

DARESSALAAM CRICKET GROUNDS & CRICKETERS



By Abdulrazak Fazal Updated: August 2020



The English Cricket Grounds are scenic and serene. Even our 'Gymkhana', 'Burhani' and 'Kinondoni' here in Dsm were enchanted cricket grounds with their serene surroundings. Recalling the past, we as spectators with our folding chairs would rush there for thrilling Saturday/Sunday cricket encounters.

One common feature of every cricket ground is its 'Score Board'. That reminds of one elderly 'Chacha' or 'Cricket Chacha' as we used to refer to him. The 'score board' would keep moving with the rapidity of a computer as runs piled up, wickets tumbled, and overs ascended to the climax. The man behind the scene was the aloof 'Chacha' who sadly at the end of the match after an exhausting day drifted away into oblivion and seclusion. Chacha's selfless and indefatigable service without any motivation or remuneration would always remain etched in the memory of local cricket lovers.

The ground that I loved most was 'Kinondoni'. Its surrounding was a tranquil site. The lush green ground, ample trees, patchy pavilion, spacious bar at the side and

right opposite there the 'Police Mess' and 'Railway Quarters'. Burhani's ground with its beautiful pavilion is still being well maintained. It belongs to the Bohoras who occasionally play friendly games and have built a mosque and hall adjacent to it. Also, the ground is now surrounded by a number of shops, offices and restaurants.

Dsm Gymkhana cricket ground now bears a different outlook. No more remains its openness and spaciousness. Dsm's commercial upsurge is amply evidenced by the skyscrapers in the background. In the past there would be drumbeats and trumpet blaring by spectators that provided a festive environment at the various grounds. During 'teatime' cups of tea and coffee made rounds, and platters of snacks and biting passed on to us sitting in a group. Cricket action led to heart beats, acclaim, criticism and even flaring of temper. The end or climax often meant nail biting finish. The elders still recall the memorable match at the Gymkhana on the occasion of HH The Aga Khan's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. HH Sultan Mohamed Shah himself was sitting right there inside the pavilion and then towards the end presented the trophy to the winning captain.

What comes to mind are the likes of Premji Vaghella, Lavingia, Mamda Kassam, the Kalyan brothers, Bhamji brothers, Ronaldson, FHR, Abdulkadar Makra, KT Karim, CD Patel, Alban Fernandez, Nazir Husain, Shashikant Patel, John Solanki, Vasant Tapu, Babu Chohan, Taher Amijee, Pranal Diwecha, Suresh Raval and several other veterans in action.

How could we ever forget Tanganyika's formidable opening pair of Praful Mehta and RD Patel with their prolific run scoring, Mohamedhusain Waliji's splendid bowling against Freddie Brown's MCC side, [Bashir Tejani](#) & [Mohamed Nathoo's](#) marathon partnership against the visiting English side at the Gymkhana ground, Amir Yusuf and [Yusuf Kabana's](#) astute captaincy enabling USC to reign the local cricket scene for more than two decades, Kulbirsingh Gupta's more than four decades of untiring service to Tanzanian cricket as a player, umpire, administrator, writer and above all grooming youths including local talent, [Sajad Lakha's](#) magic bowling spell including a hatrick against arch rivals AK Club at Burhani, [Amir Dedhar's](#) fiery bowling spell against the Zimbabwe team at Burhani, equally fiery attack at the same ground by Burhani's Adam Akberali to skittle out Union for a meager score, Shakir Sheraly and Alnasir Hasham's (Ilala) breathtaking fielding, Suru Patel and Kutbuddin Dossaji's whirlwind knocks, the forlorn figure of Shiraz Sumar on the boundary line at Kinondoni taking a spectacular catch to deprive Union of a victory and his last over onslaught in a Saturday game against Union at Burhani! Ah for those days of local cricket! Memories!

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