

# **The Royal Thomian Derby (Or the Royal Thomian Match)**

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The most looked forward to sporting and social event in the Calendar of present and past students of the two most renowned high schools in Sri Lanka, the Royal versus S. Thomas' Cricket Match, is played over 3 days in the month of March in the city of Colombo. S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia, a private Anglican school has about 2,500 boys on roll, while Royal college Colombo, a government-run non-denominational school accommodates approximately 8,000, making it the largest school in the country.

## **Origins of School Cricket in Ceylon**

The early origins of S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia date back to 1851 when it was located in Mutwal, Colombo. It is the first Ceylonese school to play cricket - beginning 1864 against the Small Pass Cricket Club in Colombo. This is also the first recorded instance of a cricket match between two Ceylonese teams played in Ceylon. S. Thomas' was represented in this historic match by G. A. Edward, W. De. Livera, K. Banda, S. H. Pereira, L. Sepion, B. A. Senanayake, C. de Silva, L. T. Nolan, E. de Hoedt, H. M. Fernando and A. Perera.

As there was no other school playing cricket at the time, from 1864 to 1877, S. Thomas' played against the clubs and other teams that were in existence in Colombo, Negombo and Kalutara, including the elitist European dominated Colombo Cricket Club. It is said that the Cambridge-educated Sub-Warden of the College, the Reverend Felton Falkner, who captained the S. Thomas' team from 1873 to 1877, was in a large way responsible for his school gaining a reputation for playing good cricket during those early formative years.

Cricket was introduced to the Colombo Academy in the Pettah, which was subsequently renamed Royal College and in later years re-located at Reid Avenue, by another Cambridge-educated Englishman, Ashley Walker, after his arrival in the island in January 1877 to take up duties as an assistant to the Principal of the Academy. Ceylon's first inter-school cricket match, the College vs. the Academy (as the Royal Thomian was then called) was played in 1878. Although the scores are not recorded, there is a reference to the 1878 match by the Secretary of the Thomian Cricket Club at the anniversary dinner of the S. Thomas' College Debating Club in 1879.

Since masters represented both schools in 1878 and 1879, both matches are not considered as part of the series. The first schoolboys' encounter in 1880 is the beginning of the College vs. the Academy series, which with the passage of time blossomed out to be what is known as the Royal-Thomian. The then Colombo Academy was represented in the inaugural 1880 match by J. W. de Silva, B. W. Bawa, B. de Silva, A. Jansz, C. Wellopulle, C. de Silva, O. Van Hoff, Wilfred de Kretser, William de Kretser, P. P. Jansz and A. Weinman. S. Thomas' College comprised F. W. McDonnell, C. Wilkins, E. R. McDonnell, F. T. Ellawala, W. B. De

Saram, W. E. Grenier, C. H. De Saram, D. Wendt, C. O. Siebel, J. Louransz and C. De Saram.

### **Most prestigious D. S. Senanayake Memorial Shield**

The time honoured encounter, now in its 125th year is one of the longest uninterrupted inter-collegiate cricket matches in the world. The Royal-Thomian, as it is popularly known, is played for the most prestigious 'Father of the Nation' D. S. Senanayake Memorial Shield. Incidentally, Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake, who became independent Ceylon's (as Sri Lanka was known at the time) first Prime Minister, donned the Thomian cap in 1901 and 1902.

The shield was presented in 1928. Mr. Senanayake's two sons, Dudley (who became 4 times Prime Minister of Sri Lanka) and Robert, played for S. Thomas' that year. The match is not just a match but 'the Big Match' and is played in a riveting atmosphere throughout the 3 days.

The electric live bands, smoke bombs, 'Nagasalang-pappara' bands and the continuous singing and dancing in a spirit of camaraderie and 'bon-homie' by thousands of diehards of the two schools - not forgetting the jollification of the special tents, Colts, Stallions and the traditionally exclusive Mustang enclosure - makes it the sporting showpiece of the year.

### **Foremost nurseries**

Royal and S. Thomas were the foremost nurseries of Sri Lanka cricket from the 1880s until about the 1970s. Both schools have produced a long line of outstanding cricketers some of whom went on to represent and later captain Ceylon/Sri Lanka with distinction against powerful test playing nations both here and abroad.

Thomian Captains Michael Tissera and Duleep Mendis captained Sri Lanka to her first unofficial Test Victory in 1964 (Pakistan) and to her first official Test victory in 1985 (India), respectively. That epoch-making first ever victorious All-Ceylon team of 1964 included 1 Royalist Darrel Liversz and 7 Thomians, Tissera, Trevlyn Edwards, Dr. Buddy (B.G.) Reid, Mano Ponniah, Ian Pieris, Neil Chanmugam and 12th man Dr. Lareef Idroos.

### **Brilliant Trio**

The debonair Tissera also led All-Ceylon to her maiden limited-over international victory in 1969. He is the only Captain to lead 3 All-Ceylon teams to memorable victories on 3 separate occasions, all against official test playing teams - Pakistan (1964), India (1965) and MCC (1969). The glorious win over India in 1965 was the first on foreign soil at that level. The mercurial Duleep Mendis incidentally is the only Sri Lankan to play and Captain a World XI (versus the West Indies in 1981/82). He is the first to score twin centuries - 105 and 105 (versus India 1982, in India) - in an unofficial or official Test for Sri Lanka. As Sri Lanka Captain, he scored a spectacular century and 94 runs vs. England in 1984 at Lord's - the Mecca of Cricket.

In the second innings, he was unfortunate to miss out on twin centuries by a mere 6 runs which should he have scored would have put him in an elite band of batsmen to have scored twin centuries in a Test match at Lord's. Mendis captained the country in back-to-back World Cup tournaments (1983 and 1987) and managed Sri Lanka's World Cup winning team in 1996. He became the first Sri Lankan to win the handsome Sharjah Award in 1990. Another Thomian Captain Anura Tennakoon led Sri Lanka at the first ever World Cup in England in 1975 and the second World Cup also in England in 1979. His batting average in unofficial Tests was 48.8 runs and he captained Sri Lanka in 16 unofficial Tests, more than any other player till Sri Lanka achieved official Tests Status. Tennakoon's magnificent 169 not out versus India in 1974 is rated by many as the greatest innings played by a Ceylonese/Sri Lankan batsman against a 'Test' nation in an unofficial Test match.

He was the Chief Executive Officer of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka. Many Sri Lankan sports enthusiasts are of the view that the great performances of this brilliant trio of Tissera, Tennakoon and Mendis, against quality international opposition were contributory factors in Sri Lanka ultimately achieving official 'Test' status and joining the exclusive band of top cricket-playing countries of the world during the early 1980s.

### **Played for Sri Lanka**

Fourteen Royalists and Thomians have played for Sri Lanka in official Tests and/or one-day Internationals since 1982, the year Sri Lanka played its first official Test match. Sri Lanka Captain Ranjan Madugalle, Jayantha Amerasinghe, Ashantha de Mel, Rohan Jayasekera, Roshan Jurangpathy and Jehan Mubarak, are the Royalists and Duleep Mendis, Saliya Ahangama, Guy de Alwis, Ishak Sahabdeen, Kapila Wijegunawardene, Kausheek Amalean, Nisal Fernando and Aruna Gunewardene are the Thomians. Sahabdeen also captained the Sri Lanka hockey team in 1989.

### **Cricketing philanthropists**

The two schools have also produced cricketing philanthropists. Royalist Dr. John Rockwood and Thomians D. L. de Saram, P. Saravanamuttu and Robert Senanayake. Dr. Rockwood was the first President of Ceylon Cricket Association in 1922. The awe inspiring D. L. de Saram had the distinction of being the first All-Ceylon Cricket Captain, and the first Ceylonese to get his name in the Wisden - the cricketer's Bible - in 1912. A President of the Ceylon Cricket Association, he holds the Ceylon record for throwing the cricket ball. In 1923, W. T. Greswell, then Ceylon's best bowler said of him, "if the Ceylonese players are understudying their idol D. L. de Saram, they should continue to do so. No better model cricket or sportsman ever donned flannels in Ceylon". De Saram died at the comparatively young age of 52 years.

The legendary P. Saravanamuttu has the honour of being elected the first President of the Board of Control for Cricket in 1948. He was also a President of the Ceylon Cricket Association. Saravanamuttu's greatest achievement was the construction of the Colombo Oval, which is now known as the P. Saravanamuttu Stadium and its pavilion during the

height of the Second World War.

He performed a miracle when he developed the ground from a marshy land to a cricket stadium. It was ready for cricket in 1943, the Royal Thomian match inaugurating the ground. The pavilion was ready in 1945 for the first ever-unofficial Test against India.

It was at the then Colombo Oval and now the P. Sara Stadium that almost all the unofficial Test matches were played. Four decades later when Sri Lanka became a full member of the International Cricket Council, the inaugural official Test match versus England was also played there. P. Saravanamuttu also began the tradition of providing employment in government departments under his supervision as Tea and Rubber Controller, to the best public schools cricketers.

He was the only Ceylonese to be paid his salary as a Civil Servant in Ceylon Rupees and an additional salary in Sterling Pounds - a bigger salary (when both were added up) than the Governor of Ceylon received! P. Sara, as he was affectionately called, died in harness aged 57 years.

His untimely death was a great loss to Sri Lanka cricket. To perpetuate his memory the BCC in Ceylon offered a Trophy - P. Saravanamuttu Trophy - for the top most domestic tournament in the country. Robert Senanayake was the longest serving President in the history of the Cricket Board.

He took over the reins in 1957/58, and was the President for a record 19 occasions before relinquishing it in 1976. By that time the Board had made great strides. He was also a President of the Ceylon Cricket Association. In 1966 to help Ceylon graduate from associate membership to full member status of the International Cricket Council, Senanayake initiated the first tournament in the Island to feature 3-day matches. He offered the Robert Senanayake Trophy for competition amongst the Government Services,

### **Madugalle honoured**

The apex body, which governs the noble game of cricket around the world, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has Royalist Ranjan Madugalle as the Chief Match Referee of the Test and One-day International Panel of Referees.

He refereed back-to-back World Cup final matches in 1999 and 2003. Former Sri Lanka poolist and Thomian all-rounder Jerome Lee Jayaratne was earlier the Project Officer for coaching, education and development at the ICC. Also, Duleep Mendis is the Chairman of the Asian Cricket Council Development Committee, and the Chief Executive Officer of Sri Lanka Cricket - the successor to the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka.

### **Batting feats**

Forty one Royalists and Thomians have scored centuries in the 'Battle of the Blues'. Nineteen of them are Royalists of which Sumithra 'Charlie' Warnakulasuriya's marathon 197,

spanning a full four and a half sessions spread over two days and scored in 1980, is the highest score for a 3-day match. The other 22 centurions are Thomians of which Duleep Mendis' belligerent 184 scored in 1972 remains as the record for a 2-day match.

Royalist Neil Joseph (in 1925 & 1926) and Thomians Duleep Mendis (in 1971 & 1972) and his nephew Manoj Mendis (in 1992 & 1993) have each scored centuries twice in the series. Dr. Sarath Seneviratne is the most unfortunate batsman in the series having been dismissed twice in the 'nervous-nineties' - for 96 and 97 in the 1964 and 1965 matches, respectively. The most number of runs in an over - 24 (4,4,4,4,4,4), was scored by Thomian E. F. Arndt in 1903.

The record partnership for any wicket in the 2-day match - 186 runs (for the 5th wicket) was shared between Geoff Wijesinghe (64) and Ian Pieris (123) of S. Thomas' in 1953. The 3-day match partnership record of 254 runs (3rd wicket) between Yasasvin Dharmaratne (124) and Anushka Polonowita (165) of Royal was in 1996. The highest total in the Series for the 2-day game - 360 for 8 declared in 1941 and the 3-day match record of 388 for 9 declared in 1996 - were both notched up by S. Thomas'. Ronald Reed of S. Thomas' has the phenomenal batting average of 108.3. His scores are - 0 and 37 in 1955, 158 not-out in 1956, 65 and 65 not-out in 1957. He represented All-Ceylon.

Royalists Malinda Thotiwilage (95 and 108 in 2001), Ganganath Ratnayake (75 and 111 not-out in 2003) and Thomians William Jayatileke (62 and 110 not-out in 1937) and Dhammika Bulankulame (108 and 72 run-out in 1984) came closer to scoring twin centuries. Hundred Royalists and 105 Thomians have scored 50s in the series. Fred Thomasz' 8 for 3

The record best bowling performance in an innings - 8 for 3 in 1884 is held by Fred Thomasz of S. Thomas'. Twenty eight bowlers (14 from either side) have taken a match bag of 10 wickets or more. Thomian L. H. Arndt's 14 for 55 in 1906 remains the best in this category. Although Royalist J. W. De Silva has taken 14 wickets in the first match in 1880, his bowling analysis is inconclusive, as the runs given away by him do not appear in any of the scorecards. Another Thomian Richard Wanduragala has also taken 14 for 76 in the 1907 match. Seventy five Royalists and 71 Thomians have taken 5 or more wickets in an innings in the series.

### **Star all-rounders**

Barney Gunesekera's (1930) 148 and 9 for 105, and Rochana Jayawardene's (1983) 145 not out and 9 for 73, are the two best all-round performances for Royal College. Mervyn Gooneratne's (1935) 107 and 8 for 66, and Ian Pieris's (1953) 123 and 6 for 64, are the two best efforts for S. Thomas' College. Pieris, a Cambridge Blue, is the only Sri Lankan to perform the hat trick in first class cricket in England. He, Gunasekera and Gooneratne represented All-Ceylon as all-rounders. In later years Pieris was twice elected as the President of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka. Thomian Alex Wijesinghe took 10 for 66 in 1933 and followed it up with 115 not out in 1934.

## **Carl Cooke - 9 dismissals**

Thomian Wicket Keeper Carl Cooke's record 9 dismissals ( 6 ct, 2 st, 1 run-out) was in 1923. The intrepid Cooke later became the first Asian to cross the English Channel from England to France in a canoe in 1937.

## **They too captained Ceylon**

Cricketers of the class of Royalists Dr. C. H. Gunasekera, F. C. De Saram, Sargo Jayewickrema, C. I. Gunasekera, Thomians A. C. Ahmath, S. Saravanamuttu, Vernon Prins and Dr. Buddy (B.G.) Reid, all wielded the willow majestically in the famous series before going on to captain Ceylonese/All Ceylon against highly rated foreign teams. Dr. Gunasekera was one of the first Ceylonese cricketers to play for a county in England. De Saram, an Oxford Blue, Jayewickreme and later C. I. Gunasekera were three of the most prolific Ceylonese batsmen during their times.

An excellent tennis player and golfer, De Saram can be considered a triple international. A. C. Ahmath was the captain of the first Ceylonese team ever to beat a recognised visiting foreign team from a powerful Test playing country - Australia in 1914.

The flamboyant S. Saravanamuttu became the first Ceylonese to score a century at Lord's and that too against the MCC in 1924. Representing the Indian Gymkhana, he had scored 124 in that match. He was also a President of the Board of Control for Cricket in Ceylon.

As a schoolboy, S. Sara has many heroics to his credit, amongst which stands quite a number of swashbuckling innings as a dashing batsman including the record for the fastest century ever in the Ceylon Schools' first eleven cricket history. Like his elder brother P. Sara, he too died in harness at the age of 56 years. Vernon Prins was a double international in cricket and hockey and Dr. Buddy (B.G.) Reid had the unique distinction of captaining in two sports - Cricket and Table Tennis, at the highest national level.

## **Holsinger - first professional**

Thomian Alfred Holsinger, who was Ceylon's fastest bowler prior to 1900, was the first Ceylonese cricket professional. He started playing in the English League in 1899.

A report in the "Ceylon Independent" of May 1899 says "Holsinger took 6 wickets with 6 consecutive deliveries for his club in Hampshire, and a wicket with the first ball he bowled in England". He had some splendid performances throughout his 15 years as a professional in England.

## **Dr. Scharenguivel - 3 'firsts'**

Another Thomian Dr. James Arthur Scharenguivel was the first Ceylonese to play for a foreign country - All Scotland and the first to score a century overseas in 1902.

He played for All Scotland against South Africa and that was the first time a Ceylonese played against a "Test" country. In 1905 he also played against Australia.

### **Schoolboys Porrit and Fairweather play for Ceylon**

Royalists Tommy Kellart and Daya Sahabandu were rated as two of the best Ceylonese slow bowlers during their times. Thomian fast bowler A. S. Eliyatamby was Ceylon's Star all-rounder beginning 1908 and Royalist Carl Van Geysel opened batting for Ceylon in 1927. A Cambridge Blue in athletics, Van Geysel the champion high jumper represented Britain in the Amsterdam Olympics in 1928. The 1934 rival captains Royalist Billy (FWE) Porrit and Thomian Donald Fairweather, both played for Ceylon as schoolboys. Several other players from both schools have also represented the country as schoolboys.

### **A. J. D. N. Selvadurai - triple international**

Thomian fast bowler A. J. D. N. Selvadurai turned out for All-Ceylon during the 1930s and the early 1940s. An athlete and Tennis player, the redoubtable Selvadurai can be considered the first triple international in Ceylon. Royalist Chippy (LDS) Gunasekera, a reputed Coach, captained Ceylon in two matches against visiting representative teams in 1935. Royalist Mahes Rodrigo and Thomian Berty Wijesinha are two other gifted sportsmen who excelled in the 1940s and 1950s as double internationals, the former in cricket and rugby, latter in cricket and athletics. Wijesinha is also acclaimed as one of the finest cricket coaches in Sri Lanka.

Royalist fast bowler Darrel Liversz (cricket and athletics) and Thomian orthodox left arm spinner Ranil Abeynaike (cricket and hockey) emerged as double internationals, during the 1960s and the 1970s respectively. A cricket commentator, writer, curator and accomplished Australian qualified coach, Abeynaike is the Coach of the 2004 Thomian first eleven team.

### **Wardens played**

Three Wardens of S. Thomas' College have played for the school in the Royal-Thomian, Canon R. S. de Saram, C. H. Davidson and the current incumbent Dr. David Ponniah. An Oxford Boxing Blue, De Saram who played in 1915, 1916 and 1917, was the first Ceylonese and old Thomian to be installed as Warden of his alma mater.

Davidson collected 'a pair of specs' in the 1919 match. Dr. Ponniah is the first from either side to score a century on debut in the 1967 match.

He is also credited with sharing the fastest century partnership in the series (in 57 mts, 4th wicket) with Azam Hameed (59 not out) in the same match. Dr. Ponniah's brother, the engineer cum architect and Cambridge Blue Mano Ponniah, played for S. Thomas' in 1960/'61 and thereafter went onto don the All-Ceylon Jersey from 1964 to 1968.

Prime Minister Sir John L. Kotelawala (in 1914/15) and Prime Minister/President Junius R. Jayawardene (in 1925) played for Royal College. Jayawardene was the President of the

Board of Control for Cricket in Ceylon from 1952 to 1956.

It is interesting to note that six Gunasekera brothers played for Royal College between 1930 and 1950. Five de Saram brothers (1879-1885) and the five Reid brothers (1956-1968) represented S. Thomas' College. E. A. Elapata (in 1888/'89) and P. B. Bulankulame (in 1919/'20) captained S. Thomas', while their grandsons Upali Katugaha and Anura Bulankulame led the Thomians in 1947 and 1988, respectively.

England-based solicitor and property developer, Thomian Glucka (AM) Wijesuriya owns the sprawling Shenley Cricket Centre, in Hertfordshire on the borders of London. It has two grounds - 17 pitch square purpose built main ground and the 10 pitch square nursery ground, with its outdoor nets comprising six grass and four all weather strips.

Fourteen overseas countries and 24 English counties have played at the picturesque main ground. After playing at the Shenley Cricket Centre, Australian Jeff Thompson the former world's fastest bowler, summed up his experience by saying, "After Lord's I would rather play here than anywhere else".

Incidentally, on the 14th of January 1994, S. Thomas' College became the first school in Sri Lanka to open its own indoor cricket nets. Royal College followed suit on the 14th of December 1995.

### **Sporting captains, memorable incidents**

There have been memorable incidents in the long Royal-Thomian series where captains had considered winning or losing secondary and taken decisions in the true spirit of the game. Two Royal Captains Channa Gunesekera and Tuan Saldin on two separate occasions recalled a Thomian batsman to resume the innings after being given out by the umpire in controversial circumstances in 1949 and 1976, respectively.

In the 1923 match, Thomian skipper Punchi Banda Lankatilleke's magnanimous gesture of playing an extra over gave Royal victory, which otherwise would have been a draw. At the time of his death in April 2003, aged 99 years, Mr. Lankatilleke was the oldest Thomian and the longest living Schools' Cricket Captain in Sri Lanka.

In 1946, the Thomian batsmen under the captaincy of Oscar Wijesinghe very sportingly ran out to bat in drizzle and bad light when they could justifiably have appealed for an early stoppage of play on account of bad light. Thomians carried on till the last wicket fell and Royal won the match.

According to Thomian Ronnie Weerakoon, he could barely see the bowler, let alone see the ball while he was batting. Later, Weerakoon played for All-Ceylon and Wijesinghe represented his country at the Empire Games in 1950 in New Zealand.



The 1928 encounter with the Thomians struggling to save the match with 8 down for 76, chasing 188 runs for victory. Notwithstanding the dire straits his team was in, S. Thomas' captain Roy Hermon graciously offered fifteen extra minutes to the Royalists to try and win the match, but the Thomian grit surfaced and the match was drawn.

Unfortunately, one match in this time-honoured series had ended due to the invasion of the pitch by a section of the spectators and disrupting the match. In 1903, S. Thomas' captained by Francis Molamure (later Sir, who went on to become the first speaker in independent Ceylon's first Parliament) had to take one last Royal wicket to win. Royal led by Frank Ondatjie had to score 26 runs to win in the last over of the match by the last pair.

Just before the over started, unruly section of the crowd rushed to the field and carried away the two Royal batsmen off the ground, despite vain attempts by the Umpires to control them. Ultimately, on reference to the Colombo Cricket Club Committee, the match was declared a draw. Molamure who captained the combined colleges, was the finest fieldsman of his time.

In the 1949 Royal-Thomian, the Thomians were stuck for time to score just 3 runs for victory (with 6 wickets in hand) ironically due to Thomian Bradman Weerakoon hitting a huge six off Gamini Goonasekera.

The ball had sailed over the ropes, over the boys' tents and into the wilderness. It is said that the time taken to find the lost ball in the end deprived the two Thomian batsmen at the crease Skipper Philips Shantikumar and Chandra Schaffter of pulling off what would have been an easy victory.

Then, unlike now, time was the only criteria that mattered and not the number of overs, which is of paramount importance now.

### **First Asian to captain Cambridge**

Royalist Gamini Goonasekera went on to become the first Asian to captain Cambridge. He played county cricket and represented the MCC. He was the stop-gap captain of the Ceylon Team in the 2nd unofficial Test match against India in 1956. A dynamic player, he was the first Ceylonese to be named one of Wisden's "Five Cricketers of the Year" in 1957.

Bradman Weerakoon became the Secretary General of the London-based International Planned Parenthood Federation, Advisor on international relations to two Presidents and the Permanent Secretary to 8 Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka - a record albeit of a different kind!

Shanthikumar came first in the then much coveted Civil Service examination in 1954 and Schaffter a double international in cricket and hockey, currency controls two of the biggest insurance companies in Sri Lanka.

Thomians Dan Piachaud and Gehan D. Mendis are two other Sri Lankan born cricketers to play first class professional county cricket in England. The elegant Piachaud, an Oxford Blue, had the distinction of playing for All-Ceylon and the M.C.C. Mendis first scored over

1,000 runs in season for Sussex County in 1980.

In 7 seasons out of 8 thereafter he topped 1,000 runs a season. He scored over 10,000 first class runs, which included several centuries and double centuries. Wisden describes him as 'a dashing right hand opening batsman'. Although highly rated, he was unfortunate never to played for his adopted country England.

### **P. Saravanamuttu Trophy - The 'Blue Riband'**

The only time the then University of Ceylon won the 'Blue Riband' - The P. Saravanamuttu trophy was in 1963. That champion team included 2 Royalists, Nihal De Mel, Dr. Harsha Samarajeewa and 5 Thomians, Dr. Upali Gunetilleke, Dr. Buddy (B.G.) Reid, Mano Ponniah, Dr. N. S. Gurusinghe and Dr. Lareef Idroos. It is also noteworthy to mention that the first SSC team to play its first ever match (in 1901 verses the Colombo Sports Club) comprised of 4 Royalists, D. B. Gunesekera (Snr.) E. Weerasooriya, A. C. Tirimanne, F. A. Obeyesekera and 8 Thomians, O. G. De Alwis (Captain), D. L. de Saram, A. F. Molamure, M. S. Guneratne, B. De Saram, A. E. Abeykoon, F. L. Goonewardene and S. De Saram. Some of these gentlemen in later years did much to popularise the sport in their provincial home towns.

### **Thomian grit**

No commentary on Royal-Thomian cricket is complete without reference to 'Thomian grit' in the context of the history centenary match played in 1979. Thomian wickets were falling all round in the second innings and Royal were in sight of victory in the last session of the match. But when all looked lost for S. Thomas' there emerged from the shadows of gloom Mahinda Halangode and Chandrashan Richards, the saviours.

The end of the day scoreboard read, Halangode 70 not out (14 fours)and Richards 20 not out (1 four) - S. Thomas 252 for 8 wickets. An unbroken ninth wicket partnership of 91 runs to bring home a honourable draw.

Fittingly, rising to the motto of S. Thomas' - "Esto Perpetua" (Be thou forever) in what is today a piece of history in the annals of the 'Battle of the Blues". Royal last won the 'Battle' in successive years 1990 and 1991 under Udaya Lakmal Wijesena and Rohan Iriyagolle, respectively.

The last Royal team to win by an innings was held by Pat McCarthy (1938), who played for All-Ceylon and a season for Western Australia in Australia. S. Thomas' last won in 1999 under Naren Ratwatte and the last Thomian team to win by an innings was led by Anura Bulankulame in 1988.

Many cricketers from both schools, whose names are not mentioned here, have played in all grades of representative cricket, thereby contributing immensely to the sustenance and progress of the sport in the country. Royalists and Thomians have also served as Presidents

of almost all the leading cricket clubs and associations.

Frank L. Goonewardene who captained S. Thomas' in 1899, was the premier sponsor and promoter of the sport in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Captain of the Kandy Sports Club, Goonewardena, a wealthy lawyer, was made a honorary member of the MCC in 1927.

After 124 years without a miss or break for wars, the series is either tied or S. Thomas' leads, depending how the contentious result of the 9-run match in 1885 is counted. S. Thomas' says it won that year and leads the series with 33 wins to 32. For Royal, the 9-run match was a draw and the competition stands at 32 wins each.

### **The 9-run Match**

The "History of the Royal College" says "Although the circumstances were quite ordinary, Royal were dismissed for 9 runs. S. Thomas' piled up 170 for 6 wickets and the rain interfered, but the umpires one of whom was Mr. Ashley Walker decided that the ground was fit for play after rain ceased. But though the umpires and the principal were for continuing the match, the team urged by a few unsporting boys refused to play."

The "Ceylon Observer" of 16th March 1885, under local and general says "The S. Thomas' College Cricket Club - the Honorary Secretary of the Club, Mr. Frank Grenier, wishes us to state that no matches in future be arranged with the Royal College CC in consequence of the latter club refusing to continue the match played last week." The Laws of Cricket is as follows, "when they (i.e. the umpires) shall call play, the side that refuses to play shall lose the match".

But, fortunately, for the future generations of Royalists and Thomians, "The History of the Royal College" further states: "The disagreement which resulted between the two teams was settled by Royal apologising and the Thomians sportive enough to bury the hatchet".

Whatever the result, the connoisseurs of the Royal Thomian believe the 9-run match has added much fun and good humour in the true spirit of the game to build a healthy Royal-Thomian tradition over the years since this controversial match in 1885.

### **Eight other "Roy-Tho" contests**

Eight other annual contests - The Royal Thomians Rowin Regatta, The Hayman Cup Water Polo Tie (in the Royal and Thomian swimming pools) the D. S. Senanayake Trophy Basketball Match, the Orville Abeynaike Trophy Hockey Match, the Tennis Tie, the Mustangs Trophy One-day Cricket Match, the Michael Guneratne Trophy Rugby Scrum-down and the Soccer Match - further binds the two schools in sporting rivalry.

A bond, perhaps best reflected by the words of a former principal of Royal College, the genial Mr. Bogoda Premaratne, that "without Royal there is no S. Thomas', and without S. Thomas' there is no Royal".

At the 1905 S. Thomas' College Old Boys Association (which is incidentally the oldest schools' Alumni Association in the country) dinner, Mr. Charles Hartley the Principal of Royal College in his speech had hoped that "S. Thomas' will be spared for many years to act as a spur and a whetstone to Royal College and other similar institutions."

We Royalists would say, if we were not fortunate enough to be called Royalists, then we would have certainly called ourselves Thomians!!!