

# THE MORATUWA PEIRIS' AND THE THOMIAN CAPTAINCY CONNECTION

**A**t a time when S. Thomas' College is celebrating a 100 years at Mount Lavinia, the Royal Thomian Cricket encounter on March 8, 9 and 10, 2018 is of much significance to the 'school by the sea'. With a promising performance in the Inter-School cricket season leading up to the Big Match, this year, the Thomians will be hoping to regain the D.S. Senanayake shield.

Moratuwa, a town well-known for Cricket, has produced many a Thomian cricketer in the past (too many to mention by name) and continues to do in the present. When this year's Thomian Captain Dellon Peiris (from Moratuwa) leads the Mount Lavinia lads in the 139th Battle of the Blues, he will be emulating three distinguished Thomian Cricket Captains who are all 'Moratuwa Peiris'.

Nilanka Peiris (1997), Ashan Peiris (2007) and Sachin Peiris (2012) have all captained S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia with distinction and their stellar performances at the 'Royal-Thomian Big Matches' speak volumes of these Thomian Captains.

It is also noteworthy to mention that no less than 11 Thomian Cricket Captains hailed from Moratuwa in the last 50 years, namely former Sri Lankan Cricket Captain Duleep Mendis (1972), Mohan De Silva (1975), Nisal Fernando (1989), Manoj Mendis (1994), Wiranga Samaranyake (1996), Nilanka Peiris (1997), Upeka Fernando (1998), Gehan Fernando (2000), Ashan Peiris (2007), Sachin Peiris (2012) and Dellon Peiris (2018). Although the writer's knowledge of the era



Nilanka Peiris



Ashan Peiris



Sachin Peiris



Dellon Peiris

before 1970 on the Moratuwa Thomian Captains is somewhat limited, it is well known that C.E.L. De Silva (popularly known as 'Kalla' De Silva) captained S. Thomas' College in 1921 and 1922.

Coming back to the superlative performances of the 'Moratuwa Peiris' who have captained S. Thomas' College, in 1997 captain Nilanka Peiris scored a brilliant 108 to guide S. Thomas' to a famous victory over Royal and regain the D.S. Senanayake shield. In the following year he was dismissed for 99, depriving him of two consecutive centuries at the Battle of the Blues Big Match.

However, his gritty 99 is still remembered by many as a memorable knock.

In 2005, after Ashan Peiris scored a valiant 125 runs in the big match, in 2007 captain Ashan Peiris scored a monumental 161 to lead S. Thomas' College to a convincing win over Royal College to regain the shield. His individual aggregate of 328 runs in the series secured him a place in the record books for those batsmen who have scored over 300 runs.

In 2009 debutant 15-year-old Sachin Peiris was part of the 'trio'

who staged (considered by many), the greatest 'fight back' in Royal-Thomian history. Along with R. Nirushan and Fahim Saleem who scored memorable centuries, Sachin Peiris scored a fighting 58 batting for 212 minutes in a true display of 'Thomian grit' which denied Royal of certain victory.

In 2011 Sachin scored a superb 77 not out almost taking S. Thomas' home to a famous victory when bad light halted play with the Thomians needing only 38 runs with six wickets in hand. Sachin is ironically the last Thomian captain to have lifted the coveted shield, in 2012, when he scored his third half-century of the series, before Royal regained the title in 2013.

It is on the back of those gallant performances of the Moratuwa Peiris Thomian Captains that this year's Thomian captain Dellon Peiris (also hailing from Moratuwa), would back himself for a match-winning performance to regain the coveted D. S. Senanayake shield.

With an excellent all-round record, skipper Dellon has led the Thomians from the front this season and will be hoping to put the 'icing on the cake' with a resounding Thomian victory come the Big Match this year, which is the fervent hope of all Thomians, young and old!

*Surath Peiris*

