



## Ashok Lakshmanan

**Born:** 27-Aug-1976, Tamilnadu, India

**Club:** Colorado Springs Cricket Club

**Batting Style:** Right Hand Bat

**Bowling Style:** Right Hand Bowl

2002 MVP Knock-Out Championship

2003 All-Rounder of the Year

2004 All-Rounder of the Year

Cricket is a team sport. Every successful team has its cornerstones upon which the rest of the team builds its glory. These are the men that prop the team up and carry it on their shoulders. Many find their lime-light, most are content to remain the unsung heroes. One such gem has decided to leave the Colorado Springs Cricket Club and Colorado in search of greener pastures. This is his story.

Ashok Lakshmanan's introduction to cricket in Colorado was more a matter of chance than a deliberate talent search. As it happens, certain members of Colorado Springs Cricket Club (then called One World Cricket Club) were out enjoying an Indian movie at a theatre in Denver. During the intermission, they (naturally and loudly) talked about cricket and their club. That's when they were accosted by a handsome young man in his twenties that seemed interested in playing cricket. CSCC wasted no time in getting him on-board. Every find was (and still is) valuable to the club. And what a find it turned out to be!

CSCC asked Ashok to join the team pronto and start practicing with them. Ashok, for his part, went about shedding the extra pounds that he had picked up during his leisurely (!) stay at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater. He worked out day in and day out and slowed down only when he was sure he was in an acceptable (by his norms) shape to bowl. A tee-totaller and a vegetarian, Ashok is a prime example of how (or why) eating meat or drinking alcohol is not a necessity to build up strength, stamina or have a gregarious nature.

During the initial practices, his team-mates could not believe their eyes and their luck at what the cat had drug in the door. Surely he was a keeper. During the 2002 season, Ashok's first with CSCC, they were not exactly the premier team in the league. Some of us feared that Ashok may leave the club for a team with a better chance at winning. But that's not the hallmark of a True Cricketer. He set about contributing his fullest and motivating the rest of us to do the same. There never was a moment that this reporter can remember when Ashok did not strive to give over and beyond his potential. His commitment to the team never wavered, even when the team moved from Denver to Colorado Springs and he had to travel 80 miles for every \*home\* game.

He rejuvenated CSCC bowling attack with his deadly in-swingers and toe-crushers. His fitness and enthusiasm rubbed off on the rest of us and CSCC started transforming itself (albeit slowly) into the lean, mean fighting machine that we know it as today. The 2002 season was a heart-breaker for CSCC. Despite performing well as a team, they just could not get over the hump and put W's in their column during the league phase. In the second game of the season, played at Ft. Collins, Ashok scored a solitary run before holing out to Dipal Patel off Mike Riley. But that was certainly not a glimpse of what was in store. Some of his finest moments in CCL were to come on that very ground. In the bowling department, he quickly established himself as the strike bowler. His swinging full-length balls were the scourge of the batsmen. There are few batsmen, if any, that would dream of slogging him off the attack. There has never been an official CSCC league game to date, where Ashok has not taken a wicket. It did not matter if he bowled 8 overs or 3. It did not matter if the game was washed out or completed. His familiar cry of 'vatta' rung true at least once in a game. Equally well-known is his self-deprecating shout of 'mairra,' that he lets out when he balls a way-ward delivery. Profligate as sometimes he is with his leg-side deliveries, he is yet to let that materially affect his statistics. Never, ever, the last one to applaud a team-mate, he is the first one to criticize himself for a deed done wrong, on or off the field. His openness and warmth have endeared him to many a team mates and adversaries alike.