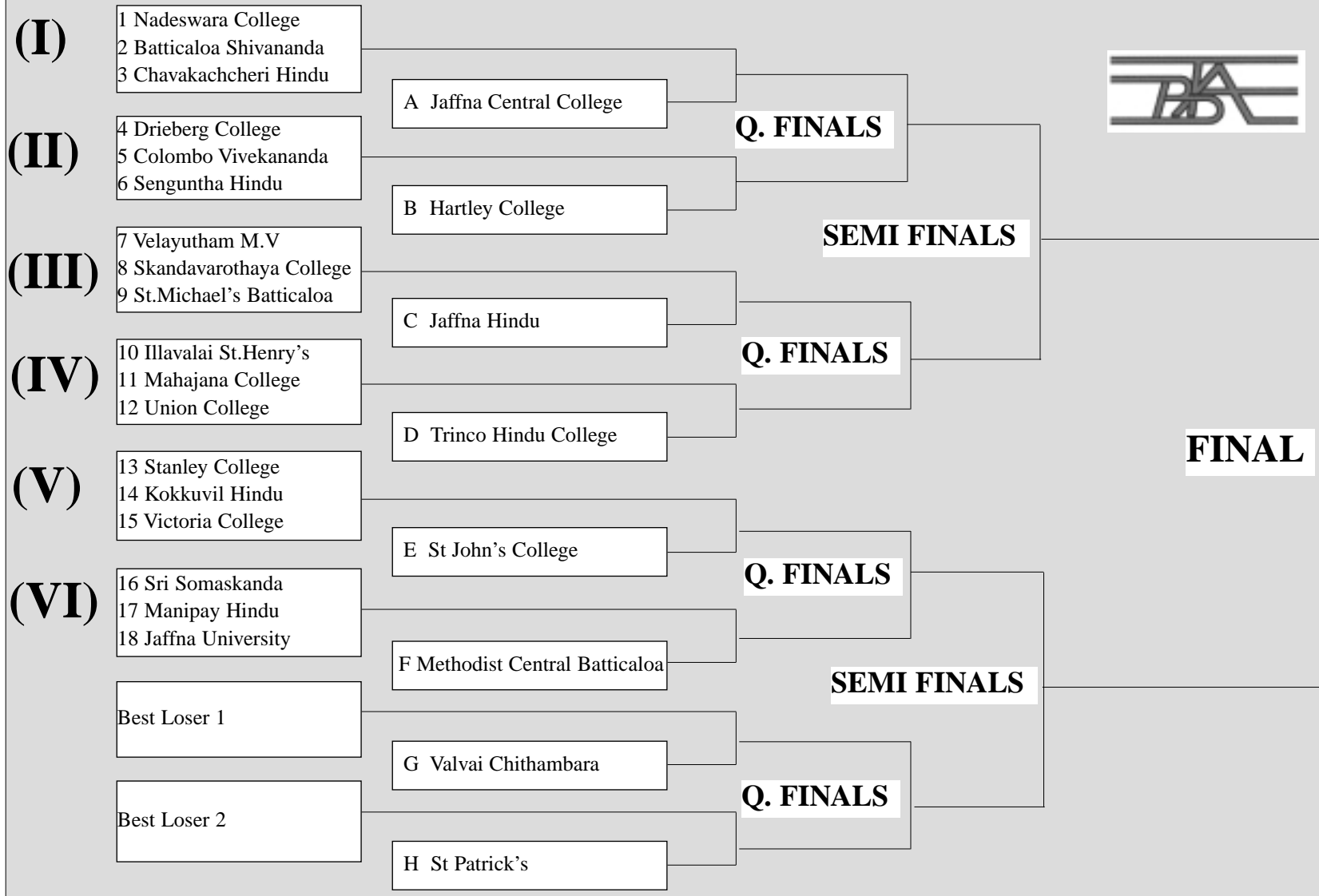


TAMIL SPORTS FESTIVAL 2001

Following the draw last week for the cricket tournament being hosted by the British Tamils Association at Norman Park, Bromley on July 29, the resultant groups are as below. To provide sufficient competition at quarter final level, the best runner up from each group will also go through.



Over five thousand people from Britain's expatriate Tamil community headed for the Norfolk town of Little Walsingham in an annual pilgrimage Sunday before last. A day of prayers and reflection began at midday with the procession of the Lady of Walsingham. The worshippers then gathered in the front courtyard of Our Lady of Walsingham shrine (pictured) to listen to prayers, conducted mainly in Tamil. Two collections were made at the end of the mass, one for the church itself and the other for the four Tamil dioceses of Jaffna, Trincomalee, Mannar and Batticaloa. The huge gathering then had lunch on the greens of the church. A benediction ceremony followed at four in the afternoon.



The launch of 'Yaham', a compilation of poems written by Eelam Tamil poet Mullai Amuthan, was held on 14 July in East Ham, London. The launch was organised by the 'Katraveli' magazine. An exhibition of thousands of Tamils books and others written by Tamil authors preceded the launch.

A decade of cricket by Victoria's Tamils

VICTORIAN Tamils Cricket Club, which is one of the Premier Tamil Cricket Clubs in Australia, celebrated its 11th anniversary with a Dinner and Presentation Night recently in Melbourne, Australia.

The President of the Club, Sanmuga, a former Tamils Union and Jaffna College cricketer, in his welcome address stressed the need for community support to take the club into the next decade. He said cricket had opened the door and given Tamils an opportunity to step into the unknown horizon of the antipodes and thereby boosting confidence and morale in the daily walk of life.

He further said this tradition would continue as the flames of love and goodwill

coupled with great sportsmanship enliven the spirit of this great game.

The club affectionately known as the "Vic Tamils" by the wider community for its on and off field feats also used the occasion to recognise the outstanding performances during the 2000-01 cricket season.

The prestigious "Cricketer of the Year" trophy was awarded to John Premachandran exCentra-lite and Jaffna school's pace bowler, S.Mahendrarajah (former Jaffna Hindu soccer and Katubedde sports) was honoured with life membership for his vision in developing the youth as well as for outstanding contributions on and off the field over the years.

In a later interview the

club's Manager N.Sriskanandarajah, a talented cricketer affectionately called as "Cricketer Sri" said the juniors need special mention and should be congratulated for featuring in the grand finals of the YCW competition and being worthy runner ups. Sri further commented that he is looking forward to building on the club's successes. The club has focussed its attention in developing the "Junior Cricket Program" with the fervent hope that in the near future representatives from our community will grace at national level, he said. The club was also determined to widen the club activities in other sports for the benefit of the community, especially for ladies and girls, he added.

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Central outgun St. John's at Northwickpark

ANYONE who has ever been to a St.John's vs. Central cricket game in Jaffna will know that this is not a fixture that is taken lightly by either side. As a result of years of intense rivalry, it is inevitably a very tense affair and the pursuit of success often pushes the players to their absolute limit. In recent years, old boys of both sides have successfully managed to revive the fixture, which now takes place annually in London. And as one would expect, much of the old rivalry and competitive spirit have continued to be strong features of the games.

However, the event is no longer just restricted to a single cricket game. Played in parallel to the main game is a friendly over 40's Old boys cricket tournament involving the same teams as well as a netball tournament for the girls. Traditional foods, snacks and music are as always available in abundance and, weather permitting; the whole family is treated to a fun day out.

Last Saturday, the eleventh annual fixture took place at Northwick Park in North London. Once the early drizzle had cleared away, the scene was set for what promised to be a close encounter. Having lost the game the previous 2 years, the St.John's players in par-

ticular were eager to reverse the tide and regain some pride.

Having won the toss and elected to bat, the Central boys made a rather laborious start, restricted somewhat by some accurate and aggressive bowling from the St.John's openers. They lost a wicket along the way but soon found themselves in some real trouble when Raguram came on as first change. Using intelligent variation of pace and flight and aided by movement off the seam in both directions, he restricted the batsmen from making any significant impression on the scoreboard during his seven over spell.

However, the tempo of the game began to change when the Central skipper Satish came to the crease. Right from the outset he made his intentions quite clear and when he dispatched one of the first few balls that he received for a huge six way over the boundary line, the signs were ominous for St. Johns. With good support from his partner Kala at the other end, the pair slowly took control and began to build a commanding total.

By the time both batsmen had been removed, in Kala's case after having scored a brilliant 50, the damage had already been done. Helped

by a late flurry of runs from the lower order batsmen, Central's final total of 185 in 35 overs was always going to be a challenging total. As the two teams set off for tea between the innings, the heavy atmosphere in the St. John's camp was clear indication of the mammoth task ahead of them.

Things began to take a turn for the worse when it was announced that the Mutton rolls and vadai had run out, and since the replenishments were not going to arrive on time, the St. John's boys had to go into bat on empty stomachs. Comments from certain quarters that this might help the boys to run better between the wickets did not go down too well either.

Having made an unexpectedly bright start, St. John's soon found themselves in more familiar territory when three wickets fell in quick succession. From here it was always going to be an uphill struggle but when they also lost the wicket of their most prominent batsmen, Sanjeevan, rather cheaply, the St. John's side knew that the writing was on the wall.

Their tail enders offered little resistance, constrained in fairness by some high quality spin bowling from Central and the proceeding for the day ended in rather

anticlimactic fashion with the Johnians losing all their wickets having barely reached the hundred mark.

So once again the St. John's boys were left to reflect on their failings whilst the Central side were able to gloat about their supremacy. Three victories in succession, each time by a considerable margin is a testament to the strength of the Central side and it is going to take something special from St. John's to get one over on them in the near future.

On a more positive note for Johnians supporters, the over 40s old boys performed significantly better than their younger counterparts and were the victors of their tournament. The exhibition netball tournament was won by Chundukuli girls school, the sister school, of St' Johns college.

Overall, the events of the day were very well organized and blessed with excellent weather, the players and spectators alike were able to enjoy a great day's sports and entertainment. The venue for next year is at present undecided but plans are in the pipeline to build on the success of this year and make the event next year an even bigger affair. Watch this space for more information.

Suicide shocks Canada Tamil's

SHE LAID the scroll of papers in front of the photo of her dead husband with a simple statement in Tamil, "Do you want me to come?" In the bedroom of the 32-year old Yaso Mahendran's suburban Scarborough, Toronto, home, her relatives found funeral clothes laid on the bed: a sari, and formal attire for her little girl Shiyami, 5 and boy Sangeeve, 3.

According to Yaso's relatives, these were the clothes they wore last year when Yaso's husband, Mahendran Thiagarajah, died in an

accident. He was 42. She has been distraught since then.

The police found her semi-conscious body, along with bodies of her two children, in the trunk of a car. Yaso is recovering in a local hospital, under police watch. She obviously tried to commit suicide and take her two children with her, the police said.

According to her cousin Tamesh Thankaraja, the suicide letter said, "I'm going crazy and there will be nobody to look after the kids". He added that the letter said that no one was to

blame.

Along with this letter, the relatives also found Yaso's signature on three cheques for thousands of dollar made out to the Hospital for Sick Children and a local Tamil community group.

They also found some cash reportedly about \$200,000 in all in a brown envelope on the bed. The envelope also contained cash marked for funeral expenses, Thankaraja said. He and the other relatives found these things on July 17 when they went to her home. Her relatives said that she had been

distraught since her husband died in a fatal fall from a shelving rack at the furniture factory where he worked.

"She couldn't sleep at night," said another relative Yogeswaran Thiagarajah. "We gave her a lot of support, but there was nothing we could do," he added.

An autopsy on both the children is yet to be conducted to determine the cause of their death. Meanwhile, the police said that such a crime seldom happens in Canada. (India Abroad News Service)

An invitation to disabled Tamil refugees and asylum seekers

Are you a Tamil refugee or asylum seeker ?
Are you physically disabled or visually impaired?
Do you live in England, Scotland or Wales?
Would you like to tell your story?

If yes, the 'Disabled Refugees in Britain' research project team would like to talk to you about your experiences. Everything you tell the team will be kept confidential and you can choose to talk to either a male or female interviewer in Tamil or English.

For further information please contact Dr Keri Roberts on 01904 433608 or kr5@york.ac.uk She will arrange for a bi-lingual interviewer to contact you to explain more about the research.

The Disabled Refugees in Britain research project is funded by the National Lottery Charities Board and Joseph Rowntree Foundations and aims to highlight the needs and experiences of disabled refugees and asylum seekers living in Britain.