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# Titans Set Sights on New Heights

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**TITANS**

**The Multiply Titans name has become synonymous with success and consistency on the domestic scene**

**SINCE THE DAWN OF THE FRANCHISE ERA, THE** SuperSport Park-based outfit has been a rich source of national players of good stock while also maintaining a high level of competitiveness on the domestic scene.

'The one thing you know when you come here is that you don't have to worry about anything off the field,' limited-overs skipper Albie Morkel explains of the culture created at the Titans.

'When I first arrived in 2003, I was struck by the high level of professionalism and that has never changed.'

Morkel adds that the trend is for players to come and stay for a long time at the Centurion facility, because it is a great place to play.

'Even guys who come from the Cape, like Fudge [Farhaan Behardien] or Paul Harris end up relocating and living here.

'We're very fortunate, because the facilities are world class. Even when you're coming through the ranks, a lot of guys play club cricket for Tuks. It is another fantastic facility, every bit as good as we get at Centurion,' adds Morkel.

The University of Pretoria (Tuks) has been a wonderful breeding ground for many Titans who have gone on to bigger things.

'I joined Tuks as a club from the beginning, and I have always enjoyed it there. Even now, there are a few guys who have come through that pipeline, like Lungi [Ngidi] and Heinrich [Klassen], and it is a great tradition,' adds Morkel.

That word 'tradition' runs deep at Centurion. The umbilical cord between former players and the current crop remains intact, and that »



578

THE NUMBER  
OF FIRST-CLASS  
WICKETS DALE  
STEYN HAS TAKEN

Cricket 105







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allows younger players to settle easier and focus on playing at their best.

Former players are still a regular part of proceedings, taking pride in showing the next generation the ropes. The Sky Blues, as the Titans and Northerns are affectionately known, are a family, and there is a long-standing trend of new players from afar staying at the franchise's Centurion flats.

'Luckily – or unluckily – I never got the chance to stay in the flats,' Morkel bemoans.

'It is great for young players coming through, and being able to stay together. At the end of the day, it's not just about cricket. They get to stay with friends and learn about life together. I know guys like Morné would have to suddenly do their own washing!'

That camaraderie helps in the bigger picture and lifelong friendships have been forged.

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**- ALBIE MORKEL**



Subsequently, there has been a flood of trophies ever since the franchise system came into effect. Six four-day titles, five one-day titles and an extended dominance in the T20 format, including three T20 titles on the trot.

The list of Titans alumni also makes for excellent reading. From staunch, old-school players like Gerald Dros and Steve Elworthy to the Morkel brothers, Dale Steyn, AB de Villiers, current Proteas skipper Faf du Plessis, and some of the most respected names in first-class cricket.

Centurion has become renowned as a stable of champions and every national squad is littered with Titans.

'The Titans have done an excellent job of retaining the services of some great pros. Players don't like leaving the Titans and then we have made some great signings too.'

'To see the next generation coming through, such as Aiden Markram and Lungi, is also very exciting. The franchise is in a great place,' concludes Morkel.

With domestic doubles now a regular trend, the Titans next target is to get the clean sweep of franchise titles. It is a lofty ambition, but no other franchise is better placed to challenge that bit of history than the Sky Blues. «