

Cricket over the years

By Cyril Fernando

With the Club's traditionally strong bias for cricket and a string of youngsters biding their time on the sidelines hoping to be chosen to any of its three elevens, practice at the CSC nets brings on a good number of players three times a week. In recent years, the steady resurgence of interest in the game in Singapore has been gaining momentum. School-leavers especially, and expatriates from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh Australia, New Zealand and Britain, are joining Singapore clubs in the hope of playing in the SCA League. CSC has consequently had an influx of some of these potential hopefuls vying for entry into Singapore cricket. The Club has appointed Indian-born Sarika Prasad and Sri Lanka-born Buddhika Mendis, the new Sports Executive to coach our budding cricketers twice a week.

When British Forces pulled out from the region in the 1960's, Singapore cricket was hit for a six. Gone were the servicemen who came here on two and a half year furloughs, taking with them their skills and experience acquired in first class English Borough, County and Club cricket that helped keep the level of the game high in Singapore. In the forties, fifties and sixties the standard had risen steeply and matting and turf pitches were laid in every British army, navy and air force base, as well as many local sports clubs.. With their pull-out, cricket pitches disappeared, overgrown with weeds, and the sparkle in the game which the colonialists introduced a century ago faded slowly away. Gone, also was the 'fire in the belly' for the game, that ardent young cricketers had developed. To compound the slide, the Ministry of Education took the game off its schools curriculum as it took up too much time, wiping out the valuable source of up and coming players.

SCA STEPS UP THE DRIVE

Sometime in 1994, the Singapore Cricket Association organised a Cricket Development Programme. The SCA at that time had no ground of its own and looked around to Clubs to provide training facilities to nurture the talents of youngsters from schools, Junior Colleges and Polytechnics, all cradles of budding cricketers. The CSC ground with its picturesque setting, well-cropped, level outfield and arguably, the best-maintained field in the Island, was a natural choice for providing coaching and practice facilities. Nowadays, schools cricket is played on the CSC on an average of three times a week.

CRICKET HITS THE SCENE AGAIN

Cricket has made its presence felt again. A sign of its rising popularity are the raucous shouts of

encouragement from the CSC pavilion that has spawned a new phenomenon, hitherto unseen and unheard of, on Singapore cricket grounds. On a few occasions, during inter-school matches, cheerleaders on the edge of the boundary lines orchestrate teams of boys— and girls as well—in an exuberant support for their team members on the field. Hitherto, we would have witnessed this at American baseball or rugby matches. But at cricket matches? Definitely a good sign.

Have we glimpsed the light at the end of the tunnel of even remotely being able to qualify for the finals of the Cricket World Cup? Admittedly, Singapore has a very long way to go, to acquire a standard anywhere near that of Test Cricket. But with help from expatriates from cricket playing countries, careful nurturing of talent from schools and expert guidance by qualified coaches, I honestly think so. What do you think? **Please write in with your views.**

SPORTS ROUND-UP

Cricket Results

Weekend of 13/14 May

Division 1 CSC 216; SCC 214. CSC won by 2 runs

Division 2 CSC 212 for 8; S. Kanaya 78, S. Smith 42, A. Ram 2-21;

SIA 152 A. Ranggi 30, Ram 30,

V. Arunagiri 4-28; A. Nandihalli 3-33;
CSC won by 60 runs.

K.O. Tournament

ICC 143; CSC 146-5 ; N. Gamage 54 n.o.

CSC won by 5 wickets

Cricket Fixtures

Divisions I, II, and III

10 June	CSC I	vs	SRC I	at	CSC
11 June	CSC III	vs	SACA III	at	CSC
	IA II	vs	CSC II	at	IA
18 June	CSC II	vs	SRC II	at	CSC
	UWC III	vs	CSC III	at	UWC
25 June	CSC II	vs	ICC II	at	CSC
02 July	CSC III	vs	UWC III	at	CSC
	SRC II	vs	CSC II	at	SRC
09 July	CSC III	vs	SRC III	at	CSC
16 July	NUS II	vs	CSC II	at	NUS
23 July	CSC II	vs	NUS II	at	CSC
	SCC II	vs	CSC I	at	SCC
30 July	CSC III	vs	NUS III	at	CSC
	IA I	vs	CSC I	at	IA