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Cricket is still alive

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Efforts to rekindle activeness in young learners through sport proved successful.

These efforts were realised through the KFC Mini Cricket Festival held at Rosebank Primary School on 14 May. Learners of Rosebank, Japari and Saxonwold primary schools painted the Rosebank sports grounds red and white on the day.

Central Gauteng Lions KFC Mini Cricket administrator Bryan Patel said the basic principle behind the event was to keep the children active while all Covid-19 protocols were observed.

Patel said, "We know we've lost a whole year from last year, so from the Central Gauteng Lions side, we want to make sure that cricket and sports still happen and this is the ideal time to work with it – especially at grassroots level."

He added, "We're trying to grow that process and make sure that we can work towards getting cricket players with adequate skills. We thank the teachers as well for their sacrifice of being out there and keeping children active."

Patel said they were focused on children from the age of six to nine years old, which is the basis of mini cricket, and they hoped to get more numbers joining in and making the children aware that the spirit of cricket was still there.

Central Gauteng Lions Mini Cricket Services manager Reuben

Mandlazi, whose role is to facilitate the development of cricket from grassroots, which is KFC Mini Cricket, up to semi-professional said, "It's quite refreshing to be back on the field especially after Covid interruptions. It was really tough for the kids in particular to just be in their houses and corridors and not be able to come out and play their favourite game."

"Today is one of those ground-breaking days for them. Through the children's participation, we will be able to identify talent which could represent their province as well as our country in the future."

Former Proteas bowler and mentor, Garnett Kruger said playing as a youngster at this level was very important because, as could be observed, the children were safely socialising, learning a new cricket skill and also learning how to interact with other children.

Rosebank Primary School Johannesburg North KFC Mini Cricket co-ordinator Frank Zagwazatha said the school was very happy with this initiative and the children were very excited as they last played a game at that venue in March last year.

Zagwazatha added, "The excitement is on everyone's faces, including myself, I love being out here and helping the kids."

"On a day like this, we thank the principal and Cricket South Africa, and KFC as the sponsors as well as so many people involved in the background who we don't even see in the limelight."



To see a video of the mini cricket players showcasing their skills on the field, scan the **PixzAR** app.

Coach Adam Baxter guides Saxonwold Primary School learner Bokang Langa on how to bowl.
Photos: Naidine Sibanda

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