

EXHIBITION GAME 1981

The opening paragraphs in Sean Pender's column in The Irish Times and David Faiers in The Irish Independent on 16th May 1981 are almost identical: Des Cashell, President of the Irish Cricket Union had assembled a star studded XI to play a Malahide XI to mark the opening of the extended and renovated grounds in Malahide including a new international standard cricket square.

In all the two teams included 12 current (or future) Irish internationals, two Indian Test players, the captain of Jamaica and seven others most of whom were interprovincial players.

The then current captain of the Irish team Dermott Monteith led the ICU President's XI while Gerry O'Brien was skipper of Malahide. Later on in the season left arm spinner Monteith was recruited by Middlesex as a temporary replacement for English spinners Edmonds and Emburey who were on England duty.



1981 Malahide Cricket Club v ICU President's XI
Official opening of extended and renovated ground including new square
b/r: JMcCleery Patron MCC, PHughes Clontarf, CHarte Bangor, RMoan Slon Mills, DKane Ballymena, MTucker CYMS, PSharma Instonians, BWGilmore MCC, PDury Nottingham, AGoodrich Ballymena, A Hughes MCC, JMorgan MCC, RShaw MCC, IAnderson Waringstown, CDavis YMCA, CWolfe MCC, JWright Hon Sec MCC f/r: BRao Strabane, TONeill MCC, BOBrien MCC, ASmith Pembroke, DMonteith Lisburn capt, ERDexter England, DCashell President ICU, GOBrien MCC capt, EMDermott Clontarf, BJGilmore MCC

Bobby Rao and Partha Sharma were both former Indian Test players and were among the first wave of professionals in Ireland, playing at Strabane and Instonians respectively. Rao subsequently qualified and played for Ireland. Marlon Tucker was professional at Dublin CYMS and was later to become captain of Jamaica's all conquering Red Stripe team.

Probably without exception all 22 players (bar Peter Dury) had played the day before in local domestic cricket across the island and then travelled distances to play in the exhibition game in Malahide on the Sunday.

Peter Dury who turned out for the Village was recognised in England as the foremost authority on wickets and who with his assistant Colin Dines was in charge of the practical aspects in the laying of Malahide's new playing square.

Renowned English Test batsman and Captain Ted Dexter was guest of honour at the match.

Unfortunately, "Man proposes...". The Irish Times reported the following Monday "Rain proved a big spoilsport for Malahide's opening of their extended and renovated ground yesterday. In between numerous stoppages for rain Dermott Monteith's international XI scored 50 for 3 before eventually a permanent halt was called to proceedings." Liam Keegan and Sean Moore were the umpires.

The first senior men's international in the renovated Malahide ground was in 1984 v Wales. There followed a number of fixtures including v Sussex 1987, Worcestershire 1988 and Middlesex 1992.

Brian Gilmore 2024