

DECCAN CHRONICLE, JULY 30, 2015

Nostalgic evening for Rovers

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JULY 29

Anecdotes were the order of the evening as Chemplast Sanmar, the company that runs the fabled Jolly Rovers CC, celebrated the golden jubilee of its association with cricket here on Wednesday. It was on July 29, 1966 that the club came under the wings of Chemplast and since then they have been synonymous with cricket in Tamil Nadu.

The event brought the past, present and the future of TN cricket together. The reminiscence speeches from ex-Jolly Rovers players such as P.K. Belliappa, K. Balaji and PS Moses took the audience to the days of yore. Rahul Dravid, Kris Srikkanth, W.V. Raman, T.A. Sekar, M. Vijay, Dinesh Karthik, L. Balaji, S. Badrinath, Bharat Arun and L. Sivaramakrishnan were some of the prominent names to grace the occasion.

N. Sankar, chairman of the group, brimmed with pride as he recalled how the club have been churning out quality cricketers. "We have been fortunate to have got some fantastic cricketers who have played with distinction for us and we couldn't have asked for more," said Sankar.

The Jolly Rovers batch of 1966-67 that won the Palayampatti Shield given for the TNCA first division champions were felicitated along with the cricketers who played for the country from the Rovers stable.



N. Sankar, chairman of the Sanmar group, with cricketers who played for the country from the Jolly Rovers stable.

— E.K. Sanjay

THE HINDU, JULY 30, 2015.

A jolly occasion for Rovers

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: At a pleasant function here on Wednesday, the Sanmar Group celebrated Jolly Rovers entering its 50th year under K.S. Narayanan and his son N. Sankar.

The evening at a city hotel was attended by a galaxy of cricket players from the past and present Rovers side.

Among the special guests was Indian batting legend Rahul Dravid, who is now the coach of the India 'A' side.

The team of 1966-67, the first victorious side from the post 1965 era of the Rovers, was honoured. Nostalgia was in the air.

Indian cricketers from the Rovers over the years, from T.A. Sekar to Murali Vijay, were given mementos.

Speaking at the event, Sanmar Group chairman Sankar said he could not forget the day — July 29, 1966 — when Rovers' then secretary V.A. Parthasarathy met his father Narayanan and re-

quested him to sponsor the team. It had been a rewarding journey since.

Talking about the long association with Rovers, Mr. Sankar said: "There is no commercial interest. It is only for the love of the game. In its first year with us, Rovers won the Raja of Palayampatti Shield. We continued to set high standards."

Mr. Sankar dwelt on former India wicketkeeper Bharat Reddy's immense contribution to the club as a player, captain and administrator. "His eye for spotting talent was astonishing," he said.

The part played by the late Parthasarathy as a tireless secretary who looked after the club's needs was acknowledged.

Wicketkeeper-batsman P.K. Belliappa, among the former giants of the club, spoke about the care taken by the Sanmar family to nurture Rovers. He said: "We were the only side then with a fantastic cricket kit."

N. Ram, chairman, Kasturi &

Sons Ltd., and a former Rovers cricketer, said, "I played in the pre-1966 era from 1963 to '65. S. Venkatraghavan was our top cricketer. We had Salim Durrani, a brilliant but moody all-rounder. My uncle S. Rangarajan, who ran the club then, was a first rate and fierce captain."

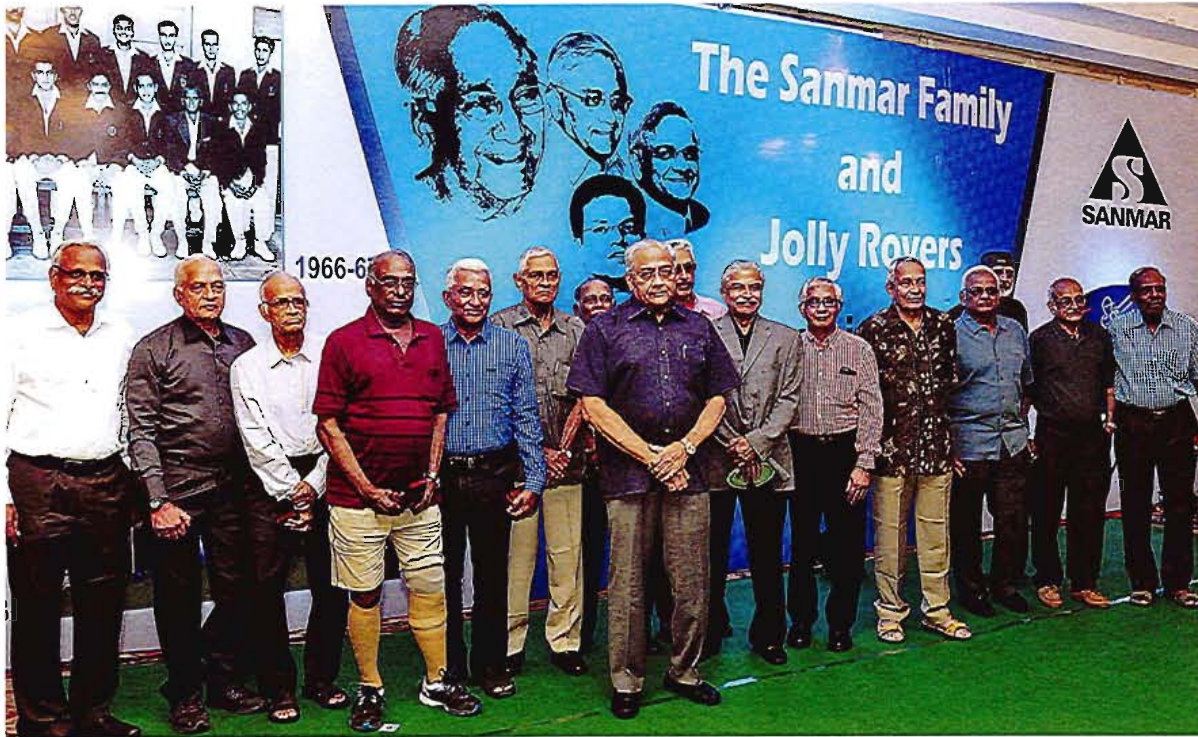
Mr. Ram congratulated the three generations of the Sanmar family for their "efficient, low-key, and almost self-effacing support and sponsorship of the team."

K. Balaji, Director, Kasturi & Sons Ltd., and former Rovers southpaw, lauded the Sanmar Group and highlighted Rovers' achievement in winning a string of trophies in diverse conditions.

Former Rovers batsman P. Moses talked about Bharat Reddy's invaluable role in the growth of the club.

The lovely IIT-Chemplast ground, the home of Rovers, was brought into sharp focus.

It was an evening when there were smiles all around.



Sanmar Group chairman N. Sankar with the triumphant side of 1966-67, the first Jolly Rovers team under the present management to win the Raja of Palayampatti Shield, at a function on Wednesday. - PHOTO: R. RAGU

TIMES OF INDIA, July 30, 2015.

50 and counting: Yesterday once more at Jolly Rovers gathering

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Chennai: It was a walk down memory lane as members who have been part of Jolly Rovers over the past five decades gathered under one roof to commemorate Sanmar Group's partnership with the team that entered its 50th year. N Sankar, chairman, Sanmar Group, felt the event brought back fond memories of an era that has seen Jolly Rovers progress from strength to strength, becoming one of the powerhouses on the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) first division league circuit. "We have been fortunate to have got some fantastic cricketers who have played with distinction for us and we couldn't have asked for more," said Sankar.

PK Bellappa, former state and Jolly Rovers captain, came up with some interesting anecdotes. "We not only had the best side at our disposal, but also boasted of fantastic kits as well. The bats that were provided to us during the 1960s and 70s



MOCK A GROUP



TOTAL RECALL: Rahul Dravid signs an autograph as KS Viswanathan looks on; (L) N Sankar with all the international players who have been part of Jolly Rovers

er fade away despite a hard day on the field," said Bellappa as the audience erupted in laughter.

PS Moses, another state cricketer to have emerged from JR's stable, said the team's performances saw a huge fillip once Bharath Reddy came into the pic-

ture.

"Bharath, who has been with the side since the early 80s, brought an aggressive attitude and has been instrumental in spotting many players who have gone on to play not just for JR but also for India. It will only be fair to label him as Sir Bharath Reddy. His service is on par with what Sir Alex Ferguson did for Manchester United," said Moses to a big round of applause.

The event saw many former players getting teary eyed as they met their former teammates after many years. "This was the sort of occasion I was waiting for. It makes me proud to say that I played for JR," said Rajagopal, trying his best to control his tears.

The evening saw the felicitation of cricketers who were part of the 1966-67 team which won the TNCA first division title, the year when Sanmar took over. That's not all. The players who represented JR and went on to play for India too were feted on the occasion.

were the envy of our rival teams," Bellappa recalled.

Sankar reminisced how KR Rajagopal, affectionately called Raja, would walk in just at the nick of time and go on

to score big. "He usually strolled in just before the start of the play. Raja would borrow a pad from someone, pick the bat from someone and score a scintillating century. He was such a joy to watch," San-

kar said.

K Bharadwaj, one of the prominent members in the side that Bellappa led, was labeled as the most well-dressed player. "The crease on his shirt will nev-

Heroes Feted in Jolly Good Evening

Express News Service

Chennai: Jolly Rovers, which has completed 50 years in the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association's senior division league, honoured its 1966 team that won the first division at a glittering function on Wednesday.

From PK Belliappa, former TN captain, to noted coach and Ranji player PK Dharmalingam, who were members of that team, were presented souvenirs. India captains K Srikkanth, Rahul Dravid, leg-spinner VV Kumar and India opener WV Raman were present on the occasion. It was a rare occasion as almost every Tamil Nadu player to have represented India gathered to celebrate the success of Jolly Rovers. Speakers mentioned the high standards the club has maintained over the years and its services to the game.

N Sankar, chairman of Sanmar Group, honoured the 1966 team and spoke of



Former players and officials being felicitated at a function of Jolly Rovers in the city on Wednesday | EXPRESS

the club's growth over the years. He also spoke of Sanmar Group's commitment to promote sports.

Current Test opener Murali Vijay, India's assistant coach B Arun, TA Sekhar, Bharath Reddy, AG Milkha Singh, L Sivaramakrishnan, M Venkatramana, L Balaji, S Badrinath, Dinesh Karthik, Piyush Chawla, Tinu Yohanan and Sujith Somasundar — who have all played for Jolly Rovers —

were present and honoured at the celebratory function attended by the city's cricketing fraternity.



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N Shankar (7th from right) with N Kumar (5th from right) and Vijay Shankar (6th right) with international stars of JRCC at the golden jubilee celebrations on Wednesday.

Golden Jubilee celebrations: Jolly Rovers row into half-century

S Thyagarajan

Nostalgia was the predominant sentiment at the congregation of cricketers, administrators, and corporate managers, past and present, amidst the celebratory ambience when Jolly Rovers Cricket Club entered into its golden jubilee at the Crown Plaza Hotel on Wednesday.

It was time and occasion for many to recall, recount and rejoice those halcyon days when league cricket, free of commercial concerns, provided enthralling fare to the thousands aficionados in this metropolis.

The life and times of a club surviving the vagaries of various phases of growth are only a handful. Judged against this assumption the era of Jolly Rovers as a prominent outfit in the league for five decades is commendable in more than one sense.

Its achievements can be termed as phenomenal; 18 times winner of the Palayampatti Shield, the emblem of city league cricket in 48 seasons, apart from the victories in The Hindu trophy, Buchi Babu Memorial, and various other tournaments, both in the state and outside.

This glorious saga would not have been possible but the unbroken sponsorship by the Sanmar Group. It is difficult to recall any other institu-

tion in the country to be associated with a club as the main sponsor for this length of time.

The Sanmar family deserves accolades from the sports community of Chennai. Quite deservedly, encomiums were showered by speakers on the Sanmar family, starting from the late, K.S.Narayanan (Nana to friends), N.Sankar, N.Kumar and Vijay Shankar, who are currently associated with the Sanmar Group.

Welcoming the distinguished gathering, N. Sankar narrated the sequence of his late father KSN, agreeing to sponsor Jolly Rovers without batting an eye-lid, when the offer was made on July 29, 1966, by the Club's Secretary V.A. Parthasarathy.

Since then, it has been a roller coaster ride for the team triumph following triumph in the first division league. Sankar dwelt upon the contributions made to JRCC by the top stars of that era. P.K.Belliappa, K.R.Rajagopal and Najam Hussain.

Sankar particularly referred to the constructive role played by the former Test cricketer and wicketkeeper, Bharath Reddy, who is part of the side for well over three decades now.

Sankar expressed his gratitude for all those who lent a helping hand in maintaining the image

and identity of JRCC over the years. He congratulated the TNCA as being the torch-bearer in conducting the league competitions in various sections with a professional touch.

Former State captain, P.K. Belliappa, recounted his experience with the Club and how honored he was to be part of the establishment where the cricketing ethos received enormous attention and appreciation. He complimented the Sanmar family for the abiding interest it took in providing the best of facilities for the players that was the envy of many other clubs then.

K.Balaji, Director, Kasturi & Sons, recounted the moments during his brief association with the Club as a player, while former Ranji star, Satwender Singh, spoke about the challenges he faced in playing against JRCC in various tournaments.

In a speech laced with humor, P.Moses, a former player underlined the professionalism of the club and highest standards of discipline maintained to earn the respect of one and all. He lauded the efforts of Bharath Reddy to creating a note of homogeneity in the team for decades.

Paying a rich tributes to the Sanmar family for its "efficient, low-key and almost self-effacing the support and sponsorship of the team," N.Ram,

Chairman, Kasturi & Sons, touched upon the times when he was part of the team and how they conquered the opponents through superior craft and planning. He also recalled the role of Salim Durrani, who represented the Club in the early Sixties, and that of his uncle, the late S. Rangarajan, (Director and Publisher of The Hindu) who was managing the Club with the late K.Balakrishna Rao of the Dasaprakash Group.

V.Ramnarayan, former player, and author, who is been part of the Sanmar Group and JRCC for decades, presented through slides those glorious moments in the history of the Club during the 50 years.

As many as 30 players have figured in International cricket from JRCC. And the list includes S.Venkatraghavan, Bharath Reddy, V.B.Chandrasekhar and the current star, Murali Vijay.

N.Sankar and N.Kumar presented mementoes to the players who were part of the first triumph in league in 1966 and also to the internationals from JRCC.

Vijay Shankar who is currently playing a leading role with the Club proposed a vote of thanks.

Former under 19 star, J.Ramdas, compered the program.

Truly, it turned out to be an evening to remember.

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