



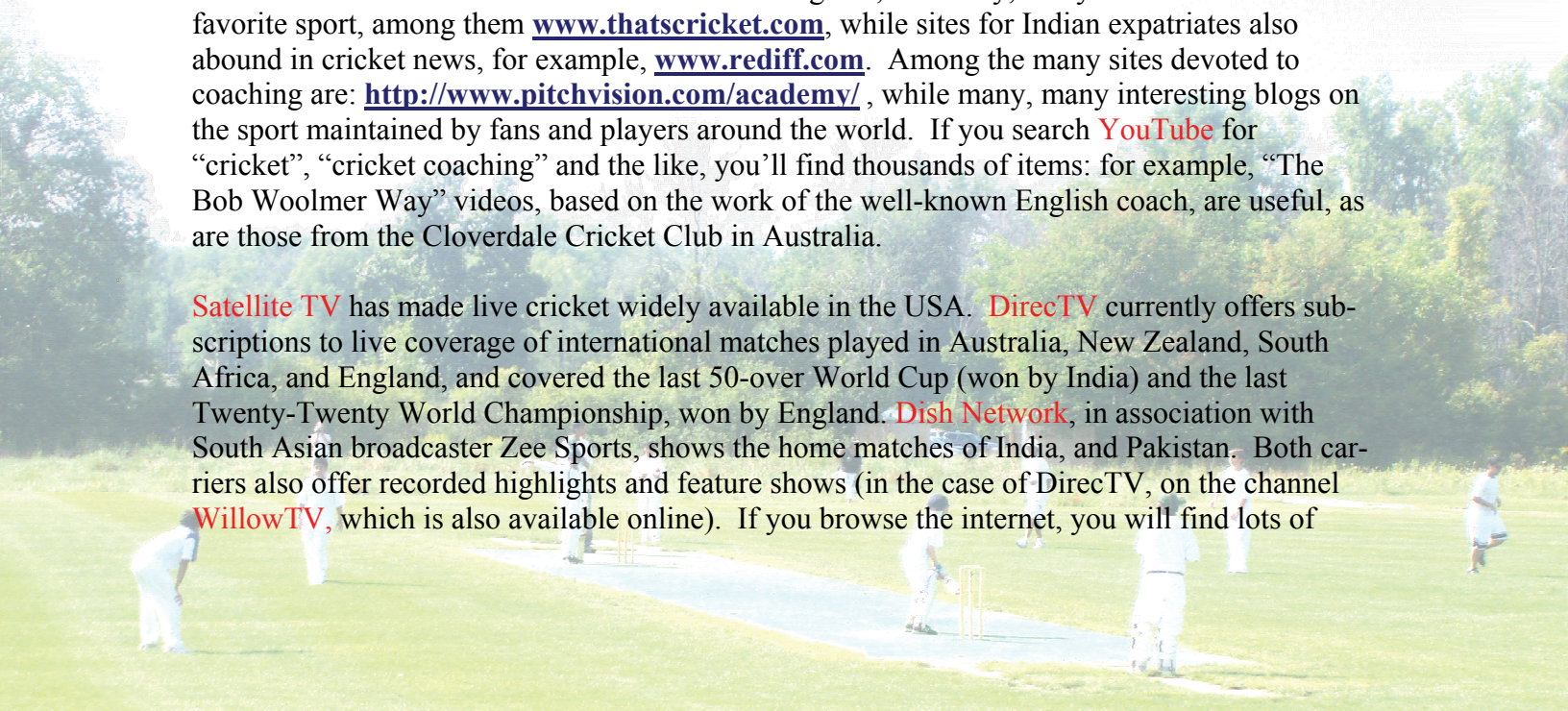
# Learn More About Cricket



Cricket, the **first major team sport to have its rules of play codified**, with its ancient pedigree and love of tradition, is also very well suited to the age of **electronic communication and globalization**. Played at the highest level on all the major continents, it has the world's most visited sports web site – [www.cricinfo.com](http://www.cricinfo.com), recently bought by **ESPN**, one of several media conglomerates fighting over the huge cricket audience. When you visit [www.cricinfo.com](http://www.cricinfo.com), you will find: real-time text commentary on all major professional matches in progress; great feature articles, renewed every day; an amazing archive of profiles and statistics (that player who made one appearance for a first-class side back in 1922 – he's there, along with everyone else who played the game anywhere at the top level); and blogs that cover every angle of the sport. There are national Cricinfo portals for all the major cricketing countries, and also for some of the lesser lights, including the USA: <http://www.espnricinfo.com/usa/content/current/team/11.html>. Cricinfo also saves you the trouble of going to the internet sites of the sports pages of the world's newspapers, since it has a blog that surfs them for you and digs up the most interesting news, whether published in Karachi, Auckland, Melbourne, London, Delhi, Cape Town, or Kingston. Indeed, one of the things that has made cricket the perfect sport for new technology and globalization is a very simple, but very significant fact: while it is played and followed by a very large proportion of the world's population, displaying extraordinary ethnic, national, confessional, and linguistic diversity, **its lingua franca is English**. On Cricinfo's blogs (as on the site's live text coverage of matches) you will see readers' comments added almost simultaneously from opposite ends of the world – South Africa and Jamaica, Australia and England, New Zealand and India; Sri Lanka and Guyana, Pakistan and Jamaica; even the United States and – fill in the blank....

The “home of cricket” is **Lord's cricket ground** in London, where the laws of the game are made, and where many famous players have shone: [www.lords.org](http://www.lords.org). The body that runs world cricket is the International Cricket Council – [www.icc-cricket.com](http://www.icc-cricket.com). The world's largest news-gathering organization, the BBC, has lots of cricket news in its sports section, [www.bbc.co.uk/sport](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport), and its sports academy has some useful coaching tips and interesting videos: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/cricket/skills/default.stm>. The biggest US site devoted to cricket is [www.dreamcricket.com](http://www.dreamcricket.com) (if you browse through the news archive, you'll find some items about cricket in Michigan). India, probably the most passionate cricketing country, with a huge fan base and a massive commercial interest in the game, has many, many sites devoted to its favorite sport, among them [www.thatscricket.com](http://www.thatscricket.com), while sites for Indian expatriates also abound in cricket news, for example, [www.rediff.com](http://www.rediff.com). Among the many sites devoted to coaching are: <http://www.pitchvision.com/academy/>, while many, many interesting blogs on the sport maintained by fans and players around the world. If you search **YouTube** for “cricket”, “cricket coaching” and the like, you'll find thousands of items: for example, “The Bob Woolmer Way” videos, based on the work of the well-known English coach, are useful, as are those from the Cloverdale Cricket Club in Australia.

**Satellite TV** has made live cricket widely available in the USA. **DirecTV** currently offers subscriptions to live coverage of international matches played in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and England, and covered the last 50-over World Cup (won by India) and the last Twenty-Twenty World Championship, won by England. **Dish Network**, in association with South Asian broadcaster Zee Sports, shows the home matches of India, and Pakistan. Both carriers also offer recorded highlights and feature shows (in the case of DirecTV, on the channel **WillowTV**, which is also available online). If you browse the internet, you will find lots of





highlights posted very quickly after matches, and there are also many services that offer live video streaming, some for a subscription, some free.

In contrast to its relative (and, effectively, offshoot) baseball, cricket has not been particularly well-served in **feature films** or **fiction**. The only really good film most people will mention is Ashutosh Gowariker's very entertaining *Lagaan* (2001, among the 2002 Oscar nominations for best foreign-language film; official website [www.lagaan.com](http://www.lagaan.com)), with Bollywood megastar **Aamir Khan** in the lead role. It is set in an Indian village during the British Raj: an English regimental cricket team challenges the villagers to play the great imperial game, confident that the ignorant natives will be easily beaten. You can probably guess the outcome... There are no world-famous cricket novels, but the sport does figure in some well-known fiction, including works by **Arthur Conan Doyle** and **P. G. Wodehouse**, while Joseph O'Neill's recent novel, *Netherland* (2008), set within what the very positive review in the *New York Times* called "the vibrant subculture of cricket in New York," has been extremely well received. However, cricket has been extremely well served by authors in other genres. Cricket journalism, both match-reporting and features-writing, is often of a very high standard and much more interesting than the treatment meted out to other major sports. Perhaps first among the greats of the past, the Englishman Neville Cardus (also music correspondent of England's *Manchester Guardian*, later *The Guardian*) set a standard that has been followed by many since. Among modern journalists Delhi's **Mukul Kesavan** (also an academic and a novelist), the Australian-based Englishman **Peter Roebuck**, and the *Guardian*'s Mike Selvey are favorite reads for many — their recent work is easy to find online. Roebuck and Selvey are among many former cricketers who testify to another important fact about the sport — quite a few ex-players can actually write (in contrast to so many other professional sports, where "ghost-writing" is *de rigueur*). Cardus, Roebuck, and Kesavan are among hosts of cricket journalists who have written great books, often, but not always, based on their columns, but some of the greatest cricketing books of all have been written by authors who were leading intellectuals first, and followers of the game second: *Beyond a Boundary* by the Trinidadian **C. L. R. James** and *A Corner of a Foreign Field: the Indian History of a British Sport*, by historian **Ramachandra Guha** are two of the finest examples, and testify to the sport's ability to provide an arena for discussions reaching far beyond runs scored and wickets taken; **Derek Birley's *Social History of English Cricket***, and the recent *Cambridge Companion to Cricket*, ed. A Bateman and J. Hill (2011) are also well worth reading. On a lighter note, there are plenty of books that take a wry look at the game: among recent examples, the journalist **Gideon Haigh**, who wrote very well on the great England-Australia matches of 2005 (*Ashes 2005: the Greatest Test Series*), is also the author of the entertaining *Many a Slip: The Diary of a Club Cricket Season*, which tells the story of a season with the club in Melbourne, Australia, for whom Haigh plays "for fun". Finally, for the young reader, **Tim De Lisle's *Young Wisden: a New Fan's Guide to Cricket*** is an excellent introduction; while the annual *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*, published every year since 1864, is essential reading for the devoted follower.

But the best place of all to start is on the playing field. For more information, contact the **Michigan Cricket Academy** (write to MCA's Information Director, Michael Makin: [mlmakin@umich.edu](mailto:mlmakin@umich.edu); or check out the MCA web site — <http://micricketacademy.wordpress.com/>).

