

REACHING THE PINNACLE

In 1991-92 the Colts won a first division premiership for the first time. It also took out the premier trophy in 1999-2000. Hence it opened and closed the decade with first division triumphs.

In 1998-1999 Colts were the runners up in the premier league and premier league limited over champions.

COLTS CRICKET CAPTAINS		
Year	Name	Season
1990	Angelo Liyanage	1990 - 91
1991	H.D. Hettiwatte	1991- 92
1992	Nishantha Ranatunga	1992 - 93
1993	Nishantha Ranatunga	1993 - 94
1994	C. Mendis	1994 - 95
1995	Nishantha Ranatunga	1995 - 96
1996	Nishantha Ranatunga	1996 - 97
1998	Chaminda Vaas	1988 - 99
1999	D. Samaraweera	1999 - 2000

The Colts had six captains in the nineties. All of them led the team once, except for Nishantha Ranatunga who captained the first team on four occasions. Ranatunga, along with two other SSC cricketers moved to the Colts following a dispute at the SSC.

Nishantha Ranatunga is the brother of former Sri Lankan cricket captain, Arjuna Ranatunga. The latter played all of his domestic cricket at the SSC, from 1982 to 2001.

For all of the nineties, Gamini Goonasekera was the president of the club. He captained the team twice in the seventies.

The following anecdote sums up the changes taking place in Colts cricket. In 1990 the Colts played the SSC in the premier league semi-finals. Nishantha Ranatunga batted at no. 7 or 8 for the SSC. The next year Nishantha was batting higher up the order for the Colts. In a finals game against the SSC the Colts batted first and recovered from 12 for 3 to be all out for 220. The Colts won the game with Nishantha taking the last wicket and Sanjeeva taking the last catch.

The 125th Anniversary publication has this to say about the nineties –

“The season 1991/92 saw the Colts achieve the pinnacle in Tournament Cricket when our team led by H.D. Hettiwatte became the Champions of Cricket winning the Division I trophy. In 1992 we were the Runner up in the Limited Overs Tournament and in 1996 Colts won the Under 24 Cricket Championship.

In 1996 our Captain of the previous year Chaminda Mendis batted his way into the record books in the country. Division I cricket was granted first class status in 1988/89 and in our Division I match against Rio Sports Club, Ambalangoda played on our Grounds on 7th January 1996 Chaminda with a century in the first innings and a double century in the second became the first to achieve such a feat in first class cricket in this country. Chaminda probably created a second record by being on the field throughout the entirety of the 3 days of the match except for a short break of 10 minutes.”

What also needs mention is that in 1995 the club organised the tourney that enable women’s cricket in Sri Lanka to finally take off. That in itself is a gesture of great importance in the development of cricket in Sri Lanka.

First ever first division triumph

In 1992 the 25th Olympics Games opened in Barcelona, Bill Clinton was elected as the 42nd US President and America voted for either a young or old Elvis Presley to be used on a postage stamp.

In 1992 Windows 3.1 was released, Euro Disney opened, and rioting broke out in Los Angeles over the beating of black motorist Rodney King. The first nicotine patch is introduced to help stop smoking and DNA fingerprinting is invented. The continuing Balkan War for the next 3 years between Muslims, Serbs and Croats prompting UN intervention. And the Colts broke the first division premiership ceiling.

This would have been a very proud event for all, particularly Ranjit Samarasekera. He led the club to its first premiership, the Donovan Andree trophy. And he coached the club to its first division I trophy.

Samarasekera influenced the club’s cricketing fortunes more as a coach than he ever did as a player, even as captain. As a coach he was innovative, bold and imaginative. He scouted for players rather than get the best out of players who arrived of their own accord.

Bernardus too has left his imprint on every facet of club activity. He has been captain, cricket coach, ground secretary, cricket secretary and general secretary.

DIVISION I, SARA TROPHY CHAMPIONS, 1991 - 92



Standing L to R: R. Logarajah (ground staff), D. Samaraweera, V. Perera, M. Perera, H. de Silva, D. Liyanage, S. Wijesekera, E. Jayatilleke, S. Fernando (cricket secretary)
Seated L to R: C. Bernardus (Gen. secretary), O. Wanigasekera, C. Mendis, G. Goonesena (President), H.D. Hettiwatte (captain), R. Samarasekera (coach), N. Ranatunga, S. Ranatunga, M.W. Rajasingham (treasurer)
On the ground L to R: H. Dharmadasa (Head, ground staff), S. Piyadasa
Courtesy of Colts 125th anniversary publication

If the chronicler is not mistaken the cricket secretary Sunil Fernando is the ex-Wesley cricketer and wicket keeper who played in the Colts second rung teams in the early seventies.

The scorecard

The scorecard from the final is obtained from CricInfo - www.cricinfo.com. It has been reformatted by the chronicler.

Colts Cricket Club v Sinhalese Sports Club P.Saravanamuttu Trophy, 1991/92, Final	
Venue	P.Saravanamuttu Stadium, Colombo, 12,13,14,15 December 1991 (4-day match)
Result	Match drawn
Toss	Colts Cricket Club
Umpires	L Jayasundera, P Manuel
Close of play day 1: Colts Cricket Club 112/5 (Samaraweera 15*, Devapriya 12*)	
Close of play day 2: Colts Cricket Club 261, Sinhalese Sports Club 95/4 (Wijetunge 3*, CN Fernando 12*)	
Close of play day 3: Sinhalese Sports Club 139/4 (Wijetunge ?*, CN Fernando ?*)	

Colts Cricket Club		
First innings		
MC Mendis	C Wickremaratne b Munasinghe	35
DSG Bulankulame	b Ahangama	1
S Ranatunga	lbw b Munasinghe	11
DP Samaraweera	lbw b CN Fernando	55
MV Perera	b Ahangama	4
N Ranatunga	lbw b Munasinghe	21
*+HH Devapriya	lbw b Ahangama	64
SD Wijesekera	c UNK Fernando b Ahangama	23
DK Liyanage	c UNK Fernando b Wijetunge	17
ODC Wanigasekera	lbw b Ahangama	5
GRMA Perera	not out	1
Extras	(b 4, lb 6, w 2, nb 12)	24
Total	(all out, 97 overs)	261
FoW: 1-10, 2-29, 3-59, 4-65, 5-93, 6-174, 7-236, 8-237, 9-251, 10-261		

SSC bowling				
Colts first innings	O	M	R	W
Ahangama	31	11	55	5
Halangoda	2	0	5	0
Munasinghe	25	8	78	3
CN Fernando	10	0	46	1
Ranasinghe	5	0	15	0
Wijetunga	17	2	38	1
Jayawardene	6	2	11	0
Wickremaratne	1	0	3	0

SSC		
First innings		
AAW Gunawardene	c MV Perera b N Ranatunga	2
SL Anthonisz	c Devapriya b Liyanage	11
+UNK Fernando	c MV Perera b N Ranatunga	30
RPAH Wickramaratne	b Liyanage	26
PK Wijetunge	c Wanigasekera b Liyanage	17
CN Fernando	c S Ranatunga b Liyanage	47
C Ranasinghe	c Devapriya b Wanigasekera	10
*MB Halangoda	lbw b Wanigasekera	9
RS Jayawardene	c S Ranatunga b Liyanage	50
AMN Munasinghe	c S Ranatunga b N Ranatunga	24
FS Ahangama	not out	2
Extras	(b 4, lb 8, w 5, nb 7)	24
Total	(all out, 77.4 overs)	252
FoW: 1-5, 2-33, 3-79, 4-79, 5-139, 6-148, 7-160, 8-181, 9-246, 10-252		

Colts bowling				
SSC first innings	O	M	R	W
Liyanage	29	12	90	5
N Ranatunga	25.4	1	88	3
Wanigasekera	11	4	31	2
GRMA Perera	11	1	25	0
S Ranatunga	1	0	6	0

Summary

Man of the Match: D.K.Liyanage. Sinhalese Sports Club missed their four stalwarts, Arjuna Ranatunga, Asanka Gurusinha, Marvan Attapattu and Pramodya Wickramasinghe, all touring Pakistan at the same time. Though a four-day final, rain hampered the game and the winner of the trophy was decided on the first innings, where a keen tussle ensued with the Colts Cricket Club winning by a narrow nine run margin. Colts Cricket Club won the toss and on the second day staged a remarkable fight back, the last five wickets adding over 150 runs. Skipper Devapriya batted for 206 minutes and hit 10 fours. Samaraweera hit 8 fours in his stay of 176 minutes. Jayawardene fought bravely to hit 4 fours in his stay of over two hours and with Munasinghe added 65 runs for the ninth wicket

M.C. Mendis and N. Ranatunga appeared 5th and 12th respectively, in the national averages. D.K. Liyanage was placed sixth in the national bowling averages. This suggests that the performance of the team was very much a team effort with each player chipping in at critical moments over the season.

Sri Lankan Domestic Season 1991-92: Best performances

Batting	
200*	A.Ranatunga Sinhalese v Sebastianites (Colombo)
177*	M.C.Mendis Colts v Kandy (Colombo)
163	M.Hemantha Kalutara v Old Cambrians (Moratuwa)
131*	C.N.Fernando Sinhalese v Old Cambrians (Colombo)
127	P.Ramanathan Colombo v Kandy (Kandy)
119	M.C.Mendis Colts v Nondescripts (Colombo NCC)
115	A.P.Gurusinha Sinhalese v Antonians (Colombo SSC)
113	R.S.Kalpage Sri Lanka A v Pakistan A (Colombo)
112*	P.Perera Kalutara v Old Cambrians
110	M.S.Atapattu Sinhalese v Sebastianites (Colombo)
102	D.D.Wickremasinghe Galle v Kandy (Peradeniya)
101	N.Devarajan Antonians v Kurenegala (Colombo)

Bowling		
10-41	10-41 G.P.Wickremasinghe	Sinhalese v Kalutara (Colombo SSC)
7-28	7-28 K.I.W.Wijegunawardene	Colombo v Nondescripts (Colombo)
7-73	7-73 A.W.Ekanayake	N.W.Province v Cen.Prov.
7-78	7-78 P.L.A.W.N.Alwis	Antonians v Sebastianites (Moratuwa)
6-26	6-26 A.W. Ekanayake	N.W.Province v W.P.Suburbs
6-36	6-36 D.K.Liyanage	Colts v Moors (Colombo HP)
6-38	6-38 A.W.Ekanayake	Kurenegala v Old CAMbrians
5-53	6-53 C.P.H.Ramanayake	Tamil Union v Antonians (Colombo)
6-53	6-53 G.P.Wickremasinghe	W.P.Suburbs v Cen.Prov. (Moratuwa)
6-62	6-62 M.Muralitharan	Tamil Union v Sebastianites
6-65	6-65 K.P.J.Warnaweera	Galle v Nondescripts (Colombo NCC)
6-71	6-71 G.P.Wickremasinghe S	Sinhalese v Antonians (Colombo SSC)

Contributed by John.Evans (en92jrfe@exeter.ac.uk)

Sri Lankan Domestic Season 1991-92: Domestic Batting Averages

(Qualification : 250 runs - Top 12 listed)

Name	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Avg	100	50
M.S. Atapattu (Sin)	10	9	6	375	110*	125.00	1	2
A.Ranatunga (Sin)	9	8	3	617	200*	123.40	3	2
P.A. de Silva (Non)	8	7	1	437	185*	72.83	1	2
U.C. Hathurusinghe	9	10	1	508	120	56.44	1	5
M.C. Mendis (Colts)	12	13	2	591	177*	53.72	2	2
H.P. Tillekeratne	9	9	1	399	151	49.87	1	2
D.N. Nadarajah (TU)	8	12	5	336	87*	48.00	-	3
A.A.W.Gunawardene	7	12	3	426	100*	47.33	1	4
A.P. Gurusinha (Sin)	10	11	3	378	115	47.25	1	2
U.H. Kodituwakku	5	7	1	268	65	44.66	-	2
C.N. Fernando (Sin)	11	11	1	396	131*	39.60	1	2
N. Ranatunga (Colts)	12	9	-	327	89	36.33	-	3

Key:
(Sin) Sinhalese S.C.
(TU) Tamil Union Athletic Club
(Colts) Colts C.C.
(Kandy) Kandy!

Contributed by John.Evans (en92jrfe@exeter.ac.uk)

Sri Lankan Domestic Season 1991-92: Domestic bowling Averages

Qualification - 8 wkts (Top 12 listed)

Name	Balls	Runs	Wkts	Avg	Best	5wl	10wM
C.P.H.Ramanayake (TU)	790	334	32	10.43	6-53	3	-
E.A.R.de Silva (Non)	433	163	15	10.86	4-10	-	-
G.P.Wickremasinghe (Sin)	1498	707	52	13.59	10-41	4	2
B.R. Jurangpathy (Col)	1176	356	26	13.69	5-74	1	-
A.Jabbar (Seb)	525	245	17	14.41	4-50	-	-
D.K.Liyanage (Colts)	999	464	32	14.50	6-36	3	1
C.Ranasinghe (Sin)	276	133	9	14.77	4-40	-	-
S.D.Anurasiri (Pan)	1584	507	34	14.91	6-120	3	1
A.W.R.Madurasinghe (Kur)	1444	484	32	15.12	5-48	1	-
P.L.A.W.N.Alwis (Ant)	1197	583	38	15.34	7-78	5	1
U.C.Hathurusinghe (TU)	438	154	10	15.40	4-32	-	-
K.P.J.Warnaweera (Galle)	1715	686	44	15.59	6-65	2	1

Key:
(TU) Tamil Union Athletic Club
(Non) Nondescripts C.C.
(Sin) Sinhalese Sports Club
(Seb) Sebastianites Club
(Pan) Panadura
(Kur) Kurunegala
(Ant) Antonians
(Galle) Galle!

Source :: A.C.S. International Cricket Yearbook 1993
Contributed by John.Evans (en92jrfe@exeter.ac.uk)

The 125th anniversary publication in which the above photo appears carries no information (subjective, descriptive/impressionistic) on the season itself. Hence, it isn't possible to detail how the season progressed and what its key moments were. Club specific averages are not provided. Such information would have given meat to the above photo and the national statistics which follow. It is a pity that the powers that were at that time weren't conscious of history and importance of cementing that moment for posterity.

When the Colts won the Donovan Andree trophy in 1972 the chronicler wrote an article which appeared in the Sunday Times. Richard Alles wrote a summary of the season for the centenary publication which also carried the averages of the players involved. Finally, the chronicler preserved press clippings from the season which appear in the chapter 43.

For all the available statistics and records, they need to be intertwined with anecdotal and subjective accounts in order to create a vivid picture of the dynamics of a season. For instance, what were the crucial games and individual performances that turned a season around? When did the momentum that propelled the team into the final commence and what factors triggered it? In preparation for the season were weaknesses considered and steps taken, such as recruitment, to alleviate them? What were the memorable catches? What were the successful strategies to curtail difficult batsmen? Were there batting performances played in difficult conditions, where skill rather than runs were paramount. These are some of the observations that underwrite the rich tapestry of cricket writing.

Sri Lanka squad members

Between 1992 and 2000 the following players were in contention for the national squad at one time or another.

Chaminda Mendis, Chaminda Vaas, Duleep Liyanage, Duleep Samaraweera, Dinuk Hettiaratchy, Eric Upashantha, Nishantha Ranatunga, Sanjeeva Ranatunge and Romesh Kaluwitharne

Apart from Chaminda Vaas, Dinuk Hettiratchy, Eric Upashantha and Romesh Kaluwitharne, the rest are in the above photo of the 1991-92 team. Sanjeeva Ranatunga left after four years.

The 125th anniversary publication of 1998 features pen portraits of seven Colts players who represented the country. They include Chaminda Vaas and Romesh Kaluwitharane who are not in the 1991-92 team.



CHAMINDA VAAS

WARNAKULASURIYA PATABENDIGE USANTHA JOSEPH CHAMINDA VAAS

BORN : 27 January 1974, Colombo.
Plays for Sri Lanka in Tests & ODIs
Left Hand Bat & Left Arm Fast Medium

Chaminda Vaas has been an integral part of Sri Lanka's upsurge in Test and one-day cricket of late. His incisive left arm pace bowling, which has invited comparisons with Wasim Akram, has given the attack the extra bite it had been missing previously. He was the first Sri Lankan to take 10 wickets in a Test match, and at 24, Vaas clearly has much to give to the future of Sri Lankan and world cricket. He is amongst the top ten in the pace bowling category in the World. It is sad to note that he is injury prone and missed out on some very vital matches for Sri Lanka.

He has been representing his club from the age of 13.

Made his Test Debut against Pakistan at Kandy, in the 3rd Test, in 1994/95

Career Statistics *(In Tests & ODIs)*

TEST MATCHES

	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	Ct	St
Batting	26	39	5	580	57	17.05	-	2	10	-
	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	5	10	SR	Econ
Bowling	925.5	202	2409	83	29.02	6-87	4	1	66.9	2.60

ONE DAY INTERNATIONALS

Made his ODI Debut against India at Rajkot, in the 1st ODI, in 1993/94

	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	ct	st
Batting	91	47	18	393	33	13.50	-	-	15	-
	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	4w	5w		
Bowling	714.1	73	2901	113	25.60	4-20	3	-		



ROMESH SHANTHA KALUWITHARANA

ROMESH SHANTHA KALUWITHARANA

BORN : 24 November 1969, Colombo
Plays for Sri Lanka in Tests and ODIs
Right Hand Bat & Wicket-Keeper

The diminutive right handed wicket-keeper batsman sometimes described as "Little" Kalu sparked in the International scene during Sri Lanka's controversial tour of 1995 to Australia. Although he scored a scintillating century on debut against Australia in 1992, at the SSC, he had been unable to command a regular place in the side. However his tremendous success, both as a wicketkeeper and opener, on this tour and the subsequent performances in the Wills World Cup 96 has virtually ensured his continued presence. His exuberant, dashing style has won the hearts of many spectators around the world, and has now gone up a step ahead as a brilliant wicket-keeper in the recent past. After a demotion in the batting order, he has come back to the role of opener once again and has really done very well.

Made his Test Debut against Australia at Colombo (SSG), in the 1st Test, in 1992/93 and made a debut 132*

Career Statistics

Made his Test debut against Australia at the SSC in 1992

M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s	Ct	St
24	39	2	1191	132*	32.19	2	7	47	11

Made his ODI Debut against India at Margao, in the 3rd ODI, in 1990/91

M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s	Ct	St
98	94	6	1594	100*	18.10	1	8	65	41

KALUTARAGE ERIC AMILA UPASHANTHA

BORN : 10 June 1972, Kurunegala

Represented Sri Lanka in ODIs,

Right Hand Bat & Right Arm Fast Medium

Made his ODI Debut for Sri Lanka v Pakistan at Rawalpindi, 3rd ODI, 1995/96 and the last ODI was against West Indies at Perth in the World Series 1995/96

Career Statistics

ONE-DAY INTERNATIONALS

	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	Ct
Batting	3	2	1	11	8*	11.00	-	-	1
	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	4w	5w	
Bowling	19	1	91	3	30.33	2-24	-	-	

DULIP PRASANNA SAMARAWEERA

BORN : 12 February 1972, Colombo

Played for Sri Lanka in Tests & ODIs,

Right Hand Bat & Right Arm Off Break & Wicket-Keeper

Made his Test Debut against West Indies at Moratuwa, in the one-off Test, in 1993/94

Career Statistics

IN TESTS

M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s	Ct
7	14	0	211	42	15.07	-	-	5

Made his ODI Debut against West Indies at Sharjah, Champions Trophy, 1993/94

ONE DAY INTERNATIONAL

M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s	Ct
5	4	0	91	49	22.75	-	-	3

DULIP KAPILA LIYANAGE

BORN : 6 June 1972, Kalutara

Played for Sri Lanka in Tests & ODIs,

Left Hand Bat & Right Arm Fast Medium

Career Statistics

Made his Test Debut against Australia at Colombo (RPS), in the 2nd Test, in 1992/93

IN TESTS

	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s	Ct	St
Batting	8	8	0	66	23	8.25	-	-	-	-
	O	M	Runs	W	Ave	Best				
Bowling	211.5	45	622	17	36.58	4-56				

<u>NISHANTHA RANATUNGA</u>											
BORN : 22 January 1966, Gampaha											
Played for Sri Lanka in ODIs,											
Right Hand Bat & Right Arm Medium Fast											
Made his ODI Debut against Zimbabwe at Sharjah, Wills Trophy, 1992/93											
Career Statistics											
IN ONE DAY INTERNATIONAL											
Batting	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s	Ct	St	
	2	1	0	0	0	0.00	-	-	-	-	
Bowling	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	4w	5w			
	17	0	82	1	82.00	1-33	-	-			
<u>MANIMELDURA CHAMINDA MENDIS</u>											
BORN : 28 December 1968, Galle											
Played in ODIs for Sri Lanka											
Right Hand Bat & Right Arm Off Break											
Made his debut in ODI New Zealand at Auckland, in the 3rd ODI, in 1994/95.											
Career Statistics											
IN ONE DAY INTERNATIONALS											
Batting	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	SR	100s	50s	Ct	St
	1	1	1	3	3*	-	150	-	-	2	-
Bowling	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	4w	5w			
	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			

Dhamika Bulankulame and Thilan Samarasekera were also Colts cricketers who were in national contention. Bulankulame was a Thomian opener who scored a century in the Royal-Thomian of 1984. Samarasekera was an Anandian who played for the Colts and then the SSC, in the late nineties.

Harsha de Silva who played for the club in 14 first-class cricket matches between 1991 and 1996 went on have a successful career as a coach. He had two spells as the coach of the Sri Lanka women's national cricket team, first between 2010 and 2013 and later from 2018 to 2020. He has also mentored schoolboy cricketers in Sri Lanka and Australia

He was a junior level coach from 1996 to 2001 for his own school, Saint Joseph's College, Colombo, and became a professional school cricket coach for St. Joseph's College in 2001 and has mentored Angelo Mathews.

Competitive across the decade?

The first season of the decade took place under the auspices of the Laxspray trophy and was won by the SSC. The next seven seasons were played for the reconstituted Sara trophy. The last two seasons were played under the premier league. The Colts won the second and last competitions played in the decade. Following the Colts triumph the following clubs took out the premiership in the following order. SSC, NCC, SSC/Bloomfield, CCC, Bloomfield, SSC Bloomfield. Hence, the SSC and Bloomfield fielded the strongest sides of the decade.

It would be interesting to know how competitive the Colts was across the decade. What were its rankings per season?

In 1996 the club won the under 24 championship. It is unlikely that the Sara and under 24 competition ran concurrently as the club Sara teams would have fielded players under 24. The following photograph of the 1996-97 first division team appeared in the 125th anniversary publication and is reproduced below.

FIRST DIVISION TEAM, 1996-97



Standing L to R: Sajith Fernando, Thushara Sampath, BathiyaPerera, Tilan Samaraweera, Suchtra Alexander, Dulip Liyanage, Eric Upashantha, Jeevantha Kulatunga, Sujith Janaka, Thilana Asiri, Sampath Thebuwana
Seated L to R: Dulip Samaraweera, Romesah Kaluwitharana, T. Rajaratnam (vice-president), Chaminda Mendis (vice-captain), Gamini Gunasena (president), Nishantha Ranatunga (president), K. Mathivanan (sponsor), S. Ramalingam (cricket secretary), Chaminda Vaas
Courtesy of the Colombo Colts Cricket Club

The significance of this photo is not known. But there are certainly cricketers of calibre in the side. The club may not have won the premiership but appear to be a very competitive side with Vaas and Kaluwitharne in it.

About this time Sri Lanka won the world cup. The chronicler never imagined that there would be any Colts cricketers in the team. He assumed that the club was lumbering along and not attracting ambitious cricketers to it. But he was unaware that things had changed.

The Colts was now an avenue through which cricketers could achieve greatness. And having made the national team there was no need to change clubs to retain one's position.

The chronicler cannot determine whether to what extent the club facilities had improved but clearly the club's cricketers had developed a sense of purpose and a bold attitude.

There is a hint that money was coming into the club. The fact that Mathivanan is in the photo as a club sponsor says a million words.

The 125th anniversary

In 1998 the search engine Google was founded, the FDA approved Viagra, Apple unveiled the iMac, the Maastricht Treaty came into force, the Yangtze River broke its banks, there was a 66-day blackout in Auckland, and there were two terrorist bombing attacks on two US embassies. After many years of troubles in Northern Ireland both sides agreed to the Good Friday peace agreement. The US President Bill Clinton denied he had "sexual relations" with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, but later admitted it. The Soviet Union Banking system suffered a meltdown when the rouble lost 70% of its value against US dollar in 6 months with several of the largest Russian banks collapsing.

Sonny Bono, Carl Perkins, Tammy Wynette, Linda McCartney, Frank Sinatra and Jerome Robbins passed away. Titanic was the first movie to hit the billion dollar mark. The soundtrack from the movie was the best selling album for the year.

No photographic record

Photographs taken of the 100th anniversary celebrations have been framed and hung on the clubhouse walls. Were the 125 anniversary celebrations relatively low-key which might explain why no photographs of the occasion were visible to the naked eye. It would be nice to access photos taken to mark the occasion and also obtain a description of the function(s) held.

Victory celebration

On 28th December 1998 Chaminda Vaas led the Colts to victory over the SSC in the limited overs final. Thawfeeq describes the game.

Vaas leads Colts to first one-day title

Sri Lanka fast bowler Chaminda Vaas handed his club, Colombo Colts CC a Yuletide Christmas present on their 125th anniversary year when he led them to a comprehensive 60 runs victory over Singhalese SC in the Premier limited overs final played under lights at the R. Premadasa Stadium on Saturday.

The win gave Colts their first-ever limited overs title and it was their first one in a major tournament since beating SSC to win the Division I Sara trophy under Hemantha Devapriya in 1991-92.

Colts lived up to the exceptional form they had shown throughout the tournament, to rattle up an imposing total of 276 for 6 off 50 overs after choosing to bat first. To chase such a daunting target under lights proved too much for SSC, who eventually succumbed for 216 in 44 overs.

Although SSC had as many as nine players (the only exceptions being Malintha Perera and Ruchira Perera) who had represented the country in one-day internationals, they were outplayed totally by a clinically efficient side led admirably by Vaas.

Vaas' advice to his players : "Let's play good cricket all the time" and the high standards he set for them were followed to the very letter in Colts' success.

The club lost a key player in all-rounder Tilan Samaraweera (who switched over to SSC), but they hardly felt his loss because of the vast amount of young talent they had waiting on the sidelines.

Naturally, with promising players like Bathiya Perera, Sujith Janaka, Ajantha Lankatilake, Ishara Amarasinghe, Monto Perera and Trevin Matthews breathing down their backs for recognition the first team players knew they had to perform to be retained.

The pace set by national wicket-keeper Romesh Kaluwitharana and Dulip Samaraweera in providing a substantial opening stand of 123 off 20 overs against a probable Sri Lankan fast bowling line-up of Pramodya Wickremasinghe, Nuwan Zoysa and Ruchira Perera gave Colts the launch pad for their lavish total. The final touches to the score line was provided by Vaas and Erik Upashantha who added a breezy 63 for the seventh wicket at more than a run a ball. SSC's batting became a cropper to the left-arm spin of Dinuka Hettiaratchi on the slow surface. Backed up by sharp fielding, none of their top order batsmen were allowed to make a substantial contribution which was a requirement if they were to successfully chase Colts' total.

Hettiaratchi finished with the excellent figures of 6 for 43, but the choice of 'Man of the Final' by adjudicator and match referee Ashantha de Mel went to Vaas, one which no one would grudge.

Scores:

Colts 276 for 6 in 50 overs (D.P. Samaraweera 57, R.S. Kaluwitharana 70, J. Kulatunga 34, W.P.U.J.C. Vaas 41 n.o., E. Upashantha 27 n.o., Ruchira Perera 3 for 56)

SSC 216 in 44 overs (Upekha Fernando 42, M.S. Atapattu 42, A. Ranatunga 20, D.P.M. Jayewardene 40, S. Ranatunga 35, D. Hettiaratchi 6 for 43, S.I. Fernando 2 for 32).

Source :: Daily News (<https://www.lanka.net>)

WINNERS LIMITED OVER, RUNNERS UP PREMIER LEAGUE, 1998 - 99



Standing L to R: R. Logarajah, V. Pushpanathan, Krishnan Indika, Lasantha Prasad, Sajith Fernando, Bathiya Perera, Sujith Janaka, Ishara Amerasinghe, Eric Upashantha, Jeewantha Kulatunga, Monto Perera, Malinda Waranapura,

Dinuk Hettiaratchi, R. Balakrishnan, H. Dharmadasa.

Seated L to R: Romesh Kaluwitharne, Carlton Bernardus (coach), Nishantha Ranatunga, Trevor Rajaratnam, Chaminda Vaas (captain), Gamini Goonasena (president), Dulip Samaraweera (vice captain), K. Mathivanan, Dulip Liyanage, Upali Warnapura

Absent: Indika de Saram, Chaminda Mendis, S. Alexander

Courtesy of the Colts Cricket Club

Joyful news

About 2000 the chronicler hosted former classmate Sarath Abeysondera with whom he played a few second XI games at Royal College in the mid-sixties. Abeysondera is the chairman/Representative for Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) for the United Kingdom and Europe. He also owns a cricket ground at Leicester.

During the conversation had over a meal, Abeysondera remarked that the Colts had won the first division cricket premiership and had cricketers of the calibre of Vaas in the side. This was the first inkling the chronicler had that the Colts was no longer the club he imagined it to be. As the news sank in the chronicler asked to Abeysondera to repeat what he said, afraid that his leg was being pulled.

A triumphant end to the decade

The Colts were premiership runners up and champions in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 respectively. The club had truly cemented its reputation as a club that took itself seriously and was taken seriously by other clubs.

As far back as the seventies there were glimpses of what the club could achieve which players like Kumar Ramanathan leading the way. But consistency was lacking.

But in the nineties the club achieved the professionalism and self-belief that had eluded it for quite a while. This was the cricket culture that stalwarts like Douglas Lieversz and Trevor Jansz dreamed of establishing but whose hopes were eluding by the lack of resources and an ability to attract the best cricketers. Jansz always followed the progress of the club and the news filtering through regarding the club's cricketing achievements would have warmed the cockles of his heart. The club was finally now in the place that he and others wanted it to be several decades ago.

There is an unsung hero behind the club's success who only appears in one of the group photos featured in this chapter. He is Ranjit Samarasekera. He was a member of the 1962-63 side that narrowly lost the Sara trophy. He knew what the club could achieve with the right talent and attitude. He set out to create the right recruitment process and instil in players tapped from around the country the belief that their personal glory and the glory of the club were intertwined.

It was good that he was made first division captain in 1972. If he hadn't he probably have left the club in anger and denied the club his services as an administrator. As it turned out he and Nathanielsz were around to see the club finally come good and their devotion and loyalty rewarded.

Carlton Bernadus had taken over as coach from Samarasekera in 1997. Roy Dias took over as coach when Bernadus commenced a nine-year stint as the Bangladeshi under 19 coach. (Apparently the Club won the under 23 tourney in 1997-98 and the R. Premadasa trophy with Bernadus as coach. This needs to be clarified.)

PREMIER LEAGUE CRICKET CHAMPIONS, 1999 – 2000



L to R: Nilaxan Abeyratna, Eric Upashantha, Chaminda Mendis, Claude de Silva, Sajit Fernando, Kamal Ranjan, Dulip Samaraweera (captain), Suchitra Alexander, Lasantha Prasad, K. Mathivanan (sponsor), Dilraj Fernando, Sanjaya Atanayake, Jaminda Sigera, Jeewantha Kulatunga, Krishnan Indika, Ishara Amerasinghe, Sisira Kumara, Thusitha Pathirana.

Courtesy of the Colts Cricket Club

PREMIER LEAGUE CRICKET CHAMPIONS, 1999 – 2000, MALAYSIA TOURING PARTY



Standing L to R: K. Dharmadasa, Lasantha Prasad, Sisira Kumara, Krishnan Indika, Dulip Liyanage, Thushitha Pathirana, Eric Upashantha, Kamal Rajan, Sanjaya Attanayaka, Sujit Janaka, Jaminda Sigera, Sajit Fernando, Suchitra Alexander, Nilaxan Abeyratne, Nuwan Jayawardhana, Jeewantha Kulathunga, Sarath Liyanage, Diaraj Fernando

Seated L to R: Upali Warnapura (cricket secretary), Roy Dias (coach), Dulip Samaraweera (captain), K. Mathivanan (manager), Chaminda Mendis

Absent: Dinuk Hettiaratchi

Courtesy of the Colts Cricket Club

It is very gratifying to see Roy Dias returning to his old club as coach. If the club in the seventies had the camaraderie and resources it developed twenty years on he probably would never have left the club.

More information required

There must be many players and administrators of the Colts who collected news clippings and kept statistics on the games played in the nineties. This chapter needs such information to enhance it with analyses of individual performances.

It may be too much to expect yearly averages and scorebooks to turn up. But anecdotal information will come in very useful and can make a big difference to the quality of this account of the nineties, a very important decade in the history of the club.

Gamini Goonasena, now domiciled in Melbourne, was president of the club for the entire decade. He should consider writing his memoirs and providing a subjective account of developments at the club, both on and off the field.