

ANTON, NAZ AND FRIENDS ENRICH BDCC

Written by on Ian Scholefield 23 January 2020

Players in Burwood District Cricket Club have come from a wide-ranging number of sources although the key stimuli predominantly have come from juniors, friends and families. In the past fifty years we have had two occasions which have produced an influential impetus to our club.

The 1970/71 season saw us add a third senior eleven for the first instance after 42 years of the club's existence. Several players joined us from St Stephens CC, Richmond which had disbanded. For memory one of our future Life Members, Bob Redwood, encouraged the initial group to join our ranks. Bob Naismith, Gary Davis, John Dellaca, Bill Grant and Colin Davis kicked off the flow and they all became great clubmen over long careers. They were the first of 15-20 players from St Stephens to boost our numbers.

Three years ago the Burras had declined to only one side from the peak of 22 in 1997/98 and the club's future was precarious. The Committee was looking for solutions when current First XI Captain (and previously in our junior ranks) Arjit Banerjee introduced a couple of acquaintances – Anton Martin and Narayanan (Naz) Ramakrishnan.



It was an appropriate choice as Anton and Naz were considering their future in the sport whilst contemplating how best they could apply their cricketing and professional nous to contribute greater to the sport. Both guys had developed their love of cricket through their Asian families who had a great passion for the sport.

Anton Martin was born in Melbourne to Sri Lankan Tamil parents who were health professionals (trained in England). Being of Tamil heritage, Anton's parents left their home country due to the Civil War and migrated to Australia in the early 1980s.

Being an only child Anton was continually exposed to cricket, whether it be watching on television, going to the MCG or listening to discussions amongst family and friends. Interestingly the family's favourites are the West Indian team with the likes of Clive Lloyd, Richie Richardson, Viv Richards, Andy Roberts and Michael Holding being to the fore. The Martin family initially lived in inner city Melbourne but soon moved to Greensborough where they built their first house. When he was aged only six Anton joined Riverside Cricket Club which runs a substantial junior development program. After seven seasons there he moved to Donvale CC as a result of the family re-locating to the area. Consecutive premierships in the Under 16's was a great debut there but his club career was curtailed by school commitments. At Ivanhoe Grammar School Anton skippered the second Eleven in 2002.

For a decade Anton drifted away from the sport due to studies in Accounting and Commerce at Latrobe University, commencing his working career at Chartered accounting firm BDO and completing his post-graduate Chartered Accountancy through the ICAA.

Narayanan (Naz) Ramakrishnan was born in Mumbai, India but came to Australia with his parents when he was 3 years old. His dad was an Aviation Engineer and was attracted by the skilled immigration policy in Australia. (He currently is employed by Boeing Australia which is the largest Boeing footprint outside USA). Initially the family lived in Reservoir before shifting to Mill Park. Naz was educated at Mill Park Primary School and Lalor North High School before ending with his final four years of schooling at Melbourne High School. Similar to Anton he undertook an Accounting and Commerce degree but studied at RMIT. On qualification Naz worked for a mid tier chartered accounting firm Moore Stephens and has since spent time at Telstra and is currently employed at IRESS, a global fintech company.

The Ramakrishnan family are fanatical cricket fans and at 8 years of age Naz followed his brother Venkat to Mill Park CC. After five seasons he dropped out as he had to choose between learning the violin and playing cricket, which were both scheduled on Saturday morning. Whilst the violin won out, once he went to Melbourne HS cricketing opportunities abounded. During his tertiary studies he donned the whites at Thomastown United Cricket Club. Work and friends soon became the priority in his life.

The flame re-newed - Like minds came together when Anton and Naz met through family friends in the mid-nineties. Eventually both guys decided that the best way of seeing their multitude of friends regularly was to form a cricket team. The Vic Stars CC was moulded in 2013 and played in Oakleigh East. Most were of Sri Lankan extraction but hadn't participated in competition for a long time. They were domiciled over a wide area such as Dandenong, Mill Park, Camberwell and Doncaster. Over two seasons they only won about five games but the comradery was fantastic.

Connections with other cricketing devotees at Victorian Cavaliers Sports Club in Clayton led to a merger between the two clubs and the resultant four teams participated in the South East Cricket Association (SECA). Boys from the Stars shone and they managed to reach the semi-finals in 2016/2017. The downside was the travel time to places like Berwick and Pakenham. This coincided with the call from the Burras' leadership and a meeting with the relevant brains trust. They were impressed with the professional attitude, a chance to be involved in plotting the direction and growth of the club, and opportunity to add value to this strategy.

Sixteen new players joined the green and gold ranks for the 2017/2018 season.

Anton and Naz took on the reins of the Second Eleven and made their mark by getting involved on the Committee. Both guys consolidated the team by adding solidarity to the batting line-up and mature leadership. Gautham Ratnakumar, Umasuthan Balasubramaniam, Branevan Shankumar and Andrew Rodrigues were the core of the batting whilst bowlers Karrtik Jeyakumar and the Ramakrishnan brothers (Naz and Venkat) chiseled out opposing batting. Finishing second after the home and away rounds they had a nail-biting victory over Eley Park to take out the premiership in H Grade.



Naz handed over the captaincy to Andrew Rodrigues for G Grade in 2018/2019. After an unbeaten season they stormed to back-to-back flags, this time thrashing East Burwood. Naz had a brilliant season, making a sensational unconquered 100 and taking 4/25 in the semi-final to be awarded the Don McLaine Trophy for the best individual on-ground performance for the club's season. He averaged an incredible 155.00 (See # below) with the bat to claim the batting trophy and was runner-up in the bowling. Anton suffered a finger injury which kept him on the bench for most of the season.



In the past two seasons Anton has stepped up to the Vice President mantle and Naz has become Treasurer. Both gentlemen are clearly focused on delivering future growth and success to Burwood District Cricket Club and we applaud them for their contributions to date and enthusiasm for the future.

Note - There has been 27 occasions where BDCC players have averaged over 100.00 for the season. The best was Cory Hall 425.00 in 1999/2000 for the Under 14 Saturday XI. The best senior average was 235.50 by Simon Dart in 1991/92 for the Men's sixths.