



TO LORD'S: Les Clark Oval curator Ricky Aitken will be working at Lord's in England next year. Picture: Jason Hollister.

Greener pastures call

IF BURNIE greenkeeper Ricky Aitken was a cricketer, he'd be celebrating selection for his country.

Aitken this week found out he would next year join the greenkeeping staff at one of the world's most famous cricket grounds, Lord's in England.

The 20-year-old will replace former Devonport curator Peter Apps, recently appointed curator of Bellerive Oval in Hobart, Tasmania's international cricket ground.

And, as with any good cricketer, Aitken has set his sights high.

"I'm hoping to create a good impression as the World Cup is in England in 1999 and I think the final could be at Lord's," he said this week.

Which would be a far cry from Burnie's West Park and Les Clark Oval, where Aitken has learned his trade during the past two years.

"I'm just buzzing," he said.

"It was the third letter and I knew it would say 'yes' or 'no' — so I was pretty nervous.

"I've only been as far as Melbourne a couple of times."

Aitken said he had been hopeful of being appointed as one of the six staff at Lord's.

"Peter (Apps) said he had been going into bat for me and he thought I'd have a good chance.

"I've spoken to him four or five times in the past three months about it, so I've got some of idea of what's involved."

Aitken will leave during April to start his six-month stint during the English summer.

His long-term aim is to gain a permanent position at an international venue.

"You just have to wait for something to come up," he said.

Cox's stats stack up admirably



Sagey Says

With NWTCA President Mike Sage

★ ★ ★

Tomorrow will see Devonport travel to Les Clark Oval and take on Burnie-Yeoman in what's been billed "as the game of the century" in The Advocate-Sportspower Cup final.

Curator Ricky Aitken has a near perfect one-day deck and the captains, Buckingham (Burnie-Yeoman) and Chris Dell (Devonport) will be looking to win the toss.

Whoever wins the toss, will most likely put the opposition in because quite often it is easier to chase than it is to set the score.

All week The Advocate spoke of the young brigade of the two clubs, but the game will be won by two veterans, Devonport's David Mullett and Burnie-Yeoman's Shane Walker.



Sagey Says

With NWTCA President Mike Sage

Curator's efforts worthy of praise

THE ADVOCATE-Sportspower One Day Cup has been run and won by the Ulverstone club which continues its dominance of the NWTCA competition.

However, the outstanding performance of the day was by curator Ricky Aitken.

After a stormy Saturday night which saw Burnie receive about two inches of rain, Aitken was at Les Clark Oval tending to his wicket at 6 a.m.

He worked tirelessly through to the start of play which was delayed by 90 minutes.

If it hadn't been for Aitken's dedication the game would not have started. And it is worth noting his efforts were unpaid.

If we didn't know it before we certainly know it now — Ulverstone's talented allrounder Gary Crawford is the best one-day cricketer on the Coast.

His ability to bowl that nagging length and his five-wicket haul and 48 runs stamped him as the outstanding player of the final.

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