

“No matter how good you feel you are, never ignore a word of advice from an elder and always be prepared to listen and improve.”

So said the late V. R. SABAPATHY

The celebrated CSC all-rounder who batted and bowled his way to fame when the standard of cricket in Singapore was at its zenith.

By Cyril Fernando

His batting scores were prolific, so were his bowling figures. This late Ceylon Sports Club member's marauding forages into the field up to half a century ago will be difficult to match. Newspapers lionized his achievements. Consequently, the publicity and respect he earned in his time were well deserved. The numerous press cuttings of his athletic exploits that have been filed neatly in clear plastic folders are, naturally a source of pride to his family. The precious records, some of them yellowed with age, are hallowed memories of a man who devoted a lifetime to sports. Reading through them, one senses the immense fervour with which the late V. R. Sabapathy regarded and played cricket. He left behind a legacy, a lesson on how to play the game. Does not this example bring to mind to words"

*“Lives of great men all remind us ,
We shall make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.”*

To him cricket was a way of life and he played the game in the highest spirit of sportsmanship. The press reports go back 65 years to 1935, when the Club was only seven years old.

The All-Round Athlete

Educated in Klang, Malaya, at Anglo Chinese School up to 1934, Sabapathy appeared on the athletic scene when, as a schoolboy, he played cricket, hockey and soccer for his school, and captained his school cricket team. He was not only the first vice captain of the Selangor Combined Schools team, but he also captained



the soccer team for two years and was school athletics champion for four years. He was clearly destined for greater heights.

Saba Dominates The Singapore Cricket Scene.

He arrived in Singapore in 1935 and soon found a place in the CSC cricket line-up, bolstering the already strong CSC contingent of first class sportsmen. His regular all-round performances impressed the Singapore selectors to such an extent, that in 1936 he was chosen to play in the 'big league' for the Colony of Singapore' against the F.M.S. (Federated Malay States). The results merited banner headlines in the Straits Times dated August 6, 1936. They read, "Colony Register Their Second Win At Kuala Lumpur—Growder And Sabapathy Did The Damage." Saba's bowling figures in that match were 7 wickets for 34 runs.

The talented CSC player's climb up the athletic ladder was phenomenal. In 1937, he was selected to play for the Rest in the annual cricket classic against the Europeans for the Clarke Cup. The Sunday Times dated June 13 of that year headlined, "Sabapathy and D'Almeida, the Heroes. Splendid ninth wicket stand of 115 runs." In the total of 220 runs by the Rest, Sabapathy scored 77 not out and D'Almeida, 45. The report continued, "Sabapathy receives a great ovation for his excellent undefeated innings." Saba had made his mark. A 1935 profile of Sabapathy, in a column entitled "Cricket Personalities," described him as having "represented the Colony without having first played for Singapore," and that he had gone on