



## **131<sup>st</sup> Battle of the Blues, powered by Etisalat**

It is around this time of year that excitement overwhelms Royalists and Thomians all around the world, as the eagerly anticipated 'Battle of The Blues' takes Colombo by storm. Now in its 131<sup>st</sup> year, the annual Royal Thomian Cricket encounter, the oldest encounter in the world will be played on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 at the Sinhalese Sports Club Grounds. This most looked forward to sporting and social event is a day reserved and revered by present and past students of two of the most prestigious schools in Sri Lanka; Royal College and St. Thomas's College. It is a fast, fierce and furious encounter of the world's second oldest game - but always engaged in with the true spirit of gentleman-ship. It is with this spirit of things that International Telecom Giant Etisalat, now in Sri Lanka, embraces the opportunity to be exclusive sponsor for this legendary event.

The announcement of Etisalat's inaugural sports sponsorship in Sri Lanka was made at a press conference, where the much looked-forward-to cricket event will take off with all the traditional fanfare. Royalists and Thomians young and old will stand together and sing their school anthems at the opening ceremony of the 131<sup>st</sup> extravaganza at SSC Grounds on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010. Fourth year coloursman and all rounder Bhanuka Rajapaksa will lead the Royalists while 4<sup>th</sup> year coloursman Dinesh Walpita captains the Thomian outfit. Both institutions which have brilliant players among the first XI pool are yet to select their final squad.

Etisalat Lanka CEO, Dumindra Ratnayaka said, "We are proud to be part of the oldest uninterrupted inter school cricket encounter played in the world-it is not simply a cricket match but a coming together of two great institutions which has nourished the culture and traditions of a generation. We at Etisalat believe in

team spirit egged on by healthy competition and this encounter epitomizes the culture we endorse.” He added, “Etisalat is delighted at this opportunity and will continue to passionately support events of this nature, which stands prominent in the heart of our society.”

Chairman of the Royal Thomian Match Organizing Committee 2010, Akmal Sathuk while thanking Etisalat, said, “We are happy to have obtained this sponsorship which will contribute enormously to the development of sports at both schools while enabling the usual traditions and camaraderie that goes with the match and which makes it legendary.”

Principal of Royal College, Upali Gunasekera while expressing his appreciation, added that this was a special year for Royal College as it celebrates its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary, “The 131st three day ‘Battle of the Blues’ for the D.S Senanayake Challenge Shield and the 35th One day ‘Mustangs Trophy’ encounters this year are also of special significance as it is in the 175<sup>th</sup> year. We are expecting many old boys coming down from overseas to witness these matches. We are also happy to welcome our new partner-‘ Etisalat’ as the Principal Sponsor of both matches”.

Warden St. Thomas' College, Rev. John C Puddefoot endorsed the sentiments expressed. “It is a great pleasure to be embarking on a new partnership with Etisalat as principal sponsor of the Royal-Thomian matches for 2010 to 2012. These are the most eagerly-awaited cricket matches in the calendar which attract worldwide interest and huge local support. We look forward to a keenly-fought contest which will show off the best aspects of both schools and provide Etisalat with a worthy showcase for its presence in the communications market”

Two fierce teams, a crowd of cheering fans, a gentleman’s game of cricket and a charged atmosphere; Brace yourself for the 131<sup>st</sup> Battle of the Blues, brought to you by Sri Lanka’s budding cricketers, and sponsored by Etisalat Lanka.

