

Cricket – superMac the history-maker



Calum MacLeod salutes the crowd after reaching three figures.
Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

Sunday is a day Calum MacLeod will never forget. The first Scot to score a 100 against England and a maiden victory by six runs over The Auld Enemy.

And the history-making result came before a nationwide TV audience.

MacLeod says Scotland are now firmly on the map, even if they are still ranked an associate nation rather than a Test one.

Later this week, after a double-header in the T20 against Pakistan at The Grange on Tuesday and Wednesday (both games start at 4pm)

he returns to play in the Kent Premier League for Bexley where he is player/coach.

He's also renovating a house and all this is a far cry from taking centre stage in a packed house at The Grange facing the best England can throw against you.

Glasgow-born MacLeod said Sunday was "right up there" as one of the best days in his sporting career.

And he said that a result like this has been coming for two years since the new Scotland coaching team, headed by Kiwi Grant Bradburn, got to work.

They preach aggressive cricket and he added: "We showed what we are capable of against Zimbabwe (in a recent clash) and to take a step up and beat an England side, the No 1 ranked team in the world, is a massive statement."

He agreed that Scotland came into the England clash from a low in Zimbabwe when a controversial lbw decision in a rain-affected game against the West Indies robbed Scotland of a World Cup slot in 2019.

And the proud Scot, who plays for Bexley, said: "This is a special day, but it does not take away what happened there (in Harare) and everybody's feelings about a ten-team World Cup.

"Performances like this help push our case (for full Test status) but these are opportunities we have to take as a Scotland team."

Looking back at the game, when Scotland scored 371 for five after 50 overs with MacLeod finishing on 140 not out, the batsman, who was released by Durham two years ago, said that England looked odds-on when Jonny Bairstow was smashing his way to 105.

But he added: "We keep talking about our bowling attack and performances like Mark Watt on that wicket and these

boundaries (they were shortened) wins you games, even if it does not grab the headlines.

“That’s a performance (three wickets for 55 runs) that we will look at as outstanding.

“And the two quick wickets we got (both falling at 245) changed the momentum of the game and when Saf (Safyann Sharif) had the ball in his hand everybody out there felt we could do something.

“He’s quite a laid-back guy and when he has the ball in his hand we back his skills.

“It is up to that to build on this and over the past 18 months we have tried to work on capitalising on key moments, not being plucky Scots losers but being brave enough and bold enough to win games.”

Duncan Hodge, the Scotland rugby international, was introduced as a motivating factor ahead of the England game.

And MacLeod joked: “He’s never going to leave.”

Looking to the future, MacLeod said that if something comes along there would be “conversations” but he added: “I do not want to get too far ahead. Let’s enjoy tonight.”