

Tom Maynard Tribute

Hugh Morris – Managing Director ECB

We could select a seriously good cricket team from the congregation here today. In fact we could select 6 or 7 outstanding teams which says everything about the respect and admiration of past and present cricketers for Tom Maynard.

Indeed the presence of so many members of the cricket community tells me Tom was not only a player blessed with extraordinary talent, but somebody whose sense of fun and enjoyment made him a hugely popular figure within our game.

No one will feel a greater sense of loss today than Matt, Sue, Ceri and family, and I know that many of you within the wider cricketing family will feel you have lost a treasured friend and team-mate; someone who enlivened the dressing room or lit-up any social occasion with his warmth and good humour.

Tom was always going to be a professional cricketer. In fact, I reckon he was probably the youngest professional cricketer of all time!

He made his first appearance in the Glamorgan dressing room at the age of 2, and by the age of 5 was a seasoned pro having taken apart our bowling attack of Waqar Younis, Steve Watkin and Robert Croft on the outfield at Cardiff on numerous occasions.

From the outset it was clear Tom had a remarkable talent, a confidence in his own ability, and a real desire to follow in Matthew's footsteps and play for England.

He began to play competitive matches at the age of 7 at St Fagan's CC, always selected ahead of his age group, and was playing regular 1st XI cricket by the time he was 13. He even played the odd game with Matt, including a First Class fixture, and never forgot the time his father ran him out in a six-a-side game at Pentyrch!

For Tom, it was not just about scoring runs – it was about the way in which he scored them. He played the game with freedom and flair and enjoyed doing things differently. Entertaining people, being part of a team, and enjoying the game he loved, was in his DNA.

As you would expect from someone blessed with the Maynard sporting genes, Tom's talent was a natural one which sometimes found expression in the most unlikely ways.

At Millfield School, they still talk about the innings Tom once played for the neighbouring village of Butleigh. Spontaneous as ever, he decided that just this once, rather than employing his usual reverse sweep, and switch hit, he would go the whole hog by batting left handed for his entire innings. Needless to say he did so – and proceeded to score a brilliant 100!

Over the past couple of seasons Tom was beginning to blossom on the First Class stage and his performances for Surrey last year earned him a place on the England Performance Programme last winter.

I was thrilled to welcome Tom to the National Cricket Performance Centre at Loughborough as someone I had known as a toddler, and whose progress I had watched through the ranks to emerge as one of the country's top young players.

At the beginning of that programme the squad spent some time with the Greater Manchester Fire Service for a session in leadership development and team building.

As you would imagine, Tom created an immediate impression and last week we received a tribute from the leader of the course who described Tom as; *"one of the stand out characters - big, loud, full of fun and a genuinely nice guy who was very entertaining company."*

Tom was always at the centre of any activity, always a lively and entertaining presence, and never one to shirk any kind of challenge – sporting or otherwise. These were the qualities he brought to the Surrey and Glamorgan dressing rooms, to the ECB Performance Programme and to our wider County game, and we are all the richer for it.

What saddens me so much is that we have not only lost a hugely popular and colourful character, but one of our most exciting and explosive young batsmen. A player who could make the game look deceptively easy, a player who was surely destined for the highest reaches of the game, and a player, whose authority and elegance at the crease reminded so many of his father.

So our thoughts today are with Matt, Sue, Ceri and family. The extent of your loss is difficult to comprehend. I can only hope you can take some comfort in the knowledge that so many people here today share your sense of grief, were touched to play a part in Tom's short but remarkable life, and remember him as you do; as a warm-hearted generous soul; a genuinely nice guy; a son you can be truly proud of.

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