

Wayne's world: after winning 39 caps for South Africa at hockey and playing in the World Cup and Commonwealth Games, Madsen has switched to cricket and has set his sights on representing England

Madsen dreaming of England call

Derbyshire's batsman comes from a talented family and represented South Africa at hockey, as Cathy Harris reports

It may come as news to his teammates, but Wayne Madsen, the Derbyshire opening batsman, is one of the legendary Madsens famed for their extraordinary contribution to South African sport.

As sporting dynasties go they do not come much more impressive than this family from KwaZulu-Natal that has produced nine Springbok hockey players over three generations.

Madsen, 27, won 39 caps as a mid-field player for South Africa, playing in the 2006 World Cup in Mönchengladbach, Germany, and the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne. Immensely talented at both sports, he settled on cricket, signing for Derbyshire in 2009.

After scoring a century against Leicestershire in the County Championship last week, Madsen has since fallen cheaply in both innings against Middlesex. However, he showed his versatility with a stint behind the stumps when Luke Sutton sustained a hand injury and remains intent on becoming the latest in the long line of South Africa-born cricketers dedicated to earning an England call-up.

Travelling on an Italian passport thanks to his grandmother, he qualifies for England in April next year. There

Famous bloodlines

THE NEVILLES

Gary is England's most-capped right back, having made 85 appearances. Captain of Manchester United for five years, he made 602 appearances for the club. Phil, his younger brother and the Everton captain, won 59 England caps, and has made a total of more than 600 appearances for Manchester United and Everton. Tracey, Phil's twin sister, is one of England's most-capped netball players with 74 appearances.

THE WHITAKERS

John has won the European Show Jumping Championships four times and has also won an Olympic silver medal and five World Championship gold medals. Robert, John's son, is a member of the Great Britain team. Ellen, John's niece, just missed out on selection for the Beijing Olympics but is a multiple winner at the Horse of the Year Show. William, John's nephew, is one of the sport's brightest prospects. Michael, John's younger brother, is an

Olympic silver medal-winner, three-times European champion and twice a World Championship medal-winner.

THE KELLERS

Erwin won a silver medal for Germany at hockey in the 1936 Olympics and his son, Carsten, captained Germany to the gold medal at the 1972 Olympics. Three of Carsten's children also won Olympic hockey gold medals: Andreas at Barcelona in 1992, Natascha at Athens in 2004 and Florian at Beijing four years later.

THE ELLAS

Mark Ella was one of the best fly halves to play for Australia during the early 1980s. His younger brothers, Gary and Glen, also played for the Wallabies, at centre and full back respectively. Marcia, their sister, was the first Aboriginal to play netball for Australia.

Words by Cathy Harris

are no regrets about choosing cricket and he is completely relaxed about his decision. He remains close to hockey, having coached at Belper Hockey Club during the winter after turning down the chance to play for Amsterdam, the top Dutch club, in the Hoofdklasse (Premier League).

Mention the surname anywhere in South Africa and you will find few sports fans who have not heard of the family. His grandparents, Lionel and Val, started the distinguished line, fol-

lowed by three sons, Mike, Paddy and Trevor, and daughter, Jo. Paddy's sons, Wayne and Lloyd, represent the next generation, along with Trevor's daughter, Kelly.

"It's a heritage I'm very, very proud of," Madsen said. "We never realised when we were growing up how special it all was and as kids it was perfectly normal to have a stick or cricket bat in our hands while our parents played. There

was never any pressure put on us to follow the tradition.

"We're a closely knit family and lots of cousins aren't sporty at all. Every year, 40 to 50 of the family go to our grandpa's cottage up the coast from Durban and there were always highly competitive games of hockey, cricket and soccer. I think a lot of our skills were learnt on those holidays."

Good manners and the spirit of fair play were drilled into the generations by Lionel. "He always stresses that we should enjoy our sport, keep our feet on the ground and remember to be gracious," Wayne said.

It is advice that this most modest and polite young sportsman has taken to heart. Delighted to receive his county cap in the match against Leicestershire, Madsen understands that there are no guarantees about progressing to the next level and realising his dream.

"The opportunity to come over and play cricket where the game began

was a huge pull," he said. "The tradition is so evident at every level of the game here and the atmosphere around the county grounds is so much bigger than in South Africa.

"I would be honoured to play for England. I realise it might seem strange because I've played another sport for another country but I made the decision to retire from international hockey and pursue a cricket career. My parents and all my family and friends fully understand and support me."

So far, so good, as his unbeaten 170 against Gloucestershire in 2009, a record score for a Derbyshire debutant, testifies. Like Kevin Pietersen, who played for the same club as Madsen in Durban, and Jonathan Trott, he lets his bat do the talking. Centuries in both innings against a strong Surrey attack last season emphasised his pedigree.

After making an encouraging start to the season, Madsen has his sights set on scoring 1,000 runs in the championship — he managed 940 last year — and consolidating his place in the middle order in the limited-overs formats.

Madsen and his wife, Kyla, a former South Africa Schools hockey player, have settled into life in rural England "big time" after buying a house in Milford, on the River Derwent. "We love the countryside, the relaxed atmosphere and the community spirit," he said. "England is our home."

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