

Edited by Charlotte Ames-Ettridge



campus life

**A**t one end of a field, a student, in full cricket gear and wielding a bat, stood ready to swing. On the other side, students prepared to pitch a ball as hard as they could. At first glance, it looked like any other training session for the West Island School (WIS) cricket team. That day, though, they had been joined by someone very special.

"Mike told me to apply the things that we know, but don't really do," Raunaq Kapur, one of the captains of the school's cricket team, said. "I think we all know how to play, we're just neglecting the little things that help us get better sometimes."

The Mike that Raunaq was referring to was internationally renowned former cricketer Mike Gatting, who visited the city earlier this month. Before the retired English player left Hong Kong on Wednesday, he visited WIS and other secondary schools, to share his sporting expertise with up-and-coming student athletes and cricket fans.

Although the session only lasted an hour, everyone on the cricket team said they had been happy to receive help from the 61-year-old cricket legend.

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Said Raunaq, the most useful thing he took from meeting Gatting was that he ought to focus on the basics.

"When you're batting, for example, the most basic thing is to just look at the ball. Most of the time, though, we're thinking about getting the most runs," the 14-year-old said. "Too often we learn new things and forget about the [basics]."

Raunaq was quick to sing the praises of cricket when we asked him what the best thing about the sport was.

"I really enjoy being a part of a team, and seeing the development of our bond

and skills," he said. "Also, being Indian, it just kind of runs in our blood, I've loved cricket since I was very young."

Fourteen-year-old Manu Mishra and fellow team captain said that cricket helps to bring people together, no matter their nationality or ethnic background. He added that there is no fast track when it comes to excelling at cricket. Rather, it takes time, wisdom, and patience. Harsh Sharma, 14, the team's third captain, pointed out that cricket also requires both physical and mental strength.

Above all, though, the young cricketers agreed that it's more about enjoying the game than it is about winning.

Their words echoed those of Gatting, who told *Young Post* that anyone who plays cricket is guaranteed two things: they will have fun, and they will make friends.

It isn't always fun and games, though, as Raunaq can attest to.

The cricket captain said that, in his time playing the sport, he has experienced a number of setbacks. When he tried out for the Hong Kong national cricket team for

under 16s two years ago, he didn't even make it past the first round. When he was on the verge of giving up, though, his brother and father encouraged him to persevere. That same summer, he did as much as he could to improve his physical fitness – an effort that paid off when he returned to school.

"The [cricket] coach, at the start of the next season, put me on the team," Raunaq said, smiling. "He even told me 'it's good to see that you didn't just stop playing. Instead, you tried to make a difference.'"

To an enthusiastic newcomer to cricket like 13-year-old Vikarn Rajora, seeing each of his team captains' journey to success was inspiring. "Maybe someday I'll be as good as them," he said.

The ability to inspire one another is what keeps the team and their bond so strong. Gatting ended his training session with the WIS cricketers with this piece of advice: "People that are good should always help [those that aren't]. It's a team game. Keep learning; never think that you're good enough to stop learning."

# Going to bat for your team

The West Island School cricket team recently had the chance to learn from one of their heroes. But, as they told **Joanne Ma**, they're constantly learning from one another, too



Harsh Sharma, one of the team's captains, believes cricket is all about having fun. Photos: Joanne Ma

The West Island school team had a special training session with cricket great Mike Gatting (back, third from right)