

Mike Riley becomes the first CCL player to officially reach the 300 wickets mark

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Congratulations to Mike Riley (FCCC) on reaching the 300 wickets milestone in CCL cricket!

On August 24th, 2014, Mike Riley snared an unsuspecting RCC T-20 batsman in his leg-spinning web and became the first CCL player to reach the pinnacle of 300 wickets. It will take quite a few more seasons for another CCL bowler to reach that milestone, only to find Mike nearing the next frontier of 400 wickets. Make no mistake, this ageless wonder has plenty of gas left in the tank and would likely see most of the current 30-something CCL players retire before he himself hangs his boots; or rather, someone snatches them from a kicking and screaming Mike!

You could write a long essay describing Mike's huge contribution to this league, being one of its founding members. You can also write a research paper on Mike the Person, illustrating all those fascinating aspects of his unique colorful personality. But this is a short tribute to Mike the Bowler, so you are not going to get any tongue-in-cheek remarks from me here ☺.

Newcomers to the league and probably many old-timers would not know that Mike was a tear-away fast bowler in his youth. Yes, it is Mike Riley in this photo and not Dennis Lillee, although the resemblance is uncanny except for the height.



His CCL teammates around the 1982 timeframe attest to the fact that Mike had serious pace. Somewhere in the 90's, Mike switched to medium pace, but kept the aggression intact. A heady mixture of in and out swingers, cutters and you-name-it brought him a plethora of wickets. The next transformation, this time to leg-spin, started around the 2007 timeframe and completed in 2009. You can only guess what is in store for the next chapter.

Here is an attempt to capture some of the highlights of Mike's bowling achievements through a brief video chronicle:

2005 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr3rnZ8GdqU>): Swadeep Pagadala wkt on 6-25-05 and the first Hat-Trick of his career x DSCC on 7-10-05. 15 total wickets in the season to help FCCC win the league championship, including the match-winning 4-wkt spell against title contender, CCCC, on 6-25-05.

2007 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11rYp1Bt1cc>): Rajesh Joshi wkt on 7-28-07 and Vicky Chugh wkt on 9-16-07. An impressive tally of 17 total wickets in his first season of switching to leg-spin bowling.

2008 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8DvdRHh0BI>): Phani Kola wkt on 8-2-08, Arun Tholudur wkt on 7-12-08, Rohith Ramkumar wkt on 9-13-08 and Narayan Madabusi wkt on 9-27-08. 24 total wickets in the season where Mike mixed medium pace and leg-spin, reaping rich rewards.

2009 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KjSaoFIhA>): Noman Khan wkt on 8-2-09, after an all-familiar vociferous appeal, this time for a caught behind. 17 total wickets in the season, after switching back to leg-spin.

2010 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mkgqxhhVFk>): Naveen Kaje wkt on 5-2-10, Rohith Ramkumar wkt to help FCCC win the T-20 league championship game on 5-22-10 (watch the awesome flight, drift and spin to get Rohith stumped), and Hamayun Zaheer wkt on 7-17-10. 24 total wickets in the season.

2011 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lWcujsGfFlc>): Ramakrishna Bharadwaj wkt on 6-4-11, Hamayun Zaheer wkt on 6-11-11, Satyam Singh wkt on 9-10-11, Vamshi Magutha wkt on 10-15-11 with a magnificent wrong-one, Manjeet Inamdar wkt on 10-15-11. An astonishing tally of 47 wickets for the season to win the Best Bowler award for 2011 KO-Twenty20.

2012 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCyGobmevYE>): Ishan Rao wkt on 5-5-12, Cecil Sunder wkt on 6-9-12 and Murali Krishna Nallamothe wkt on 6-16-12. 15 total wickets in the season.

2013 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoTXCHH7UrM>): Sandeep Bollampally wkt on 4-13-13, Manjeet Inamdar wkt on 8-17-13 and Mayur Ostwal wkt on 8-17-13. The highest wicket-taker for FCCC with 28 total wickets in the season.

2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tw3zbrcurpl>): Ramakrishna Bharadwaj wkt on 5-10-14, Sandeep Bollampally wkt on 9-6-14, Aloknath Rao wkt on 9-6-14 and the 300th wicket of Keerthi Varala on 8-24-14. 17 total wickets in the season so far.

So here we are, Mike, raising our glasses to you, to celebrate your monumental achievement. Keep those competitive juices flowing on the field and continue to showcase the grace off the field. Let that cunning mind plot the downfall of a lot more CCL batsmen and we will celebrate again when you scale the next peak.

-Rajesh.