

The Johnian Dream Team of the 20th Century

By

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A little more than a year ago, at the turn of the 21st century many cricket writers and enthusiasts were drawing up their cricket teams of the 20th century, be it for Australia, England, Sri Lanka or any local or community cricket club. They were calling it their dream team and had drawn up their lists from players who had represented their particular team. When the Editor of the St John's College Old Boys Association (Victoria Branch) newsletter asked me to write an article for his paper, I thought it would be a good idea to select my dream team to represent St John's College, drawn from players who had appeared for our college in the 20th century. I am sure my list is not going to satisfy everyone who reads this article. In fact I am certain there will be disagreements if not controversies. I welcome dissension and hope sufficient interest will be created to make some readers to argue as to how the team could be improved; whom to drop and whom to include, giving their reasons. Please write in to the Editor with your views.

When I started on my work, little did I realise the enormity of the task of selecting only eleven men from a galaxy of stars with a wealth of talent. I had watched almost all of the cricket matches St John's played from 1948 to 1958 and quite a few in the sixties. Then again while working in Jaffna I had watched most of the matches from 1971-76 and from 1982-90. For the rest, I had to rely on reports and discussion with knowledgeable cricket lovers like E.M. Ponnudurai, Jimmy Rajaratnam, E.A. Champion, S.K. Mahalingam, C. Sooriyakumar all of whom had coached the college XI, and also from articles by Alex Thambirajah who used to cover the cricket season for some of the daily newspapers in Sri Lanka and who had taught at St John's College for more than a quarter of a century.

To make my task easier, I decided to make a value judgement. Even though St John's College had been playing cricket from the beginning of the 20th century, I decided that the standard would not have matured until the thirties. This automatically precluded the inclusion of Shanmugam who had played for the All Ceylon combined schools around 1914 or so. Similarly I felt that due to the unrest in Jaffna after 1983, boys could not give their time or talent towards cricket and some schools gave up the game altogether, thereby reducing the competitiveness. The lowering of the age limit during this period also contributed towards deteriorating standards and regrettably I have decided not to select anyone from this period.

It is natural for anyone selecting a team from players spread over a century, to view their own period with tinted glasses. So the bulk of the players in my dream XI are people whom I actually saw in action. Among those whom I had not seen, the following were worthy of serious consideration: - R.R. Scott who played in the late thirties and early forties, A. Canaganayagam,

R.S. Peter and Thiru Kadirgamar who appeared in the forties. I have also decided to omit players who played their best cricket after leaving St John's College and who cannot be included on the form they displayed while at St John's. C. Balakrishnan, the only Johnian to play cricket for Sri Lanka, scoring a fifty in his debut against Australia with bowlers of the calibre of McKenzie and Connolly in 1968 and who played with resounding success for the Ceylon University and Bloomfield therefore does not find a place in my team. Neither does J.B. Francis who went to Union College after playing for St John's College for one year and later captained the Army at Sara Trophy matches. C. JothiRavi is another who was a great success at Jaffna College after leaving St John's. M. Sivaratnam and J. Kanaganayagam learnt their cricket at St John's College, but played for Central! Unfortunately, none of them could be selected on their performances while they were at St John's.

Let me now get on to the selection itself. I will open with C. Sooriyakumar and T. Kadirgamar (a right and left hand combination). S.K. Mahalingam who coached St John's for about 25 years and saw players in action for another 25 years once said to me that in his opinion C. Sooriyakumar is the best bat St John's College produced. Statistics seem to bear this out. Sooriyakumar held the individual record score of 181 till it was recently broken a couple of years ago. He had 4 centuries to his credit and in the 1965 season totalled 614 runs and 599 runs in 1966 at an average of 85.6. He captained St John's and then went on to Captain the Tamil Union in Sara trophy cricket. After he turned forty he used to Captain the Jaffna Johnians (made up of old boys) and score heavily in organised matches against other clubs in Jaffna. I remember one innings of 90 odd not out he scored against a strong Army XI when he also withstood their strong bowling attack. Sooriyakumar was also a useful right arm medium pacer and a good field. Partnering him at the other end will be Thiru Kadirgamar. I saw him in action only in Old Boys vs. Present Boys matches but it was enough to see his class. A strongly built left-hander, Thiru could bowl fast to fast medium left hand swing with the new ball. He held the record score of 113 (together with R.R. Scott) in matches against our arch rivals Jaffna Central, which stood from 1947 till 1982. After leaving school, he joined the Police Department and played for them.

Against Kingswood College, played in Kandy in 1946, St John's was set to score 261 to win in 90 minutes. Kadirgamar and Reggie Jeyarajah opened the innings for SJC and thundered along to 175 in only an hour. Slaughtering everything that came against them. Ultimately SJC finished at 255 for 3 with Thiru making a polished 76. Mr Thambapillai, the Kingswood coach said Thiru was among the best batsmen in Ceylon schools at that time. Seeing the two six footers Thiru Kadirgamar and Sooriyakumar coming to open the innings would have demoralised any opposition. The others who came into contention to be considered as openers were D.J. Nathaniel (Capt. In 1950), C. Balakrishnan (already mentioned), Karuniyan Arulanantham and D. M. Ratnarajah, all past captains. But Sooriyakumar's and Kadirgamar's ability to bowl fast to fast medium (both having opened bowling also for SJC) together with their propensity for big scores swayed the decision in their favour.

The one down position is of great importance. The batsman should be able to face the new ball if a wicket falls early, one should be able to push the score along at a merry pace if the openers had blunted the attack. The ideal person for this is D. Canaganayagam who was normally an opener, but could tear an attack apart. In his last year, I think he went one or two wickets down. Canaganayagam was an elegant left-hander, the most attractive schoolboy cricketer I have watched. His 148 against Kingswood in 1951 and N. Surenkumar's 145 vs Central in 1990 are

two finest innings of appreciable size I have seen in school cricket. Both enabled SJC to win the matches by an innings. I remember Canaganayagam's straight driving, especially when he was going out to break R.R. Scott's record of 152 before an imminent declaration by SJC. He hit the Kingswood fast bowler over his head for two fours and was bowled the next ball trying a similar stroke. Surenkumar's innings was in the last match I was destined to watch in Jaffna. After a streaky stroke or two early in the innings, he batted as if in a dream. His drives and cuts, both square and late were exquisitely timed, beating third man, extra cover and deep cover repeatedly. In passing I must mention two other cameo innings, one of 58 by Canaganayagam in his last innings for SJC (Vs Central in 1953) and Prashanthan's 57 in the same innings as Surenkumar's vs Central. He came one down with the SJC score of 112 scored in 16 overs only. He laid about the Central attack with much gusto that his drives left them standing. Just before he got out, the Johnian score was 206 for 1 in only two hours of batting! Mind you this was in the Big Match! I will always treasure these memories and quote Wordsworth in appreciation of them: -

*"For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude."*

The two wickets down position is usually filled by the best batsman of the side, unless it happens that the best batsman is a specialist opener (eg: Victor Trumper, Len Hutton, Sunil Gavaskar). Three people come to my mind for the dream team – R.R. Scott, A. Canaganayagam and N. Vasanthan. I did not see any of them in action, but Jimmy Rajaratnam considers A. Canaganayagam the best of the Johnians he had seen during the first half of the century. He may not have seen R.R. Scott, I am not sure. But the fact that A. Canaganayagam left SJC and then played for St Joseph's in Colombo would suggest he might not have fully matured at SJC. Anyway, I will vote for R.R. Scott for the two down position.

He is probably the finest sportsman SJC produced. He captained SJC in cricket and football for 4 years from 1938-41. In athletics he came first in 440 yards and 880 yards at the Ceylon Public Schools meet. As a schoolboy he represented Sri Lanka against India and came 3rd in the 400 metres and helped Sri Lanka to win the 4 x 400 Metres relay. He scored 4 centuries for the college during a period when centuries in school matches were a rarity. His 156 stood as the SJC individual record for nearly 30 years and his 113 vs Central was the record score in the Big Match (along with Thiru Kadirgamar who also made 113 vs. Central) until it was broken in 1982.

The number 5 position should be filled by a batsman who could act as a sheet anchor in case of an early collapse. This is the position ably filled by stalwarts like Ken Barrington for England in the 1960's and by David Boon for Australia in recent times and by Steve Waugh now. I can't think of a better person to occupy this position than M.B.J. Tissainayagam. He was a batsman who scored consistently in his five years for SJC, with a top score of 142 against Christian College, Kotte. He had a strong nerve and rose to the occasion in "needle" matches. He never failed in the Big match except in his last innings against Central when a big score from him did not seem to matter much, SJC winning easily by an innings, with the match over within one hour on the second day. His main scores against Central were 84 and 96 when on both occasions a century eluded him. On the first occasion he hit his wicket after pulling a short ball to the

boundary and on the second he was out to a dubious LBW decision! In the event of a score, he will restore calm and stability to a shaky start by SJC. In addition to his batting, he was also a reliable slip fielder.

With the batting taken care of, I will go on with the selection of the bowlers, starting with the opening bowlers. The first of these is the easiest selection of the whole team. Ask anyone from SJC who had studied there during the second half of the century whom he considers the best bowler at SJC, there will be only one answer – S.K. Mahalingam. He was the epitome of what a fast bowler should be. Speed, accuracy and control, with variations of out and in swing were his forte. He had some amazing bowling figures, especially in 1953 with 8 for 6 and 6 for 3 as his best. In the first of these, it should have been 8 for 2 because an edged leg slip catch was not taken as the ball flew to the boundary. In the second SJC was playing Jaffna Hindu. The scores were very similar with a handful of runs separating the teams when Hindu went in for the last innings with about 130 or 140 to win – a very gettable target. But SK put a stop to their ambition with a display of superb controlled fast bowling to bundle them out for 16. I remember watching through binoculars and actually seeing the batsmen literally shivering in their boots! The odd part is that the other bowler or bowlers also must have performed decently, taking the other 4 wickets for the balance 13, but I can't remember who they were – so dominant was SK then. Once after taking 5 for 32 against a visiting Tamil Union side, Mahalingam asked C.T.A. Schaffter who at that time was the opening bowler for Ceylon, for some tips regarding fast bowling. Schaffter had replied there was nothing he could teach Mahalingam, as he had the full repertoire required by a fast bowler. Odd as it may sound, Mahalingam was even more a difficult bowler with the tennis ball. With the tennis ball he had a semi-circular run-up and delivered it somewhere around his right ear. The ball half way through its trajectory swerved out towards the slip and when it pitched broke back into the batsmen's legs like a venomous cobra spitting!! A most uncomfortable ball to face. SK in addition was a thrilling batsman to watch, with a very powerful drives on either side of the wicket and an occasional hoist over the boundary for six! His driving was so well timed and executed, that the ball seemed to accelerate on its way to the boundary. He had a century to his credit against Jaffna College, when some of the fielders complained in jest that when Mahalingam was batting, the boundary line seemed very close and the lunch interval too far! I hated bowling against him at practice for he aimed at landing the ball on the roof of the Principal's bungalow or on the games room tiles after clearing the mahogany trees! SK running up to bowl the first ball of an innings, amid the hush and expectation of the crowd is an abiding memory of those happy carefree days under a blazing Jaffna sun.

To partner Mahalingam with the new ball, I had to decide between R.S. Peter (Capt. In 1946) and S.S. Shanmugarajah who terrorised Jaffna schoolboy batsmen between 1951 and 1959. Peter was a great all round sportsman, but two opening bowlers for SJC (who shall remain nameless) told me (I never saw Peter in action) that Peter had a suspect action. So reluctantly he is overlooked for the position. Shanmugarajah was in addition a left-hander who bowled very fast and was a strong hitter. It is important to have at least one good hitter, pure and simple, as he can devastate any attack when in the mood. Once against Nalanda, Shanmugarajah opened his scoring with three sixers off the first 3 balls bowled to him. Small boys used to roar in anticipation when he went to the wicket, with his bat tucked under his huge blacksmith arms, like a toothpick. The Nalandians guessed what was coming and placed a strong outfield, but to no avail. Shanmugarajah not only cleared the ropes but also landed the ball on old park road and thence to the Old Park itself. At that time, the College presented anyone scoring 75 in a match

with a bat. Shanmugarajah went to about 70 (in this Nalanda match) when he decided to play safe and bat respectably! The inevitable happened. He soon got out for 74! But it is his bowling that is still talked about. He broke R.K.V. Premachandra's (Central's champion batsman) arm when he was on 90 and had to retire hurt.

Shanmugarajah was a genial giant who became a devil when provoked. I remember an over bowled by him at practice. Coach Mahalingam had called him an old woman for not bowling his fastest and gave him a new ball. The first thunderbolt took the outside edge of my bat and flew over slips for 4, thudding against the water tank base. The second ball swung into me and caught a painful blow on the inner left thigh, which made me limp for almost a week. The next one smashed into my off and middle stumps before I could lift the bat! S.S. Rajaratnam was next in. He was a good bat who later scored centuries for the Steel Corporation in Mercantile cricket. His first ball, a little short, flew past his bat, while S.S waved his bat airily. The next one made a mess of his middle stump, sending it flying and almost spearing the wicket keeper. I think this happened because after I was bowled, the stumps had not been firmly planted, resulting in the cartwheeling of the middle stump! Anyway, it was a glorious sight. The next person who came in, I think, if memory serves me right was Yogakumar. Shanmugarajah now thoroughly enjoying himself let fly a beamer, intentional or otherwise is not known. Yogakumar went sprawling on all fours in trying to avoid decapitation and ended up like a praying mantis, while all of us doubled up with laughter. As there was a match the next day, Mahalingam decided not to risk injury to anyone and took the bowler off! Shanmugarajah's best bowling performance was to take 5 for 10 and 4 for 14 in the Big match in 1958. He also took a hat trick against the Colombo schools, the last three wickets, enabling Jaffna schools to win.

Shanmugarajah's unpredictability would have been a perfect foil for Mahalingam who was very predictable and consistent. What a pair they would have made. In the one over at practice just described, it is regrettable to note that out of the 4 actors in that drama, I am the only one alive to tell the tale. After reading my article, I am sure some will regret even that!

In support of the opening bowlers, there are two medium to medium fast bowlers in Sooriyakumar and Kadirgamar. It is now the turn to select the spinners. SJC has been served with a variety of spinners, both left and right hand, but in my opinion and that of many others to whom I have spoken, the best off spinner and best leg spinner produced by the College are E.G. Thevanayagam and A.I. Somanader, respectively. During the 3 or 4 years they played for SJC (Thevanayagam from 1947-51 and Somanader 1958-60) they were unplayable in Jaffna school cricket and reaped rich harvests, including in the Big matches. Thevanayagam took 23 wickets against them in his last two matches and opened the bowling. Thevanayagam in addition was a good batsman with half centuries to his credit. He was also a superb slip fielder. Somanader also had great success against Central college, and bamboozled all who came up against him. I don't think either of them was mastered to any great extent during their school cricket career. What a combination they would have been, to come after the opening bowlers had done their work.

To support quality bowlers, it is very important a very reliable wicket keeper is there to create doubts in the minds of batsmen. SJC has been lucky that they have produced a number of great wicket keepers. The names that come readily to mind are M. Sebaratnam (1951-52), Raju Navaratnam (1954-56), V. Sivananthan (1957-59), R.C.S. Cooke (1960-61) and T. Thevapalan (1971-73) all of them capable batsmen in addition. Of these, I'd cast my vote to Sivananthan,

who at his best was unsurpassable. He used to keep against the speed of Shanmugarajah and the wiles of Somanader and was a tower of strength to them. I remember in a match I was elated at having bowled an opposing batsman, or so I thought, even though a little surprised that Sivananthan had appealed. I couldn't believe Siva had stumped the batsman and had been so quick I thought he had been bowled. He was that quick. It was the presence of Dr H.I.K. Fernando, which kept Siva out of Ceylon team, but Siva did play a few matches for the Board President's XI and also Sara Trophy cricket for the University and Nomads. He was a capable bat with a top score of 75 against Kingswood. I remember watching him play for a President's XI against a visiting Joe Lister's XI containing some international stars. The match was played at Peradeniya, I think in 1966 or 1967. Sivananthan scored a quick 20 odd not out, one stroke, a straight drive past the bowler Derek Underwood, bringing the house down. Even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer, not the least being the bowler himself!

The last position to be filled is a pivotal position, that of a genuine all-rounder, one who could play in this dream team either for his batting or bowling. SJC again has been blessed with quality all-rounders like R.S. Peter (1945-46), S.K. Mahalingam and his brother S.K. Paramalingam (both in the 1950's), E.G. Thevanayagam, M. Theivendra and his brother M. Surendra and D.J.N. Selvadurai all in the 1960's and K. Sanjeevan in the 1980's. Of these the first four were more bowlers than batsmen while the last named was more of a batsman. Theivendra and Surendra could have been selected either for their batting or bowling. Both were left handers who played with conspicuous success for the University teams after leaving SJC. But I think Theivendra was the better and more complete player. He could be considered to be within the best three in either batting or bowling at SJC in the second half of the 20th century. He played for SJC for 7 years, which is a record. He scored 3 centuries for them with a top score of 134 vs. Hindu College, in which match he also took 10 wickets. A left arm spinner, he took 70 wickets that season (1965) which I believe is still a record. It is good to remember that it was done in only 10 matches. Brian Close who coached schoolboy cricketers in Sri Lanka opined that Theivendra was one of the best in Ceylon. While captaining the combined University team in the Sara Trophy, Theivendra almost completed the coveted double of 50 wickets and 500 runs, missing it by just seven runs. Theivendra was a top class athlete, who won the Public schools titles at 110 metre hurdles and triple jump and came runner-up in the long jump. He was good enough to represent the College in football, which makes him a real all-rounder, especially when we remember he entered Medical College and passed out as a doctor! But it is for his cricket that he will be remembered at SJC.

So now the dream team to represent SJC in the 20th century is complete. In batting order it is as follows: (The years given against each player represents the period he played for SJC and should be correct to within a year or two).

1. *C. Sooriyakumar* *1964-67*
2. *T. Kadirgamar* *1945-47*
3. *D. Canaganayagam* *1950-53*
4. *R.R. Scott* *1937-41*
5. *M.B.J. Tissainayagam* *1954-58*
6. *M. Theivendra* *1961-67*
7. *E.G. Thevanayagam* *1948-51*
8. *S.K. Mahalingam* *1952-54*
9. *V. Sivananthan* *1957-59*

10. *S.S. Shanmugarajah* 1957-60
11. *A.I. Somanader* 1958-61

The team has everything a cricket side needs. The batting goes down to No. 10 with everyone of them scoring at least a fifty and seven of them centuries. It has right and left hand combinations, steady and cautious players as well as stroke makers and some lusty hitters. The bowling has fast, medium and spin (both off and leg break) with both right and left arm bowlers. In addition to the Sobers like quality of Theivendra, others like Kadirgamar, Sooriyakumar, Thevanayagam and Mahalingam were capable all-rounders. Everyone of the team is a safe fielder, with a combination of in field and out-field specialists.

If a twelfth man is to be selected, one does not have to search beyond N. Naveenan who played in 1971-72. He was the finest all round schoolboy fieldsman I have seen. At covers he was quick and had a fast return to the keeper. At short-leg he was incomparable. I remember a match against Jaffna College played at Vaddukoddai. It had been level pegging all the way through until Jaffna College started the last innings. Victory was possible for either side, but a draw seemed probable as time was of the essence. The Jaffna College openers played confidently and their supporters may have had hopes of a great victory when their opener played a perfectly legitimate leg glance off a fast bowler. The ball never was over 6 to 9 inches above the ground when Naveenan at short-leg dived full length to his right and brought off a miraculous catch! It was really an incredible catch, the best I have seen in a long career of cricket watching, even better than the one I saw Tony Lock took at short leg off a full blooded hook by Stanley Jayasinghe off the bowling of Ted Dexter. Naveenan's catch changed the complexion of the game, the bowlers being encouraged by that catch and running through the rest of the batting to give SJC a victory.

This dream Johnian team of the 20th century should be able to beat any other similar team from other Jaffna schools. Without recourse to statistics, I can safely say SJC has more wins against every other school there than any other school has over SJC, and that too by a comfortable margin. The fact that the first eight in the batting order had captained the College speaks for itself. Dr E.A. Champion in an article written for a Jaffna College souvenir, states inter alia, that the Captain of the St John's College team is their best player whereas the Captain of the Jaffna College team is their next popular player! The only three players not to Captain SJC in this team are the wicket keeper V. Sivananthan and the two bowlers Shanmugarajah and Somanader who were bowlers pure and simple and as such the hewers of stone and carriers of water of this batsmen's game and are not expected to entertain captaincy hopes! The fact that 8 of the team had been captains during their playing days confirms not only Dr Champion's observation, but also the quality of the side.

The question arises, who is to Captain this team. I suppose any of the eight (the first eight in the batting order) could have acquitted himself admirably as the skipper. Since only one has to be selected, I short-listed the possibles to five, namely Kadirgamar, Scott, Thevanayagam, Tissainayagam and Theivendra. My reason for this is that to captain this talented team, one should have a flair for leadership and also have an understanding of the psychology of the individual. Scott, Kadirgamar and Thevanayagam became leaders of men in their professions with the Police and Army, while Tissainayagam and Theivendra who both became doctors can be

assumed to have a thorough knowledge of human character and psychology. I had never seen Scott and Kadirgamar captaining a side and am nervous to make any judgement. I saw Thevanayagam captain the College most admirably. His side of 1951 was one of the best to represent SJC, but they lost the Big match by 7 runs, after winning all the other matches by an innings, including Kingswood. Years later, I met Thevanayagam and over drinks at the Army mess at Diyatalawa, our conversation turned to this match. Thevanayagam was even then inconsolable, blaming himself for over bowling. This is what happened in that pulsating match 50 years ago. SJC were favoured to win it easily and even agreed to play on the Jaffna Esplanade which is the home grounds for Jaffna Central, even though it was the turn of SJC to host the match (since the 1960's, the Big match has always been played at the Esplanade to enable the vast crowds to be accommodated). Central batting first were 47 for 7 with Thevanayagam having 6 for 20 or so. He was tiring but always looked like taking a wicket when the last 3 wickets took the score to 158, with Thevanayagam ending with figures of 6 for 47. SJC collapsed for 103, but struck back dismissing Central for 36, with Thevanayagam taking 6 for 12. With 92 to win, SJC was sitting pretty at teatime on the second day, with the score 70 for 4. But the Central fast bowlers Chanmugam and Rajasingam had other ideas. They bowled like Jupiter and Mars in conjunction with sustained speed and fire to bowl us out for 84, the last man being run out, not grounding his bat while running! I am certain, as certain as one can be on these things, that had we played the match again or on our grounds, we would have won by an innings. If only Thevanayagam had rested while the 8th wicket was building the score. If only well, to this day it is one of my life's regrets we lost the match.

But this story brings me to my point, which is that when a bowler captains a side, he tends to over bowl or under bowl himself. All other things being equal, it will be better for a batsman to Captain rather than one who will be called upon to bowl long spells. As Theivendra is also an important member of this team who will be asked to prove his worth as a bowler, it leaves Tissainayagam as the obvious choice as captain. He will bring to this position an unflappable temperament and good judgement. He is one of the very few who had captained SJC for two years in succession. Alex Thambyrajah, the doyen of sports writers who used to write for the daily newspapers of Sri Lanka about Jaffna sports, in an article for an SJC magazine covering his period as a student and teacher there, specially names Tissainayagam as one of the astute captains produced by the college. The 1965 cricket team led by Kanagadurai is generally considered the finest to have represented SJC. Results-wise there is no doubt about it. Of the 10 matches played, they won 9, including one over Royal College. The only match they did not win was a draw against Nalanda where time deprived them of it when chasing runs, finishing just 12 short with 4 wickets left. But Tissainayagam's 1958 side will give it a good run. This side too drew one match and won the rest. But they just scraped through by 1 wicket against Jaffna College. The draw was against Kingswood, which could have gone either way, with Kingswood having to make 7 more to win with their last man in. But the other not out batsman was their captain Maurice Fernando who had scored a century in the first innings. Maurice Fernando was elected the schoolboy cricketer of the year and schoolboy batsman of the year in the competition conducted by the Times of Ceylon for school cricket in Sri Lanka that year.

Out of the dream team, four members, namely Tissainayagam, Sivananthan, Shanmugarajah and Somanader were in the 1958 side. When you remember that Balakrishnan (who was later to play for Sri Lanka), Karuniyan Arulanantham and Paramalingam were also members in it, one has to be wary of not giving it pride of place. Anyway, Tissainayagam captained it with great flair and he

also captained the previous year without the loss of any match. It should also be taken into account that Shanmugarajah and Somanader in their first year of cricket did not have much cricket “savvy” and the captain had to set the field for them and keep a “fatherly” eye over them. Tissainayagam did this without much ado.

So Jega Tissainayagam is my choice to captain the SJC dream team of the 20th century! I am sure I will be accused of nepotism, but I swear I have not been swayed by any favouritism. If others do not believe it, so be it. Anyway, a little bit of nepotism is not a bad thing! Ask the Bandaranayakes!! I hope other readers will write to the Editor and send their views and suggestion to improve the team, if that is possible. I have enjoyed writing this article and am sure there will be an error or two, especially with the years in which the players appeared. These will be of minor importance. I am thankful for the opportunity of having watched most of these players in action, as well as their opponents from other schools. In the twilight of my life, I often run through some of these matches, and in my mind’s eye, I capture some of the magic moments like an exhilarating catch, or a swashbuckling innings or the ball sending the bails flying. It may be that in another 100 years, someone else will be selecting the dream team of the 21st century to play against my team. May I be there to see it! One could be certain the game will be played in the best traditions of cricket. **For Johnians always play the game!**