

FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS ...

Philip Purefoy Sandford, the second Headmaster at DHS, attempted to introduce Soccer, Tennis and Cricket on the small piece of ground at the School when it was situated in town at the Bayside.

There was very little interest but the boys played impromptu games of soccer on the sandbank at the Bay when the tide was out.

When the School moved to St Thomas Road, on the south side of the red brick school building the ground was semi-cleared of bush and was fairly level. This was where boys' sport was introduced and cricket games were played here from 1900.

Top Field, as it was known, is now called Sandford Field – Sandford never set eyes on the new School up on the Berea as he left South Africa eight years before the new School's existence, never to return to Durban. How amazing it is, that since his early efforts to introduce cricket to School, DHS up until today, has produced more international cricket players than any other school in the world, the tally being 30.

Vic Robins was selected to play for South Africa in 1927 against England. While still a schoolboy at DHS involved in a junior game on Top Field, he hit the ball firmly into a thorn tree in the field of play near the boundary. He and his partner proceeded to run – the fielding side protested as the batsmen crossed six times with no intention of stopping. The fielders declared the ball lost. However, the batsmen (still on the run), and their team mates pointed out the ball was not lost as it could clearly be seen firmly imbedded in the thorn tree. It was, therefore, not lost. Vic and his partner, it is alleged, collapsed exhausted after completing 44 runs off one ball. This feat has not been beaten. Sandford is a small field and the scoring shots bring in singles, fours and sixes – twos are like hens teeth. The junior sides, the under 13 in the days gone by, and now the under 14, soon learn to call decisively at the crease. This ground was the 'cradle' for our young players – and in 1997 yet another fine team 'did their time' at this venue.

Alan Norton was the 1997 Under 14 A coach and he and his team saw out a most rewarding season. The DPHS motto adapted from the Town of Durban's Coat of Arms, 'From small beginnings better fortune follows,' rings true. (Not a city at the time of the introduction of the coat of arms.)

Hashim Amla, Imraan Khan and Nicholas Compton featured in the Under 14 1997 team photograph. Hashim and Imraan were later to play in Alan Norton's DHS 1st team and also in his Pirates Kismet Club side. Nicholas Compton, our latest DHS old boy international has been selected to play for England which tours India later his year.

So here in this photograph we have three international stars who started their cricket careers here at DHS on Sandford Field.

J.J. Oddy

Archivist.



Imraan Khan standing third from left, Nicholas Compton seated first from left
Hashim Amla seated second from the right.