As one of the newest sports clubs on campus, cricket has gone through its share of growing pains. Hardly two years old, they just met the competition requirement of 11 players this past semester. As a freshman, Vishal Patel was voted into office as president and has big plans for the club.

Even though they are a newer sports club, cricket has a long history. While no one is sure of the origins, it has been played in England since the 15th century and is the world’s second most popular sport. Through colonization, England spread the sport around the world, according to Encyclopedia Britannica. “It’s like a religion,” Patel says about the sport’s popularity in India, where he learned cricket and lived for 13 years.

Even though there are more players on each team, the game play of cricket is similar to baseball, even though there are more players on each team. There is someone who throws the ball, who in cricket is called a bowler, and they try to make it difficult for the batter to hit the ball. In cricket, though, the goal is not to strike out the batter, but to hit the wicket placed behind the batter. The batter is trying to guard the wicket and score runs.

To score a run, the batter must hit the ball and run to the opposite wicket until the ball is caught or brought back to the pitch. “In baseball you get up to bat maybe three times in a game,” Patel says. “Here, you get to bat just once, but you stay there until you’re out. You don’t have to run every time.” After getting out, a new batsman takes his place until 10 players have gotten out. This signals the end of an innings, which is both plural and singular in cricket.

Innings can go on for as long as the batter wants, because there is no limit to the amount of runs scored. Patel has a goal to get 100 runs in one game, because “100 is a big deal.” Players can even score multiple runs on one hit if they would like, making 100 runs a possibility in the game.

Equipment is similar to that of baseball, according to Encyclopedia Britannica. There is a bat made of willow that is flat on one side and rounded on the other, and has a cane handle. The ball is made of cork and string, and covered with leather. The players can wear protective gear, but only the wicket keeper can use a glove.

This is another goal Patel has for the team. Without the proper protective gear for batters, they cannot compete. Not only this, but they can only practice with tennis balls instead of regulation cricket balls in case of injury. They hope to get funding for the protective gear, as well as approval to convert Bethel Field into a cricket pitch, with a circular center and no grass in the bowling area.

If you have a basic understanding of the rules, then you can pick up cricket. Patel says the biggest misconception about cricket is that it’s too hard, but if you understand the rules of cricket or of baseball, it should be easy for you to pick it up. He says that he hopes to get a training practice in for newcomers if they’re interested in learning and becoming better cricket players. “I’ll have different days for them, like we’ll have the practice on different days,” he says. “I’ll have the training days for them so they can catch up and they can come practice with us on a regular basis.”

Their final goal, which will be a goal for years to come, is to expand. Patel encourages everyone to try it for the unique aspect of the game, and to become a more multicultural person. “India is just one country and they have two billion people, so if you think of Asia and Europe and everybody else then that’s like more than four or five billion people watching that game, playing that game.” Since it is such a widespread sport, Patel also urges those who are thinking of studying abroad to pick up the sport.

They are not just looking to expand at the collegiate and competitive level, but to all who are interested in picking up the sport. “We’re currently trying to get into the Muncie middle schools and high school with cricket,” Patel says. “If they ever try to apply to Ball State it’ll be good for them. They can straight up play cricket because they’ll already know from middle school and high school.”

Even though Patel has been president for a few weeks, “Cricket to me is just my hobby,” he says. Becoming a sophomore this school year, he has years to transform the club into the vision he sees and to bring his hobby to another level. “It’s what I do.”