

Glory Gardens is the name of the recreation ground at the back of Bason Street where most of us live; except Frankie, Jo and Jason who are from the Birdcage Estate just round the corner, and Tylan who lives in Hereward Road. We play cricket on the Rec most evenings after school in summer, and all the time in the holidays. You know, just practising and seeing who can score the most runs. Sometimes we play three or four a side, but everyone fields. Azzie brings his dad's stumps and I've got a bat and pads and an old leather ball.

It was one evening last week, while we were playing, that we saw Kiddo Johnstone walking his fat dog, Gating, through the Rec. He stopped and watched us for a bit. Kiddo's a teacher at Hereward Middle School, where we all go. We call him 'Kiddo' because that's what he always calls us. He used to play county cricket before he injured his knee and started teaching. He still walks with a bit of a limp. Azzie's dad, who knows everything about cricket, says he was a pretty good bat and a medium-pace seam bowler.

Kiddo's all right really - as teachers go. He goes on a bit when he starts telling stories about things that happened to him aeons ago. But, as most of his stories are about cricket, we don't mind too much.

After he had watched us for nearly half an hour, Kiddo came over.

“That wasn’t bad, kiddoes,” said Kiddo. “Ever thought of forming a team?”

“Yeeeah!” said Frankie, going into one of his daft, wild war dances which we always ignore completely. Kiddo gave him a strange look. We all know Frankie’s a bit bonkers – but that’s another story.

There are no organised cricket teams at school. We play softball cricket in P.E. now and again but that’s all.

“How? Who’d we play against, Mr Johnstone?” asked Cal.

“Well, I was thinking – if you’re keen, that is,” said Kiddo. We all nodded. “Well, I’ve been wondering if it wouldn’t be an idea to set up an Under Eleven side at The Priory. It’s time we brought some younger players into the club.”

“You bet,” said Frankie and he started practising imaginary hooks for six over square-leg.

Eastgate Priory C.C. is one of the best clubs around. They have their own ground and pavilion just down the road, at the end of Woodcock Lane. Kiddo opens the batting for the first team.

“But we haven’t got eleven players,” said Marty Lear, who always looks on the black side of things.

“How many have you got, kiddo?” asked Kiddo.

“Nine,” I said quickly before Marty could speak. There were a few gasps of amazement but I don’t think Kiddo noticed anything.

“That sounds all right for starters,” he said. “I’m sure we can find another couple of players. Tell you what, I’ll ring a few people at the Club and give you the verdict at school tomorrow. By the way, who’s your captain?”

“Hooker is,” said Cal pointing at me and no one argued.

“Good,” said Kiddo. “See you tomorrow then, Harry.”

And off he went with Gattling waddling and puffing along beside him.

“Nine!” snorted Marty Lear after Kiddo was out of earshot. “Where do you get nine from?”

“Eight plus Ohbert,” I said.

“Oh but, Hooker ...” began Ohbert (that’s why we call him Ohbert).

“You’ll have to play until we find someone better,” said Cal.

“Shouldn’t be hard,” said Tylan. Everyone, except perhaps Ohbert, knew that Ohbert was seriously awful at cricket, and virtually everything else, too.

Ohbert’s like a creature from outer space. When he says something, people just look at each other and shrug their shoulders. No one has a clue what he’s talking about. He’s quite short and weedy and he grins a lot, especially when he’s on his own. He always wears a baseball cap, usually back to front. Cal says it’s his head that’s on the wrong way round.

“Erica can’t play,” said Jason suddenly.

“Why not?” asked Erica.

“Well *I’m* not playing in a team with girls in it,” said Jason.

“Just because she’s better than you,” said Azzie smiling at Erica.

“Don’t be ridiculous,” said Jason and he stormed off. But we knew he’d be back.



That evening, Cal and I were sitting in my room trying to work out the team and batting order for our first game. This is what we finally came up with (in batting order).

Hooker Knight (capt)

Jason Padgett

Azzie Nazar

Cal Sebastien

Erica Davies

Frankie Allen (wkt)

Tylan Vellacott  
Marty Lear  
Ohbert Bennett  
A. N. Other  
A. N. Other  
Scorer: Jo Allen

I was used to making up cricket teams with Cal. We'd spend hours selecting the 'best England team', 'best West Indian team', 'best cricket team of all time' and so on. But it was strange to be working on our own team.

Cal's a lot taller than me and he's the strongest in our class by miles. But though he's big I've never seen him take advantage of his size and push anyone around. Mind you, he's got a terrible temper, but even when he goes really wild he just shouts and screams at you and then in a couple of minutes he forgets all about it. We've been best friends since his family moved into Bason Street. Apart from being nearly as mad about cricket as I am, he's a good laugh.

"The batting's not too bad," said Cal. "At least it's okay down to Erica."

"Do you think Jason'll play if Erica's in the team?" I asked.

"Yeah, as long as you let him open the batting with you and people don't keep telling him she's better than he is," said Cal.

"Who do you think should open the bowling with Marty?"

"Dunno. 'Spose it'll have to be you again," said Cal. He grinned. "Proper Captain Marvel, aren't you - opening bat and bowler!"

We both knew we badly needed another bowler. Marty's quite fast, but I'm only medium-pace. And we've only one other bowler we can rely on to take wickets - that's Cal with his off-breaks. Erica and Tylan are okay but I really

hoped Kiddo would find us someone as quick as Marty - or even quicker.

The door burst open. "What're you two doing?" said Lizzie barging in. My sister can't stand not knowing everything that's going on.

"Clear off, stupid," I said but she'd already grabbed our team list.

"What's this? Don't tell me. Boring cricket again. When are you ever going to grow up?" She took another look at the list. "Hello, 'Hooker Knight (capt)'. What's this, then? What a joke - is my dearest brother going to be the captain of a cricket team?"

I kicked her on the shin, pulled the team sheet out of her hand and pushed her giggling out of my room.

"Boring cricket, boring cricket," she chanted outside the door.

Cal and I shrugged. He's got a younger sister, too, so he knows what it's like.



Next morning, Cal and I saw Kiddo as soon as we walked into the playground.

"It's on, kiddoes," he said. "You're the official Eastgate Priory Under 11 Team. And I think I've found you a couple of extra players, too."

He seemed quite excited and Cal and I looked at each other. We knew Kiddo was taking a big gamble with us and we both hoped we were up to it. Then he dropped the bombshell.

"Your first game's against Wyckham Wanderers. I think they're quite useful so it'll give us a chance to see what you're like. Can you arrange for your team to be at the Priory Ground on Wednesday, Harry? It's a twenty overs a side match; five o'clock start."

## Chapter Two

“THEY’RE IN THE Under 11 Area League *and* Wyckham Firsts won the County Cup last year,” said Marty. “We’re going to get stuffed.”

I didn’t need telling that Wyckham was one of the strongest clubs around. They had Under 11, Under 13 and Under 15 sides as well as their Firsts and Seconds at senior level.

“But we’ve got Ohbert on our side,” said Frankie. “That’ll make all the difference.”

“Bet I score more runs than you,” said Ohbert who was listening for a change.

“Tell you what, Ohbert,” said Frankie. “I’ll give you 50p for every single run you score.”

“Oh but ... all right then,” said Ohbert with a silly grin.

We laughed. The chances of Ohbert scoring a run were about three zillion to one.

We were making our way along Woodcock Lane to the Priory Ground for our first game. Everyone had heard some story or other about the brilliant Wyckham Wanderers and none of them were good news for us. As we walked along we were getting gloomier and gloomier.

Finally, Jo Allen said, “I don’t care how good they are. Glory Gardens can beat anyone if they want.” No one looked very convinced but it was good to have one fanatical supporter.

“I hope the players Kiddo’s found us are world class,” said Cal.

“And I hope they won’t mind playing in a girl’s team,” said Jason.

“Oh, give it a rest, Jacey.” Cal was getting really fed up with Jason whining on and on about Erica. None of the others seemed to think it was a problem having her in the team, except perhaps Frankie, but I was still feeling a bit bothered about it. I was pretty sure that there’d be no girls playing for Wyckham, or any of the other Under 11 teams for that matter. And I’d never actually told Kiddo she was playing.

I needn’t have worried. When we arrived at the ground Erica was already there. She’d arrived already changed and was talking to Kiddo and two other boys.

“Ah, Harry,” said Kiddo. “Here are your two players: Matthew Rose and Trevor Collinge.”

I said hello and at that moment the opposition arrived in a yellow minibus with ‘Wyckham Wanderers Cricket Club’ printed on the side of it. We watched them as they got out. They seemed big. A lot bigger than all of us – except for Cal. And they were all wearing white cricket gear and carrying cricket bags.

We must have been staring at them because one of them said, “What are you lot looking at? Never seen a cricket team before?”

“Oh, they’re a cricket team,” said Frankie. “We thought you’d come to paint the pavilion.”

I had a nasty feeling we weren’t going to look much like a cricket team when we got changed. I turned to Matthew and Trevor, “Can you bowl?”

“Oh, yes,” said Trevor.

“No,” said Matthew.

We were in trouble. The game was twenty overs a side and the rule is that no bowler can bowl more than four overs. That meant I had to have at least five bowlers. Marty, me, Cal bowling his very slow off-breaks, Trevor and who else? Tylan perhaps, but he wasn’t very accurate and

he'd probably give away a lot of wides. Erica was straighter but she was in the team for her batting not bowling. I decided to bat if I won the toss.

I lost and they chose to bat first. So we were in the field.

After we'd changed, Jo came over with a brand new score-book Kiddo had given her. She'd filled in the top of the first page like this.

HOME TEAM	GLORY GARDENS	V	WYCKHAM WNDRS.	AWAY TEAM	AT EASTGATE PRIORY
INNINGS OF WYCKHAM WNDRS.....			TOSS WON BY W.W... WEATHER GOOD...		

"Aren't we called Eastgate Priory today?" asked Azzie.

"Not if I'm scoring," said Jo. "My team's called Glory Gardens."

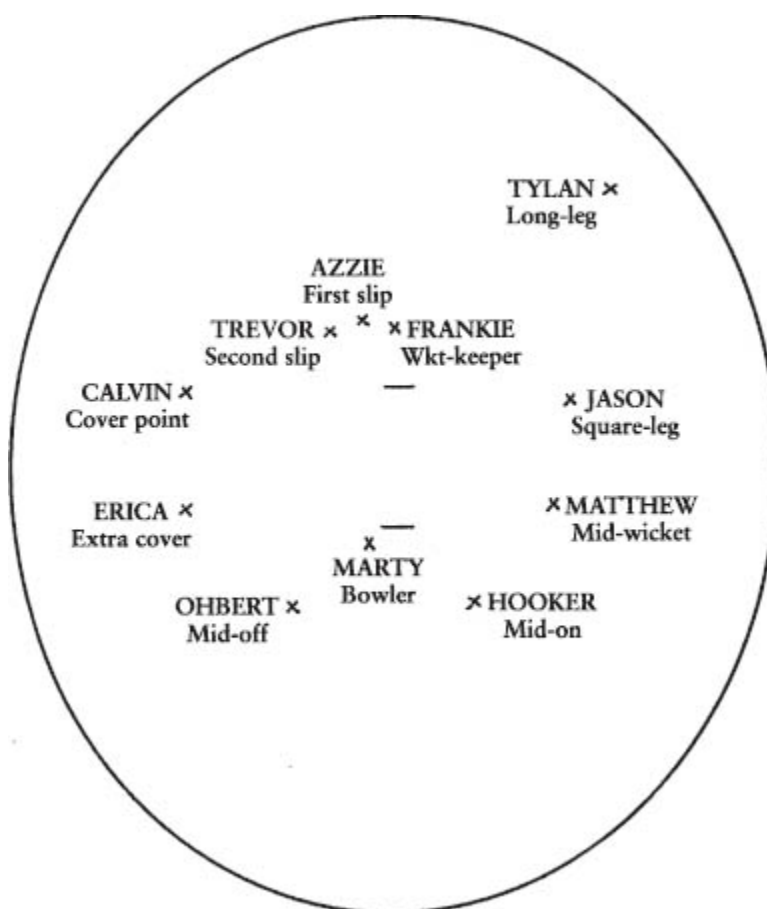
"I'll talk to Kiddo about it," I said. But somehow I never got round to it. I had other things on my mind - bowlers and field placings, for a start. I told Jo that Marty and Trevor were going to open the bowling and she wrote their names down on the scoresheet.

All the team - apart from Frankie who was still trying to find his wicket-keeper gloves - were out on the pitch, throwing around my old leather ball. Everyone except Tylan and Ohbert were, at least, wearing white shirts. Frankie and Marty were in their grey school trousers; Erica wore white tennis shorts. Azzie, Trevor, Matthew and I had proper cricket trousers. Cal had found a pair of trousers belonging to his brother which were nearly white and his mother had somehow made them fit him because his brother's two years older than him and quite fat. Tylan wore jeans, a yellow tee-shirt and black trainers. Ohbert had decided on a purple sweatshirt with green palm trees on it and a pair of baggy shorts; at least they weren't his most colourful ones. Wyckham looked like a proper cricket team; we looked as if we were going to play on the beach.

I let Marty and Trevor know they were bowling and started telling everyone where to field. I'd learnt all the

field positions from a book Azzie's dad had lent me. It didn't help much to begin with because half the team didn't know what I was talking about. When I told Ohbert to go to mid-off he looked quite upset and started to leave the field. So I gave up and just pointed to the positions instead.

Marty's a good, straight bowler; quite quick for his height. So I decided on a fairly attacking field to start with - including two slips. It nearly paid off.



*This is the field I set for Marty's first over. I'd planned the positions before the match because it's easy to get confused when you've got nine fielders to think about. There's only one player on the boundary, two slips and the rest form a ring around the bat, saving singles. To score, the batsmen have to hit through or over the ring.*

In came the two umpires - grey-haired, wheezing Sid Burns, the regular Priory umpire and a serious and very smartly-dressed Wyckham official. He went to square-leg

where he kept looking across at Ohbert's shorts, frowning and blowing his nose on a big white handkerchief. Ohbert didn't notice anything as usual; he was watching Gatting rolling in something in front of the sight-screen.

Both their openers looked good. You can tell good cricketers just by the way they walk to the wicket and take guard. "Middle and leg," said the taller of the two in a rather posh voice, and he faced up to Marty.

At last we were ready and Marty ran in to bowl. His first ball was a wide. The second was straighter and the batsman swung outside the off-stump and got an edge. It flew to Azzie in the slips, low and hard to his left and he dropped it. Marty looked furious. His next delivery was a fast full toss down the leg side. The batsman missed; it bounced in front of Frankie and popped over his head. Four byes.

5 for none and they hadn't scored a run with the bat yet.

"Slow down a bit and get it straight," I said to Marty. He huffed and puffed a bit but his next four balls were pretty good and only one run came off them.

Now it was Trevor's turn.

His first ball pitched half way down the wicket and the tall batsman took a great swing at it as it bounced for the second time under his bat. Frankie stopped it on the fourth bounce and grinned at me.

I thought, Oh no, he can't be as bad as that.

The next was a high full toss. It was looping and very slow - much slower than the batsman thought - because he ducked and the ball lobbed over his head, hovered a little and then ... it landed right on top of the bails, shattering the stumps everywhere. The tall batsman looked at the demolished wicket and walked off shaking his head.

Azzie and Frankie took one look at each other and collapsed on their backs screaming with laughter.

"Was it a Scud missile?" asked Cal.

"Or a UFO?" said Tylan.