

Auckland Cricket Selection Sri Lankan tour feedback - July 2018

Hi Amita

It's been a few weeks since we got home and we've settled back into our routines. I just wanted to drop you a note to say 'thank you' for everything you did for us while we were on tour.

Anna and Lily had the best holiday ever, Rupert had a wonderful experience and learned so much about himself, his cricket and how to get along with team-mates and I had the best break I've had in a long time.

Sri Lanka is a beautiful country and Sri Lankans are the nicest people I have ever met (yes, really!), so thank you for leading us on a wonderful tour of some of your country.

We had such a good time with Basil after the cricket tour too - it was so good to be able to visit other parts of the country and to see some amazing places. The accommodation you arranged for us was absolutely first class too; we felt very spoiled :)

I've also let Phil know how grateful we are for all his efforts in supporting us and attending to every detail to make our trip enjoyable. He did an amazing job - you selected (and trained) him well!

Thanks again for a wonderful two weeks - we would love to visit Sri Lanka again in the next few years.

All the best
Chris & Anna

Tue 31/07, 3:15 p.m.

Hi Iain and Tony

I'm getting in touch after being fortunate enough to be part of the recently completed Auckland Cricket Selection tour of Sri Lanka organised by Amita Weerakoon. Given Auckland Cricket's endorsement of the tour, I thought you might appreciate some feedback about the trip.

So, in no particular order, here is my attempt to summarise a truly memorable tour.

Organisation

I can't even begin to guess how much time Amita and Basil (his man on the ground in Sri Lanka) spent behind the scenes getting accommodation, transportation, venues and activities sorted but they deserve huge credit for their efforts in putting together a truly memorable but very safe experience. There were more than 50 people and two busloads of gear to move around but Basil and his team managed this professionally and with a smile.

Accommodation & Food

The five hotels that we stayed at were of top quality, set in some amazing locations and all shared two key features - a large pool to cool down in at the end of each day and a buffet breakfast and

dinner to ensure all tastes were catered for and everyone was well fed and watered. For a young cricketer (and their old supporter), life doesn't get much better than that!

Activities

It was clear that a lot of thought went into making sure that the activities on the non-playing days gave the tour members a chance to enjoy unique experiences that reflected the best of Sri Lanka – my son and I will never forget being able to release 3 day old turtles into the ocean at dusk or having a wild elephant wander past us within touching distance at the safari park. A tuk tuk ride through downtown Colombo is also an experience I can highly recommend.

Cricket

Obviously, this was the main reason for the trip and it certainly didn't disappoint.

It is always a challenge working with players from different schools, of different ages and with varying levels of ability but Amita did an outstanding job in bringing together two teams that I believe exceeded expectations with their performances. It was clear that the boys responded well to the principles laid out by Amita at the training sessions before the tour – learning, fun and respect – and it was a pleasure to watch the camaraderie between them grow as the tour progressed.

As far as the games were concerned, all were played on quality grass wickets and most were at venues with facilities that I believe are equal to (if not better than) most first-class grounds in New Zealand – it was also a treat to have official umpires and scorers and even attendants who kept the scoreboards up to date. As wide eyed as our boys were to be playing at these amazing venues, it was great to see that the opposition teams were just as excited to get the opportunity to play on these grounds as well.

The standard of cricket was also very good – the senior players in the U17 team rated it as equivalent to the First XI competition in Auckland – and Amita did an excellent job of making sure everyone got their opportunity with both bat and ball. It was also pleasing to watch the boys adapt so quickly to the different conditions and to see knowledge and learnings being freely shared between team members.

Final Thoughts

If the opportunity presents itself, I would unreservedly recommend this tour to any secondary school age cricketer that is serious about improving their game while also enjoying some once in a lifetime experiences. I think it is a credit to Auckland Cricket that you stand behind these tours and I believe you will see the benefits in future years as the boys apply learnings from these trips when they return to their school and club teams as better cricketers and better young men.

If you or any prospective participant in a future tour has any questions about any aspect of the trip, I'm happy to be contacted to answer them.

Best regards

Matthew Bond

Email: matthew.bond@tfs.co.nz

Mobile: 0274 576 236

Hi Amita

It's hard to believe we've been back for over a week already.

I just wanted to send you this short note on behalf of our family to say a very big thank you for organizing such a fantastic trip to Sri Lanka. Like many of the parents, this was our first trip to the country and we can only say the tour was exceptional. You clearly put an enormous amount of planning and effort into the organization of the tour and the result was a trip which introduced us to the culture and essence of Sri Lanka while helping our boys gain cricket experience that will stay with them all their lives.

Dan was very nervous before we left but quickly gained in confidence after the first game. I think the experience for him was enormous and he made some great friends along the way. As soon as we arrived back in Auckland Dan said he would like to go again.

Phil and Dinesh did indeed go the extra mile too. It wouldn't be an easy job managing such a group with so many hotels and transfers and Phil made everything run like clockwork. Dinesh was excellent with the team, providing excellent feedback and coaching and the boys all liked and respected him.

Thank you for making the trip such a memorable occasion. We will certainly be back to Sri Lanka and will give much thought over the next few weeks to joining next year's tour. You may find you'll have three cricket teams to deal with soon as everyone keeps returning. The chartered jet might be on the cards!

Kindest Regards

Kerry, Bronwyn, Will and Dan Titchener

Hi Amita

Sam and Owen had such a wonderful tour to Sri Lanka, it was great to get daily updates while Liam and I were in cold Dunedin! I couldn't believe it when Owen said it was enjoying curry for breakfast!

It was great to hear that both teams had some good wins also. Sam really enjoyed the cricket and no doubt it will steer him into a great upcoming season this year. I am sure his confidence got a good boost!

Kind regards

Jo MacKinnon

Hi Amita,

Hope you have made it home safely.

Thank you for such an inspiring trip to Sri Lanka.

It was a truly incredible opportunity that Logan and I will not forget.

We appreciate all your hard work to make this trip come together.

Kind Regards

Andy Nottage

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Hi Amita,

Would just like to say a HUGE thank you for the amazing trip that you put together.

Hunter and I will treasure some of the memories that you helped to create 😊

I hope that you enjoyed the rest of your time in Sri Lanka and caught up on some well deserved rest!!

Anyway we are back into the swing of crazy term life here and trying to adjust to the slightly cooler weather and a new schedule !!

Steve and I will let you know after Christmas around if we will join the tour again next year..... we need to get through World Champs in Adelaide in November and then take a big breath and look at what is on the calendar for next year!

Thanks again for the magic trip, and talk again soon.

Warm regards

Claire 😊

P.S Tell Jodi thanks

Hey Amita

On my behalf, thanks so much for giving Hunter the opportunity to head to Sri Lanka.

I know he thoroughly enjoyed it and is determined to head over again next year if he has his way haha there is plenty of water to head under the bridge before we even think about the next 12/18 months.

Hunter is still exhausted which is a bit of a crack up An amazing experience with cricket, the culture and an amazing tour group and team mates.

Claire also had a blast you certainly wouldn't call Claire a "cricket mum" so I wondered how she would find that part of the trip.

But she has come home talking of her great trip, the experiences she had, and the great people she shared the trip with.

Thanks again and I look forward to catching up with you soon

Steve

Hi Amita,

Just wanted to say Thank you for including Nathan on the trip. It was a great opportunity for him and an experience he will never forget.

He was 'buzzing' when he got home that night!

Thanks again

Belinda

Belinda Smith

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Dear Amita,

Thank you all so much for everything you did prior to the tour and during the tour. We had such a great time, and this was due to the thorough organisation from each of you. The tour was so much more than cricket, and for me especially one of the highlights was the cultural anecdotes from each of you during bus journeys. Riley has returned saying to Craig and his brothers, 'when we all go next year...' So I guess that perfectly sums up what a fantastic trip you all organised.

Thank you and kind regards,
Tanya and Riley

Sent from my iPad=

Hi Amita

Good to hear you've made it back in one piece and hope you enjoyed some quality downtime in SL before coming back here.. Thanks again for all your efforts in putting together another spectacular tour – I didn't think you could top the 2015 Rosmini trip but

you really smashed it out of the park with the latest tour! I'm sure you've probably got a heap of them already but, if you want me to write a letter of recommendation, I'd be more than happy to do so.

Cheers

Matthew Bond

**Senior Business Analyst
Toyota Financial Services**

Good morning Amita

I want to thank you so much for another great tour. Caleb really enjoyed the experience and thank you for being their primary care giver during the tour.

I have sent a message to Phil and I think you both deserve a medal in managing such a hard age group of boys.

Once again thank you and I hope you managed a few days respite prior to returning to NZ.

Look forward to catching up during the cricket season.

Regards,

Chief Petty Officer, Denise Kingi

A message from **Kushil**



Kushil Gunasekera

Dear Amitha and the Auckland group,

Many thanks for the donated cricket gear.

Most grateful Amitha and may you continue to flourish greatly with blessings in abundance.

When you give more than one expects, you get more than what you expect.

Nicest wishes,

Kushil.

Kushil Gunasekera

Founder/Chief Trustee at Foundation of Goodness

Reply