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# USA!

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By Terry Jacoby  
Heritage Media

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**T**here is a saying that goes something like this: "Now that wouldn't be cricket." It basically means that, whatever that is, wouldn't be fair or honest.

For Dexter's Gordon Makin, cricket has a whole different meaning. And it would be fair and honest to say that this young man has found an incredible passion in his life at such an early age. Oh yeah, he's pretty good at it, too.

How good?

Makin, 15, was one of only two Michigan athletes selected to play for the USA U-15 squad and represented his country in the International Cricket Council Americas Northern Division Tournament held in August in Winnipeg, Canada. Anytime an athlete can put on a uniform with USA on it is an impressive accomplishment.

Makin, a sophomore at Dexter High School, and Novi's Rohit Mogalayapalli were the first Michigan Cricket Association players to be selected for a national team at any level (U-15, U-19, or senior). This international tournament takes place every two years and is the only regularly occurring chance for North American U-15s to play for their countries.

Makin, who normally opens the batting for his club and region, was asked to bat up the order on a strong USA team full of fine opening batsmen. Of course, he accepted the challenge and responded by helping his team with some outstanding play.

He finished the tournament fourth on the team in runs scored and batting average, and top in strike rate (runs scored per ball faced), playing in all four matches. He also was the USA's wicket keeper (cricket's equivalent of catcher), taking four catches and playing a role in three run-outs.

North America's premier Web site devoted to the world's second-most popular sport, [www.dreamcricket.org](http://www.dreamcricket.org), selected Makin for its



**A Bermudan batsman plays a defensive shot, with Dexter's Gordon Makin up at the stumps.**

all-tournament team, one of four Americans to be honored.

The USA team, coached by former West Indies wicket keeper Milton Pydanna, finished the tournament in a three-way tie with Bermuda and Canada, but emerged as champions on net run rate, after a close victory over Bermuda, a crushing defeat of Canada, and then tight losses to both teams in the double-round-robin.

This was the first time a US team had won the tournament.

Gordon went from "trying it out in the backyard" to wearing a USA jersey in a relatively short amount of time.

"Until about four years Gordon had just played a bit in our back yard with me," said his father, Michael. "I played at school and a little at university and with English friends when they visited us here or when we visited them."

One day Gordon saw a flyer for Michigan Cricket Academy on the bulletin board at Bombay Grocers in Ann Arbor and he started going to MCA practices at the cricket ground in Lyon Oaks Park in Wixom.

Gordon took to the game immediately, played for MCA in a tournament in Chicago within a month of joining the Academy, and since then has played for MCA in tournaments in California and Florida. He's also played for MCA in a series with a club in Toronto.

Makin also has been a regular for the Motown Cricket Club, an adult club in the Michigan Cricket Association.

Based on his performance in a national inter-regional U-15 tournament in 2009, Makin was selected as a reserve for the U-15 USA team. "Ever since then he's wanted to make the USA team for this year's tournament, so he was overjoyed when he was selected," his father said.

Cricket is very dynamic – while most sports favored in the US require skilled execution of carefully planned plays, cricket requires you to do different things all the time, and every ball bowled changes the game, often in ways that cannot be anticipated. "I think that what he likes most about the game is its

## What is cricket?

Cricket is a game for two teams of 11 members each that is played on a field having two wickets 22 yards (20 meters) apart. The object being to score runs by batting the ball far enough so that one is enabled to exchange places with the batsman defending the wicket before the ball is recovered. Cricket is played as a major professional sport in England, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, the West Indies (the Anglophone countries of the Caribbean), Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Zimbabwe. In the USA most cricketers are expats from cricketing countries, and in the Midwest the majority are from South Asia, where cricket is by far the most popular sport.

## Correction

An earlier version of this story first appeared in the Dexter Leader. That version included several factual mistakes. We regret the errors and wanted to correct it with a new version.



Wicket keeper Gordon Makin takes a throw from the outfield for the USA vs. Bermuda.

## CRICKET

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striking combination of the characteristics of a team and an individual sport – when you are batting, you are, essentially, all alone, and if you are out first ball, that’s the end of your batting for the match, while if you bat for a long time, you can win the match for your team more or less on your own,” Michael Makin said. “But many aspects of the game require the collaboration of many teammates, and even batting is done in partnerships.”

Makin opens the batting for his club – facing the fast bowlers when the ball is new – and he likes that challenge.

“He also enjoys keeping wicket, where the sort of athleticism he has developed in soccer, rugby and American football help him – you have to dive for the ball and need very quick reactions,” said Makin, who is from England; his wife Alina is Russian, which makes Gordon one of the few if not only cricketer of

even partly Russian background to have played for the US.

Gordon, whose younger brothers Neil (12) and Nigel (5), also enjoy cricket, has played other sports while growing up in Dexter. For four years he played as a midfielder on a soccer team (for the now defunct Ann Arbor Arsenal) that won league and tournament titles. He also played Little League baseball in Dexter and was briefly a member of the Dexter Wrestling club.

He currently plays football for the Dexter High School JV team and rugby for the Dexter Devils U-19 team.

But cricket is the ticket for Gordon.

His career highlights already include a maiden half-century at last year’s inter-regional tournament in New Jersey (vs. South West Region), 44 not out and the Man-of-the-Match award vs. University of Michigan XI in the American College Cricket Cup in October, 2010, scores of 47 and 72 at the California Cricket Academy U-17 Tournament this June, and two fifties

in the recently completed inter-regional tournament in Connecticut.

Gordon’s local coaches include Dr. Vankeepuram Giri, an outstanding former professional cricketer and the high performance coach at MCA.

“As the recent elite level coach, I see one unique quality in Gordon,” Giri said. “He belongs to the rare breed of ‘Staying at the Crease.’ You don’t find this quality in many of the present day cricketers especially in the USA. In fact, there is hardly any in Michigan. This staying power is something very important in all forms of cricket.”

Giri likes what he sees from Makin as a player.

“I am sure Gordon Makin is going to be a great force to reckon with,” he said. “I find him moving towards the right direction to become a great cricketer. I wish him all success in his cricketing career.”

With all of Gordon’s experience and skill it wouldn’t be fair to assume he can’t accomplish whatever it is he wants to accomplish.

That wouldn’t be cricket, now would it?