



WICKET CRAFT

Cricket club brings popular international sport to local parks

Charlie MacKenzie | Staff Writer

Students are chirping about cricket.

Cricket is a popular sport in India, and has been brought to Mason High School by a group of 30 students. The club meets every Thursday to discuss club activity and practices every Saturday at Heritage Oak Park. Cricket is played on an oval field by two opposing teams of 11. Senior member of the club Amit Sathe said the sport isn't too distant from America's favorite pastime.

"It is kind of like baseball in a way that you have two bases instead of four," Sathe said. "One person is running and another person is batting at a time. There are wickets, which are stumps. The guy who is throwing the ball is trying to hit the wickets, and if he hits those then the person is out. The two people work together and they run to each side. If you can't make it before they hit the

stump, it's an out. Also if you catch (the ball) out of the air then it's an out."

A point is scored when both runners make it to the bases without being tagged out. Multiple runs can be scored at each bat. According to freshman and founder Durga Mishra, his love for the sport and the difficulty to organize games convinced him to create the club.

"A lot of my friends and I have played cricket when we were young but we were never able to play often, maybe only once a year at a party," Mishra said. "We all really enjoy the sport and we wanted to make something that we could play on a regular basis."

As cricket is a very rare sport in the United States, it is hard for the sport to spread. According to Sathe, his parents made him join a cricket team when he was in sixth grade.

"I was on a team in sixth grade," Sathe said. "I used to live in Louisville, Ken-

tucky and back there my dad was friends with a guy who knew Sachin Tendulkar, the best cricket player of all time. My parents made me join and then I played and it was pretty fun. When I realized here that a freshman was starting a club, I had to join."

The school doesn't technically sponsor the club, however the school board approved the club meeting on school grounds. Sycamore is the only other school in the area with a cricket club, and as of now the club is playing and practicing amongst themselves. Mishra is trying to expand the club to other schools in hopes that they can play against other teams this fall. Mishra said that he is reaching out to his friends at other schools and attempting to convince them to organize their own cricket clubs.

"We have 28 people in Sycamore starting a team and what we are trying to do

right now is expand to Lakota and other schools," Mishra said. "We have friends there and we are able to contact them as they are starting (a club)."

According to Mishra, the club will be hosting cricket camps over the summer in order to give young kids a chance to play the sport.

"We really want to have fun but we also want to give back to the community," said Mishra. "This summer we are going to be doing cricket camps to teach little kids how to play the sport."

Cricket is a large part of the Indian culture and Sathe said he hopes that America will eventually adopt cricket as a more popular sport.

"In India, cricket is really the most popular sport," Sathe said. "...Wherever you go, whether it is colleges or high schools, you'll find someone playing cricket out on the field. I hope it spreads even more and gets bigger."

Cricket club members prepare for a game of cricket on a baseball diamond at Heritage Oak Park.

Photo by Madison Krell