



GoodSport NEWS

S R I L A N K A O L Y M P I C W E E K L Y N E W S B U L L E T I N

NOC NEWS

Tennis - a game not only for the rich and spoilt



105th Sri Lanka Tennis Nationals
Sri Lanka Tennis Association
National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka



Infusing adrenalin to the National pool is commendable

From time immemorial, the hard courts at the Greenpath Junction has been a buzzing location with girls, boys, men and women of various ages walking around armed with their rackets; first as a keep-fit past time and then as a serious sport.

Then from time to time they manage to surface the talents akin to Arjun Fernando and Saranga Sangakkara who moved to the level with their artistry of racket wielding.

Many moons have passed since those feats and now President Iqbal Bin Issack's present responsibility is to live up to the status quo and then seek ways of enhancing fortunes.

Initially we asked the Tennis chief about the present state of the sport and how the game is progressing.

Issack explained, "The Tennis Association is the oldest national body in Sri Lanka.

"We are over one hundred years old and we celebrated our centenary a couple of years ago.

"I reckon it is the oldest association of any sport in Sri Lanka.

"Then talking on the present status of the game of tennis, we are in Davis Cup group II, Federation Cup group II and among the juniors, we are among the top 16 in Asia.

"Individually there is not much rankings but we have a lot of players in Asia.

"We conduct many tournaments in Sri Lanka with a calendar full of activity. The tournaments are conducted in all parts of the country and there are a lot of centres – twelve and we pick the players. From the players to those points, there is a lot of development happening in these areas."

Talking of twelve centres, we inquired as to how the twelve centres would help the game climb to the next level.

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Issack said, “In the outstations as I said before the twelve centres – they are in Batticaloa – we have put up three hard courts out up there, we have started in Trincomalee, Negombo, Kurunegala, Bandarawela and Kandy etc.

“What we do in these centres is that we have our co-ordinators whom we have put to look after the centres there and he visits all the schools in the area and he speaks to the schools in order to get them involved with the sport.

“In fact in the under ten age group – we have the annual under-10 tournament in Colombo and in that, we have over eight thousand children playing tennis today.”



Then speaking about the courts outside Colombo, Issack said that especially in the schools, there are a lot of centres being put up and that is very healthy for the game.

He said, “There the clubs are taking a leading role and we are looking to them to develop the game in those areas.”

GoodSport then inquired from Issack as to where international tennis is perched in Sri Lanka.

He replied, “This time Davis Cup is world group and there we played Paraguay around 8-9 months back – just before the outbreak of Covid -19, -

but internationally Tennis has been in a standstill since.

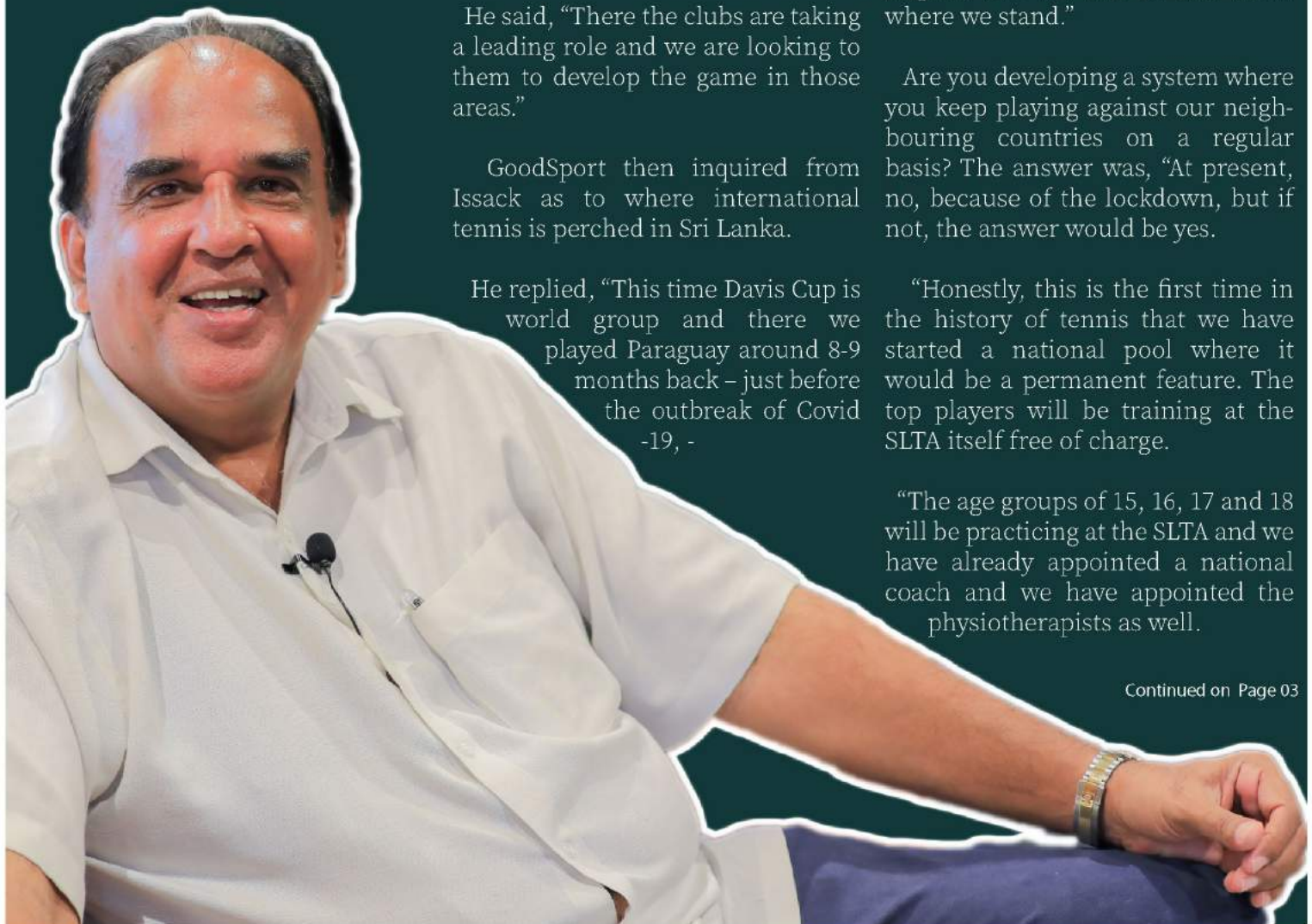
“Our next game is against Taiwan which is supposed to be played in August, but we still do not know where we stand.”

Are you developing a system where you keep playing against our neighbouring countries on a regular basis? The answer was, “At present, no, because of the lockdown, but if not, the answer would be yes.

“Honestly, this is the first time in the history of tennis that we have started a national pool where it would be a permanent feature. The top players will be training at the SLTA itself free of charge.

“The age groups of 15, 16, 17 and 18 will be practicing at the SLTA and we have already appointed a national coach and we have appointed the physiotherapists as well.

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“So we have mooted a scheme that the top players will be paid by the SLTA – their travelling, their entry fees and other sundry expenses.”

The next question was – what their future plans are and how they would like to see the game of Tennis in Sri Lanka five years hence.

He said, “We have made a start now and hopefully once all the things fall into place, within the next few months, our top most players will be travelling abroad with the national coach and there, they will be taking part in tournaments.



“This is the thing that was lacking – just a handful of players who could afford; they go out of the country and we are thankful for their parents for doing that – there are some kids being trained in Spain and some in the USA and one or two of them playing in Germany – all done with their parents’ personal funds.

Issack explained, “In Sri Lanka the young ones who are playing well break their flight for studies – O/L and A/L examinations; for instance, there was an instance Japan’s world ranked player Kei Nishikory was beaten by one of the junior players, yet, later Nishikory went on to become one of the best in the world while our player gave up halfway.

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“In the past Tennis has been an individual sport and everybody has been training on their own but what we thought was, there is a lot of financially disadvantaged kids also who find it difficult to cope.



“They reach the top but they give it all up because the sustenance is difficult. So, we thought that the best thing is to have a national pool with everything looked after.

“But, there are a lot of others who cannot afford to do so and that is why we have started this programme and the national scheme will be – which we have done a couple of times before – just for Davis Cup – but, that is too short.”

“That is the period that the players peak in tennis but they let go because of studies. The other reason is Tennis is a very expensive game to indulge in. Nonetheless, we do produce world class players in wheelchair tennis. We have twelve players who are ranked in the world today and a few of them are in the top 50s and the 60s.”

“Another scheme that we have started is for the same reasons above; we will identify players from outstations, who need support who give up the game at the age of 13-14 for the want of funds.

The final salvo was – though the game is over one hundred years old, players with world rankings have been more than rare – for instance our neighbouring country, the situation differs.



Cricket First Sport to Announce Qualifiers for Commonwealth Games

Australia, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa and a country from the West Indies join England in qualifying for Birmingham 2022; Qualifier to determine final participants

Cricket is the first discipline to announce qualifying teams for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games as the sport makes a landmark re-entry to the prestigious multi-sport event scheduled from 28 July to 8 August next year.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) made the announcement as women's cricket features in the Games for the first time in 22 editions and cricket for only the second time ever, the first occasion being a men's ODI competition in Kuala Lumpur in 1998, which was won by South Africa.

The six qualifiers who join home team England in the eight-team Twenty20 competition are Australia, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa and a country from the West Indies.

They have secured qualification as a result of their standings in the MRF Tyres ICC Women's T20I Team Rankings on 1 April 2021.

As per the qualification process, the winner of a designated Qualifying event will determine which country from the Caribbean region gets to participate as athletes will be representing their individual countries and not the West Indies as they would at ICC events.

The last participating team will be decided through a Qualifying tournament to be held by 31 January 2022, details of which will be announced in due course.

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will see 4,500 athletes from 72 nations and territories compete across 11 spectacular days of sport.

The Commonwealth Games cricket tournament will take place at the iconic Edgbaston Stadium, with tickets set to go on sale later this year.

Commonwealth Games Federation President Dame Louise Martin: "It is an exciting milestone to be announcing the first teams to qualify for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Cricket is a sport that is synonymous with the Commonwealth and we are so excited to have it back in the Games for the first time since the men's competition at Kuala Lumpur 1998.

"The debut of women's T20 cricket will be an historic moment for Commonwealth Sport and a wonderful showcase for women's sport across the world.

Congratulations to the teams that have now booked their spot to compete at the iconic Edgbaston Stadium for what I am certain will be an unforgettable tournament."

ICC Acting Chief Executive Geoff Allardice: "We are incredibly proud and excited to be part of Birmingham 2022 and it is a fantastic opportunity for us to continue to grow the women's game globally.



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“We are committed to maintaining the momentum that saw 86,174 fans packed into the Melbourne Cricket Ground for the final of the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup last year and Birmingham 2022 gives us another global stage on which to showcase the women’s game.

“On behalf of the ICC and its Members, I thank the Commonwealth Games Federation for their support and look forward to seeing some superb cricket at Edgbaston.”

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur: “It’s great to be confirmed a place in the Commonwealth Games.

“We are raring to go, confident of doing well after having made the final of the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup in Australia last year.

“It is an awesome opportunity for both the women’s game and cricket to make a mark at the prestigious multi-discipline Games and we hope to return with loads of good memories.”

England captain Heather Knight: “We’re really excited about hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2022 and it offers a big opportunity for women’s cricket, both in England and Wales and around the world.

“With direct entry into the competition confirmed, we’re one step closer to being on the pitch in Birmingham, and the prospect of potentially winning a medal is something that will be at the back of our minds across the next 12 months.

“It’s going to be a fantastic competition, a real chance to showcase the women’s game to a huge audience and it’s one we’re thrilled to be taking part in.”

South Africa captain Sune Luus: “Participating in the Commonwealth Games will be an awesome experience for the teams and a tremendous opportunity to take cricket to new audiences.

“We have been constantly improving as a side and will go into the event hoping to emulate our men’s team, which won gold the only previous time cricket featured in the Games.”

QUALIFIED
CRICKET T20
BIRMINGHAM 2022 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

ENGLAND	NEW ZEALAND	INDIA
AUSTRALIA	SOUTH AFRICA	PAKISTAN
WEST INDIES ONE COUNTRY FOLLOWING A QUALIFICATION TOURNAMENT		

commonwealth sport | ICC



First Virtual Olympic Solidarity Sport Administrators course concluded

The Olympic Solidarity's first sport administrator's course for the year 2021 was conducted by the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka from 22 – 25 April 2021 on a virtual basis.

Due to the prevailing uncertain pandemic situation, NOC Sri Lanka planned again to organise the course via Zoom, there 29 candidates representing National Sport Federations, Ministry of Education, schools, Universities, Sri Lanka Army, Sri Lanka Navy, Sri Lanka Air Force and sports institutions were selected to follow this course.



The four-day course consisted of five sessions in a total of 15 hours of online delivery.

During the delivery of the course, participants were involved in many interactive discussions especially in sharing their experience and ideas.

and management were covered by the course directors.

This time, six course directors comprising of three National Course Directors - Mr. B.L.H. Perera, Group Captain Nalin De Silva and Mrs. Olivia Gamage and Provisional National Course Directors - Dr. Rear Admiral Shemal Fernando, Major General Dampath Fernando and Mr. Gobinath Sivarajah, conducted the course.

In addition, course directors did panel discussions on various topics from the Manual.

Moreover, after finishing the course, all participants were issued with a Workbook and a Question Bank consisting of 50 multiple-choice questions, which are solely produced by the NOC Sri Lanka to encourage the participants to go through the Manual and share their proposals in various spectrum in the sport field.

from five major sections such as principles, structure and leadership of the Olympic movement; the games; athletes at the heart of the Olympic movement; promoting the Olympic values and sport;

