

Glory Gardens 4 World Cup Fever

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About the Book

Glory Gardens C.C. can't resist a challenge, and this time they're going for gold in a World Cup competition! With teams from Barbados and South Africa visiting the area at the same time, it's a brilliant opportunity for the club to make its mark worldwide. It's not long before the thrills and spills of cricket spark off sporting drama, temper tantrums and practical jokes. So, as Australia do battle with the West Indies and South Africa face India, can Glory Gardens rise above the squabbling and bring glory for England ... ?

WORLD CUP FEVER

BOB CATTELL

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RED FOX

Chapter One

WE WEREN'T EVEN half way through the summer holidays and Glory Gardens had run out of fixtures. Of course, we'd won the Under 13s League in June, but since then we'd just played a few friendlies including another brilliant last-ball victory over Wyckham Wanderers, our deadliest enemy. Now we had no more cricket for the rest of the season.

"I can't see much point in practising when we haven't got anything to practise for," said Jacky. We were changing after Saturday morning Nets and, to be honest, it hadn't been a brilliant session.

"It's a complete waste of time," said Clive who's never been a big fan of net practice and doesn't miss a chance to moan about it.

I love Nets - for me Saturday mornings are the highlight of the week. But even I had to admit it isn't the same if we aren't playing any proper games.

"I suppose we could arrange some more friendlies?" suggested Erica.

"No, we want a competition," said Cal. "A knock-out cup or a tournament or something."

Cal was right. I decided to talk to Kiddo about it after the practice session.

One of the problems about Glory Gardens now is that Azzie, Clive, Marty and I are playing regularly for the County Under 13s Colts. So the four of us have had plenty of games (played 7, won 4, drawn 2, lost 1), but the rest of the team haven't and that's why some of them are getting fed up.

Anyway, it's time I introduced the team properly. I'm Hooker Knight, the captain of Glory Gardens Cricket Club, winners of the North and East County League and the 'best team in the universe' if you believe Frankie Allen. That's us in the picture.

I'm in the middle of the front row with the cricket bat. Cal is the tall one leaning over at the back - he's my best friend. He lives next door to me. He's a really good off-spinner and he opens the batting. Cal's talking to Frankie, our non-stop joker and wicket-keeper. Frankie's sister, Jo, doesn't play in the team - she's our scorer and secretary and club organiser. Between Jo and Frankie is Ohbert, who comes from outer space where they don't play cricket.

We play at the Eastgate Priory Club and we should really be called Eastgate Priory Under 13s but Glory Gardens has been our name right from the very beginning. It comes from the Glory Gardens Rec at the back of my house, where most of us started playing cricket.



Back Row: Cal, Clive, Jacky, Erica, Mack, Tylan Front Row: Frankie, Ohbert, Gating, Jo, Hooker Azzie, Matthew, Marty

There's one other important person I should tell you about who's not in the picture - our trainer, Kiddo Johnstone. Kiddo's the Priory's best batsman; he used to play county cricket and he coaches us at Nets every

Saturday. In the week he turns into one of our school teachers. Frankie says that he's like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and that it must be something he has for breakfast that mutates him into a teacher.

After Nets I found Kiddo in the club kitchen giving Gating a bowl of water. Gating's our most faithful fan. Well, maybe not a fan exactly but he comes along to all our games and to net practice, too. That's him in the picture, sitting in front of Ohbert. He's getting a bit ancient these days and he spends most of his time eating or snoring under the pavilion steps. But for some reason, given he's rather fat and smelly and sleeps most of the time, Gating is everyone's favourite dog. He belongs to Kiddo and follows him everywhere.

Gating was making such a racket, slurping water everywhere and pushing the bowl about with his nose, that Kiddo and I could hardly hear each other speak.

"I've got something to show you, kiddo," shouted Kiddo and, before I could say anything about fixtures, he handed me a letter. "Read that."

DURBANVILLE C.C.

Dear Prof,

I think I told you our under 13s are in England on tour for a month. Now I've just heard there's a problem with their itinerary. Can you fix them up with somewhere to stay for a couple of weeks - and maybe find them a few games of cricket? Sorry it's short notice, but if anyone can do it you can.

Please call.

Yours

Jim Winstanley

"It came this morning," said Kiddo. "What do you think?"

I jumped out of the way of Gattling's flying water bowl and read the letter again. "Who's Prof?" I asked.

"It's just a stupid nickname I had when I played cricket," said Kiddo.

"Why Prof?"

"Oh, I can't remember. Does it matter?"

"Not really. Where's Durbanville?"

"In South Africa. I used to coach there in the winter. What do you say? Could we find them all somewhere to stay?"

"You bet," I said. "When are they coming?"

"Next Saturday. There's not much time."

"And when can Glory Gardens play them?" I asked.

"The Wednesday evening, probably."

When Kiddo told the others there was an enormous cheer.

Everyone wanted to have a Durbanville player to stay.

"We've got plenty of room," said Jacky. "My brother's away camping."

"We haven't got a spare bedroom," said Jo, "but Francis can move out and sleep in the bathroom."

"We could take two if you hang upside down in the broom cupboard," said Frankie.

I wouldn't fancy moving into Frankie's bedroom - it's a complete bombsite. Frankie is the most untidy, disorganised person I've ever known. He drives Jo mad because she's the exact opposite; she organises everything, including Glory Gardens C.C.

"How about you, Ohbert?" said Cal. "How many can you take?"

Ohbert was plugged into his Walkman as usual and concentrating hard on trying to read the writing on the bottom of his trainers. He looked up. "Oh but ... what, Cal?"

"Do you want a South African to stay with you?" shouted Cal.

"A what?"

“A South African.”

“Oh but ... all right. But it won't eat my goldfish will it?”

Kiddo looked at Ohbert and frowned. “Well, er, before you get carried away, I think maybe your families might want a say in all this. Tell them about it when you get home and ask them all to ring me.”

Moments later Mr Nazar, Azzie's dad, arrived, closely followed by Clive's aunt. They were the first two to sign up for the South Africans. Clive lives with his aunt these days. His mother died in a car crash years ago and he had a terrible time with his father after that. His old man used to get drunk and beat him up and in the end Clive ran away from home. He never talks about it and I think his father's probably left town now. Clive is a brilliant left-handed bat – although maybe not quite as brilliant as he thinks he is. He's a bit too keen to boast about his cricketing ability and criticise everyone else and his arrogance upsets some people in the team. There've been times when that's caused big trouble for us, but fortunately he's not as bad now as he used to be.

Anyway, everyone agrees that Clive's dead lucky to be living with his aunt; for a start, she makes the best cakes in the world. She said she'd take at least two South Africans and she'd got lots of friends who'd put more of them up if we wanted. Then she gave us Saturday morning's second bit of good news.

“If you really want to play against a good team you'd better take a look at this,” she said putting on her glasses to read the Gazette.

WANT TO PLAY THE WEST INDIES?

Some of the boys from Griffiths Hall School, Barbados – who are in England for a special summer school – are missing their cricket. They are one of the top young sides in Barbados and they are offering to challenge any Under 13s team in the area.

"It gives a telephone number here," said Clive's aunt.

"South Africa *and* the West Indies," gasped Jo.

"It'll be just like the World Cup," said Frankie doing a little dance to celebrate.

"Outrageous," said Tylan.

"Too true it's outrageous," said Mack. "You can't have a World Cup without Australia."

Mack's family have been over here for a year now but he never lets us forget he's an Aussie. He goes to Clive's school on the other side of town and it was Clive who introduced him to Glory Gardens. He's the best fielder in the side and not a bad batsman and bowler.

"And what about India and Pakistan?" said Azzie's dad who's crazy about cricket and was getting very excited.

"Oh that's okay," said Frankie. "We'll just fly them in. Money's no problem. We've got plenty in the post office account, haven't we, Matt?"

Matthew's the club treasurer. "Thirty-eight pounds and 25p exactly," he said, putting on his serious, treasurer's face. "And we need a new cricket bat." Matthew opens the batting with Cal and he's just as serious when he does that.

"Oh well, maybe not," said Frankie. "I know! We'll ask Wyckham Wanderers to play and we can call them Australia and give them another thrashing."

"You know, that's not such a bad idea," said Mack.

"Really?" said Frankie, looking surprised.

"I know quite a lot of Australians over here. I might be able to put together an Aussie side."

"And I can pick a team to represent India and Pakistan," said Azzie's dad looking delighted at the idea.

"Well I'm not playing for them," said Azzie. "I play for Glory Gardens." That was a relief. Along with Clive, Azzie's our best batsman. We certainly couldn't afford to lose him as well as Mack.

"Hold on a minute," said Kiddo. "Before you all get carried away, we haven't got *any* teams coming yet. Let's

wait and see what happens.” He said he’d phone the West Indies school and talk to the fixtures secretary about arranging the games at the Priory.

But everyone was already making plans for the World Cup. Even gloomy old Marty was excited about it. “I wonder what the West Indian bowlers will be like? Fast, I bet,” he said. Marty’s our opening bowler and he’s pretty quick himself.

As we walked home from Nets, Cal, Marty and I talked about nothing else. How good would the South Africans and West Indians be? Could Mack and Azzie’s dad really get two more teams together? Would our parents agree to have a Durbanville player staying with us? Of course they would.

“By the way, did you know Kiddo used to be called Prof when he played cricket,” I said.

“I bet it’s because he teaches French,” said Marty.

“Why?”

“Prof’s short for *professeur* which means teacher,” said Marty.

“But he only started teaching after he gave up cricket, didn’t he?” I said.

“Just shows some people are born to be teachers,” said Cal. “His mum probably called him Prof when he was little.”

“Anyway, he doesn’t like being called it much,” I said.

“Oh really,” said Cal. “I must tell Frankie.”

Chapter Two

“GRIFFITHS HALL SCHOOL are definitely on, kiddoes,” said Kiddo two days later. “I’ve sorted out the fixtures. We can play all the games at the Priory at a push – though I wouldn’t mind using a second ground if we can find one.” Kiddo spread a big sheet of paper across his dining table.

GROUP A	GROUP B
<i>Wednesday August 3rd</i>	
Glory Gardens v Durbanville	
<i>Thursday August 4th</i>	
	Griffiths Hall v Team X
<i>Friday August 5th</i>	
Glory Gardens v T McCurdy’s XI	Mr Nazar’s XI v Griffiths Hall
<i>Sunday August 7th</i>	
T McCurdy’s XI v Durbanville	Mr Nazar’s XI v Team X
<i>Wednesday August 10th</i>	
SEMI FINALS	
Group A Winner v Group B Runner-up	
Group B Winner v Group A Runner-up	
<i>Saturday August 13th</i>	
FINAL	

All 20 over games except the final which will be 40 overs.

Kiddo had asked us to come to his house to talk about the ‘World Cup’ and Frankie, Cal, Erica, Azzie and I were gathered round looking at his plan.

It was the first time any of us had seen where he lived. It looked more like the Priory pavilion than a proper home. There were cricket pictures all over the walls - mostly photos of Kiddo when he was younger playing county cricket. There he was receiving trophies or standing next to famous people like Geoffrey Boycott and Bob Willis. There was hardly any normal furniture in the room, just the big long table and three old battered leather armchairs. The carpet was worn out, too.

"Who are team X?" asked Erica.

"That's one of the things I wanted to talk to you about," said Kiddo. "Even if Asif's father and Mack come up trumps with their teams, we'll still need another side to make the whole thing work properly."

"I'm sure Wyckham Wanderers would play if we asked them," I suggested.

"Good idea," said Kiddo. "We could play some of the games on their ground, too. That might bring a smile back to Bunter's face." Bunter Elgood is the Priory groundsman. He hates having too many games arranged on *his* ground; he says it wears out the square. I don't think he really likes people playing cricket at the Priory at all.

"What about the other two teams?" asked Kiddo.

"Dad says he's got his eleven already," said Azzie. "He's spent all week ringing people up from work. Mum says he'll get the sack if he's not careful. I think he's been having some secret training sessions with them, too."

"That wouldn't surprise me," said Kiddo with a smile. "How's young McCurdy getting on?"

"Last time I saw Mack he'd only got five," said Cal.

"I shouldn't worry - he'll find a team all right," said Erica.

"So it looks as if we've got a competition, kiddoes," said Kiddo.

"The World Cup!" insisted Frankie.

We all wanted to know about the West Indian team. Kiddo told us they would probably be the best team we'd ever played. "Everyone's good at cricket in Barbados," he said. "And they tell me Griffiths Hall School has one of the best teams on the island."

"Wait till they meet the best team in England," said Frankie.

"At least we won't be playing them until the semi-finals or maybe even the final," said Cal.

"If we get that far," said Erica.

"Course we will," said Frankie. "We've only got to beat Mack's Aussies and the South Africans."

"I shouldn't underestimate Durbanville, kiddo," said Kiddo.

"When are they getting here?" I asked.

"On Saturday," said Kiddo. "I told them to join us at Nets, so you'll be able to get a good look at them then."



At Saturday Nets Mack announced he had nearly a full team. "It hasn't been easy, mind. There aren't as many Aussies over here as I thought. And most of them can't play cricket or else they're the wrong age."

"How many have you got?" asked Tylan.

"Nine. But a couple of them are only *just* Australians."

"How can you be only *just* Australian?" asked Erica.

"Well ... if your grandmother's one, for instance."

"Or if you can sing *Waltzing Matilda* or you've got corks hanging down from your hat?" suggested Frankie.

"Well, I can't be too fussy if I'm going to find eleven players. I was thinking of picking Sam Keeping."

"He's not even a bit Australian, is he?" asked Cal.

"Not as far as I know," said Mack. "But he's the best wicket-keeper in the county and I've discovered his middle name's Sidney."

"So?"

“Well Sydney’s in Australia, isn’t it?”

“Have you got any real Australians apart from you?” asked Jo.

“Yes, loads. You wait and see. The Aussies are going to take this World Cup apart.”

“Get ready to be blitzed by Glory Gardens on Friday,” said Frankie. “First we get the Ashes back - then we win the World Cup.”

Marty, Jacky and I spent most of the session working on our bowling action with Wingy, the first team’s ace fast bowler.

“If you’re going to bowl fast you’ve got to work at being aggressive,” said Wingy. “That doesn’t mean you have to swear at the batsman or anything like that. But remember, if you’re a fast bowler, *you don’t like batsmen.*”

He told us to go and bowl as fast as we could and then he gave us a few individual tips. He told me to aim at the stumps by looking outside my right arm before I delivered the ball (I’m a left-arm bowler - even though I bat right-handed). And he showed Jacky how to follow through down the pitch.

Half way through Nets they arrived. The South Africans poured out of their minibus and rushed over to meet us. The first things I noticed were their stange accents and how fit they all looked. Their captain was about to introduce himself to me when a much shorter boy with thick, wavy hair and a biggish nose jumped in front of him. “This is Louis Moyake, captain of the invincible Durbanville Darts and I’m Joe Reddy, the best wicket-keeper in South Africa. You’ve probably heard lots about me already.”

Louis gently pushed Joe out of the way. He was tall and athletic looking and he had teeth that were so white they almost dazzled you when he smiled. Louis introduced the rest of his team and then I called out the names of the Glory Gardens players.