



Presley Polonnowita, Akash Santhosh and Desert Cubs players at a Shyam Bhatia promotional event

## Coach calls for complimentary access

**Alex Leach**

DUBAI — The head coach of a UAE-based cricket academy has called upon the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) to allow the game's next generation complimentary access to the forthcoming international action here.

Pakistan will play Sri Lanka in three Test matches, five one-day internationals (ODIs) and one T20 game across Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah over the next two months.

They'll then take on England in three Tests, four ODIs and three T20 encounters across January and February in the first two venues as the sport's top stars return to these shores again.

Those titanic tussles are sure to prove popular among the cricket-loving public here and Presley Polonnowita, of Desert Cubs Cricket Academy in Sharjah, believes sufficient space should be made available in the

stands for the future Umar Guls and Kumar Sangakarras.

"It's not only a boost for my academy, but for all of the cricket-loving kids in the country. They are hungry to see international cricket, especially Test cricket," he replied when asked about the upcoming Pakistan matches on the horizon.

"I have asked the ECB to give some allocated areas for the boys within academies here to see the Test matches.

"I've requested them to send invitations to the academies to let the children in free of charge or at a very nominal cost on a specific day because it's a requirement for them.

"When we were growing up, we went to the grounds and saw them live, with all of the discipline they had in their batting and bowling, their temperaments and the passion.

"These children only see T20 these days, so this is a good opportunity for all of the UAE academies to take their

children and show them that this is the cream of cricket.

"The main thing is for the children to see how these great cricketers play, their temperaments and what the differences are between Test cricket, T20 and one-dayers.

"It's a very good opportunity and, as a coach, I'm very happy to see that these tours are happening in this part of the world."

Such an initiative would also assist Polonnowita in his concerted attempts to bring more youngsters up through the ranks and eventually across the boundary rope in the national team's colours.

"My plan is to produce more cricketers for UAE teams in the future. That's my requirement," he added.

"As a coach and a person who has played cricket in this country, I'd like to see my children one day playing cricket for UAE teams and bringing glory to the country."

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## Inspired youngster comes out with book

**Alex Leach**

DUBAI — A budding young cricketer has unveiled his own book at Shyam Bhatia's museum here after being inspired by the renowned enthusiast's own written musings on the bat and ball game.

Our Own English High School Sharjah pupil Akash Santhosh, 11, penned his 'Cricketer's Handbook' having been given Bhatia's 'Portraits of the Game' as a gift at the Bhatia-backed U15 'Cricket for Care' finals, where he represented Desert Cubs Cricket Academy.

Sufficiently compelled to turn his hand to authorship thereafter, Santhosh began researching and writing

about the formats, history, laws and stars of the sport, with the very first edition being launched at Bhatia's Jumeirah residence over the weekend.

"I was inspired by the book 'Portraits of the Game' by Shyam Bhatia," admitted the Desert Cubs' U12 'A' player, who counts Wasim Akram, Don Bradman and Sachin Tendulkar as his cricketing idols and wants the book to act as a reference tool for his fellow peers.

"In that, specific information has been collected about the players and memorable moments, so I thought we have to give maximum knowledge to all of the novices, like me, and I've since made this book."

Santhosh's head coach at the Desert Cubs, Presley Polonnowita, hopes the youngster's own initiative can

encourage others in his age group to assess how else they can benefit from their physical participation out in the middle.

"It's excellent and children should go that extra mile to think beyond bat and ball," he enthused. "When you take up the game, you play - and enjoy - it.

"But, it's always better to think a little bit about statistics here and there, where to get information from and what else you can do to contribute to the cricket world.

"These are the ways that children at a young age can explore and find out what they're capable of. "I'm sure this is going to be a hit and the other children will think of doing similar things in the future."

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