

Fruitful school cricket season

By N. D. ABEYGUNAWARDENE

THE CURTAIN FELL ON THE SCHOOL CRICKET SEASON RECENTLY AFTER FOUR MONTHS OF HARD FOUGHT BATTLES IN THE GREEN MIDDLE, BUT LEAVING BEHIND MANY MEMORABLE MOMENTS AND ABOVE ALL BRINGING TO THE LIMELIGHT STARS OF OUR FUTURE LITTLE CRICKET WORLD. THRILLS, EXCITEMENT, EXHUBERANCE AND HEALTHY RIVALRY WERE SEEN IN ALL SPLENDOR AND PAGEANTRY THROUGHOUT THE SEASON AND IN KEEPING WITH THE BEST TRADITIONS OF THE GAME.

As a player, coach, and a keen follower of the game for well over fifteen years I am in a position to praise and comment the School Boy Cricketers for maintaining a high standard of the games which augurs well for the future of cricket in Ceylon. Our cricket is gaining ground both in quantity and quality and it is indeed a pleasure to see many new schools and colleges in remote places taking to this great game. With a fair and equal distribution of material, encouragement and advice to all Senior and Central Schools in the Island it will not be far off when we would be able to produce more "giants" of the game.

It is mentally impossible for me to single out every individual who shone or trace every school which enjoyed this year's cricket season. It is not fair by me to write on cricket and Cricketers that I have not seen, hence I will only touch on some of the major cricket playing colleges and a few lesser famous schools where I had the privilege of meeting, knowing and seeing the players in action.

To St. Thomas' fell the honour of going through the Season with an unblemished record among the Colombo group of Colleges. The only match in which defeat started at them dangerously was against Ananda and was lucky to have avoided defeat.

Led by Larsef Idroos that experienced all rounder, St. Thomas' ended the season in a grand note. Idroos is still a menacing bowler with his leg spin and googly. He derived much support from B. E. Thomas another right arm leg spinner of a different type. In Michael Sproule and C. E. Ponniah the Thomians possess two good batsmen who did extremely well. Much of Sproule's batting was not seen due to ill health and I hope to see him back next year in topping condition.

Also the unique honour of being unbeaten goes to St. Anthony's College, Katugastota led once again by Charlie Joseph that batting machine from the Hill Capital. St. Anthony's did remarkably well. They owe their enviable position to team work and sterling leadership of Charlie Joseph. Having won the Best School Boy Cricketer's prize last year he maintained his fine form throughout this season too.

Bowing only to St. Benedict's College, St. Peter's too had a very successful season. P. Athukorale who captained St. Peter's is an attractive batsman and was ably assisted by R. Ailes another stylish right hand batsman.

Many of us expected much of Royal College this year though, however, they never came up to expectation. Leading a side full of colourmen, Michael Dias for some unaccountable reason failed to exploit their might. In skipper Michael Dias, Sarath Samarasinghe, N. Sennanayake and E. B. Pereira Royal had a fine batting line. Sarath Samarasinghe the keeper was easily the best among the schools and it was a delight to see him behind the wickets.

Whether he stood deep for the fast bowlers or crouched with the face just over the top of the off stump for spinners, he was safe and sound, supple and nimble footed, blessed with a pair of hawk eyes and sure hands. D. Sahabandu their left arm pace bowler was the most successful bowler. Here is a bowler who can use the new and old ball intelligently. I must not fail to mention the excellent fielding of T. Perayeraraw in the covers.

Wesley College had a fair season. Ably led by Senthil Sinniah that stylish free scoring batsman Wesley College had many good victories. Wesley was lucky to have Lakshman Gunatilleke the fastest bowler in schools for yet another season. His express left arm bowling has wrecked the strongest batting sides. Having taken well over 100 wickets in both seasons Lakshman Gunatilleke has achieved a unique performance seldom seen in school cricket. Easily the best opening bowler in schools, I wish Lakshman Gunatilleke all the luck in first class cricket in which he will battle next year. Though Wesley had a shaky start Senthil Sinniah moulded his team admirably as the season progressed.

Tall and Lanky Priya Perera one of the finest all-rounders in schools today led St. Joseph's this year. Priya Perera a clever off spinner and a stylish batsman did extremely well even last year and maintained his form throughout this season with bat and ball. In Tissa de Soysa and Raja de Silva they have two great exponents of the game. Raja de Silva with his clever right arm leg spin bowling and elegant left hand batting was a tremendous force in the Josephian side.

Tissa de Soysa the most successful batsman in the side had a wide range of strokes all round the wicket. He scored heavily this

best batsmen in school cricket today. Let me not fail to mention here P. Fernandopulle who fielded excellently in the covers.

1,000 RUNS

Nalanda College was led by Jayawickrema Perera another good all-rounder. He is a stylish right hand batsman and a left arm pace bowler who has done well this season. In Nihal Amaradasa Nalanda possessed the schools most prolific scorer. Only school boy to score 1000 runs this season, Amaradasa revels on matting and turf both alike with a wide range of strokes and a care-free approach to the game this batsman is a delight to watch. Many draw games marred Nalanda's success which otherwise would have been an enviable record.

The Kotahena lads were led this year by E. Rodrigopulle the madding leg spinner and to their credit goes the only defeat of St. Peter's in Allan Gunasekera the keeper they have a steady batsman N. Amarasinghe and N. Soysa in no small way helped with their intelligent pace bowling.

Zahira College had a lean season this year. U. Mahroof the skipper was the most successful batsman while the rest did not come up to expected standards. However B. P. Aliph impressed much as a batsman.

The Cambrians were led this year by that outstanding all rounder W. G. Fernando. This left hand batsman hits the ball hard and from the time he occupies the crease he means business. W. G. Fernando was also the most successful bowler. S. Kasturiratne and Sunil de Silva were others who caught my eye.

The young Trinitians were led by that elegant stroke player and their batting mainstay J. Rattwatte. He was ably supported by all rounder E. Roles. Trinity College one time producers of our best cricketers from the hill capital has failed to maintain their past achievements. This season has been rather lean for them and personally I will be the happiest to see this great institution once again achieving the glories of the past.

In glancing over the Cricket Season 1960 I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention some of the talent in lesser chicketing schools.

MUCH TALENT

W. M. Fernando who led Kingswood this year is a hard hitting batsman and an inspiring bowler. They were unlucky to have missed that remarkable bats-

another who caught my eye. An intelligent spin bowler who fights the ball well.

T. Jayasuriya was Richmond's batting mainstay. He is another hard hitting and carefree batsman with a very good eye. Another lad from Galle worth mentioning is S.A.S. Jayawickrema. Mahinda College opener. This boy possesses a sound defence and also a variety of strokes. K. Fernando skipper of St. Sebastian's Moratuwa is another attractive batsman who has scored freely this season. H. R. P. Jayatilke and G. Molligoda have been among the runs for Dharmapala Vidya. G. Molligoda is a youngster with much promise. St. John's skipper S. Jegathesan had a good season with the ball. His off spin bowling brought him well over 50 wickets this season.

Ranjith Cooray also of St. John's is a batsman with much promise who uses his feet well. Much of him will be heard in time to come. Christian College Kotte one of the oldest institutions in the Island was led by young Sydney Amarasinghe who incidentally holds the record for the highest number of runs in the big match against St. Thomas' Kotte. He is a stylish batsman with many good scores to his credit. Milroy Martin who captained St. Thomas' Kotte is a fair bat and did creditably well in their big match last weekend.

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Spearheading the attack Anton Perera once again displayed hostile and fiery bowling. T. Le Mercier the left arm spinner enjoyed a very good season capturing over fifty wickets with his controlled spin and flight and variation of pace. Le Mercier is certainly the best among his type in schools today.

FAST SCORERS

The team of the season Ananda College had to lower their heads to St. Peter's and this was the only defeat they suffered. If scores are an indication and the amount of time taken to complete the scores is taken then Ananda College deserve the praise of being the most aggressive and fast scoring side. They had seven outright victories of which five by innings and this tells the rest of the tale.

Affable Yatagama Amaradasa who led the side was ably supported by that fine all rounder Mohanlal Fernando, young Semasinghe and Polonowita. In the field Yatagama Amaradasa handled his mates with the knowledge and experience of a veteran and his bowling changes, field placing were of the highest class. Whether it was batting, bowling or fielding Mohanlal Fernando was well above the average school cricketer and I believe every cricket fan will be looking forward on his performance for the University next year.

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Tissa de Soysa the most successful batsman in the side had a wide range of strokes all round the wicket. He scored heavily this season with a hectic innings of 122 against Jaffna Schools in an inter-zone match. This batsman is an asset to any side and is exhilarating to watch. He has both science and beef in his shots and foot work of a ballet dancer and I consider him to be one of the

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