



*E CPT Opening 08-Feb-2003.jpg
on CD, 72 dpi*

Preparation for the Opening Ceremony of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2003, at Newlands, Cape Town, gets underway.

Stella Vista

introduced the latest technology for cricket scoring at the ICC Cricket World Cup 2003, which took place earlier this year.



*E WND RSA-NZL 16-Feb-2003.jpg
on CD, 72 dpi*

South Africa vs. New Zealand at The Wanderers, Johannesburg.

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*E Bloem 21-Feb-2003.jpg
on CD, 72 dpi*

Above: Television commercial testing, prior to a match at Goodyear Park, Bloemfontein.

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Stella Vista Technologies is a world-leader in the design of state-of-the-art multimedia communications systems, providing displays, control equipment and software for a multitude of applications. The complete line of multi-purpose products includes, scoreboards, video display screens and combined text and graphic messaging displays with real-time data capabilities.

Stella Vista focuses on designing, producing, integrating and supporting innovative products and services for clients' specific needs. This provides a total solution for sport, business, entertainment and the transportation markets, ensuring complete customer satisfaction while providing the viewer with a truly remarkable experience.

Where it all Began

When South Africa was awarded the right to hold cricket's most prestigious tournament, namely the ICC Cricket World Cup 2003, the country received yet another opportunity to showcase itself, this after successfully organising the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the 1996 African Cup of Nations, the 1999 All Africa Games and most recently, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. These events, in addition to the Cricket World Cup, have demonstrated the country's infrastructure and natural beauty, as well as the resourcefulness of its people.

In an international tender, Stella Vista Technologies was selected in June 2002 to provide a total solution, including new displays and upgrades to the twelve cricket grounds designated to host the tournament. All the permanent parts of the system, including the scoreboards and associated equipment, as well as the scoring and production software, in addition to the integration of the existing scoreboards at the twelve venues, had to be in place within four months, giving Stella Vista an extremely short delivery period.

Meeting the Requirements

The project consisted of several integrated elements:

1. **Official cricket scoring software**
2. **Full production software for scoring and statistics display**
3. **LED scoreboards**
 - a. **Full-matrix scoreboards**
 - b. **Numerical scoreboards**
 - c. **Alphanumerical scoreboards**
4. **Integration of existing scoreboards of the following types:**
 - a. **Incandescent lamp**
 - b. **Wedge-based**
 - c. **Electro-magnetic**
 - d. **LED**
5. **Rental of video replay screens for the duration of the event, including:**
 - a. **TV commercial play-out equipment and services**
 - b. **Instant replay equipment and**

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services

c. Match highlights play-out equipment and services

Innovative Technology

The Cricket Scoring Software complies with the latest laws of cricket and includes a database, to which all players' statistical information is added. This information is updated on a ball-by-ball basis and is fully integrated with the production software.

The new scoreboards measure approximately 26m wide by 8m high. They consist of several sections: the main full-matrix scoreboard; the secondary numeric scoreboard; the full-colour, full-motion video screen and the static border. The screens feature a wide viewing angle that makes them readable to spectators within a 160° angle.

Stella Vista's proprietary display controllers, powered by the real-time VxWorks operating system, control the displays. The data is sent to the screens via a fibre-optic connection, ensuring maximum performance and reliability.

On this project, Stella Vista employed its versatile faceUp system for the first time. The system uses a standard structure that treats various parts (full-matrix scoreboard, numeric and alphanumeric scoreboards, video screens and additional permanent signage) as building blocks. This allows for the use of temporary video replay boards, temporary sponsor branding, changes in size and shape of various screen portions, as and when required.

The video replay boards come from Stella Vista's Titan® range, and feature over 1-billion display colours, high resolution, and high brightness. Additional features that increase the overall picture quality are the proprietary Virtual Resolution® technology and uniformity correction.

The Secret to Success

While the new technology in LED screens is clearly superior to that of the old incandescent, wedge-based and electro-magnetic scoreboards, the secret of the success of the new scoreboards was in their design.

The new scoreboards were standardised across the seven main stadiums and introduced a totally new, multimedia con-

cept to cricket scoreboards. The innovative design, reliability and versatility of the new system ensured that all of the spectators, officials and media enjoyed the very best cricket experience possible.

The stadiums were equipped with "all-in-one" scoreboard/video screen units. The central part of each is a "main" scoreboard — a matrix of amber LED clusters capable of displaying text and graphics. This portion of the screen is used for showing a multitude of cricket statistics during the game. The integration of the database, scoring software, statistics, and general information provided a uniquely superior solution for the ICC World Cup 2003. The innovative development team created over one hundred information screens, which kept the crowd informed of the state of play at all times. The flexibility of the system allowed for the display of a full scorecard or a more detailed display that even included a comparison of 'balls received' versus 'balls scored from'. For the first time, the historic statistical information was updated as each ball was bowled, allowing the operators to display the players' career statistics, as well as important milestones for teams and players, with a click of the mouse. The variety of cricket statistics displayed at the event was unparalleled. Showing public information messages and advertising further enhanced the versatility of the main scoreboard.

Getting the Full Picture

The numerical portion of the scoreboards was designed to complement the details shown on the full-matrix scoreboards and displayed crucial information relevant to the current state of the game. During the first 'innings' the public are kept informed of the total score, wickets fallen, 'overs' bowled, current batsmen's scores, 'overs' left and run rate achieved. Once a target score is set, the scoreboard automatically displays 'runs to win' and 'run rate required'. A single glance at this portion of the scoreboard was enough to inform the viewers of the current state of play.

The third portion of each scoreboard structure is the video replay screen. Pictures of the players filled the video screen allowing the spectators to view their

heroes' close-up shots, whilst the main scoreboard displayed their career statistics. Video replays of the action on the field allowed the crowd to have a much closer view of the game. The rules for using the video replay screens at international cricket matches are quite specific. The International Cricket Council lays down the rules that are designed to protect the umpires from an unfriendly crowd and to minimise the distraction to the players, while at the same time achieving maximum crowd involvement. Sponsors' logos were therefore displayed on a rotational basis at times when ICC rules required a static screen. The system was fully integrated with the PA system, ensuring maximum exposure for the sponsors' television commercials that were rotated during breaks in play. To keep the crowd entertained television highlights of previous games were also shown prior to the game commencing.

In addition, the scoreboard borders were used for logos, providing additional exposure for sponsors and the event itself.

It's in the Details

Particular to the cricket video replays, while standard large pixel pitch LED displays normally used at soccer, rugby and American football stadiums would not be able to display the small cricket ball, Stella Vista's Virtual Resolution® technology allowed the spectators to see every detail of the action. During the event Dr Ali Bacher, the Executive Director of the World Cup, commented that "the upgrades at all of the stadiums are truly fantastic, and I have been very impressed with the new scoreboards and replay screens."

For Stella Vista's part, they were aware that the scoreboards and video screens were going to play a prominent role during the World Cup, but quite to what degree, they could not have imagined. To get the maximum crowd involvement in the game, it was decided to use the video screens to announce the results of third umpire decisions. In practice, this meant that when one of the 'on field' umpires calls for the decision, Stella Vista screens would be used to communicate this fact to the crowd. While the umpire was review-

ing the video footage, the screens would show a sponsor branded "third umpire decision pending" animation, increasing the tension. Finally, once a decision was reached, the result would be shown on the screen — informing not only the spectators present at the ground, but also the millions watching at home.

Stella Vista Leads the Way

Another innovative application of the new scoreboards was the "SMS the scoreboard" feature. The spectators were asked by the scoreboard operators and the public announcers to send a text message from their cellular telephones to a number shown on the screen. A selection of the best messages were then collated and displayed on the scoreboards.

As if all of this wasn't enough, an event at the game played in Durban on 3rd of March demonstrated the importance of electronic scoreboards at sports events. The home team needed to beat Sri Lanka, to guarantee going through to the next stage of the tournament. In cricket, if rain stops a match, a statistical method devised by Frank Duckworth and Tony Lewis is used to determine a target score, ultimately deciding the winner of a match based on the statistical likelihood of the team batting second reaching the score posted by the first team. The accumulated experience in previous cricket matches played worldwide forms part of the basis to calculate the target score. After confusion over how many runs South Africa needed to score to win the match in the last few balls, they eventually tied the game. Unfortunately this was not enough and the home team were out of the World Cup.

While the heated arguments after the match failed to help the South African cricket team, a decision was made to display the Duckworth/Lewis targets on the scoreboards at all the remaining matches of the tournament. Stella Vista's team once again rose to the occasion and had the screens ready to display this information on a ball-by-ball basis before the following match. The International Cricket Council has now requested that all electronic scoreboards show the par score on a ball-by-ball basis. This was another 'innovation first' introduced by Stella Vista. ■