

Sir Ali Muslim Club

By 1930, Nairobi had become more than the railroad camp and supply depot for the Uganda Railway. It was now a humming commercial centre and the original Indian railway workers that had been recruited from India were joined by friends, relatives and other family members to settle down and had made it a home.

Some second generation Punjabi Muslims formulated plans for having a club where besides sporting activities, families and friends could relax and socialise with each other. Enthusiastically people began to build a Muslim club. Funds were raised and a piece of land was acquired. It goes without saying that for most people settling in a foreign land, money was hard to come by. Sir Ali bin Salim hailing from an aristocratic background came to the aid and although he resided in Mombasa he gave a large cash donation. In 1934 he was requested to lay the foundation stone and in appreciation of his gesture the club was named after him.

Cricket started at Sir Ali Muslim Club in 1933 and within a year players were selected from the Club to play in the annual Asians versus Europeans match. Yakub Khan and Abdul Kadir Malik were the first from the Club to be selected for this prestigious event. Every year saw the emergence of new talent and the names of the stars are too many to enumerate in this short article. Suffice to mention that current BEAMA members that made their mark as cricketers include Salim Mehar, Frasad Mughal and Bashir Ahmed. It was a proud day in the history of the Club when, the late Mehmood Quraishy, Frasad Mughal and Zulfiqar Ali were selected to represent East Africa in the inaugural World Cricket Cup in 1975. A mention must also be made of the fifties, sixties and seventies great, Mehboob Ali who led the Club to many successes. Basharat Hassan learned his craft at the Club before becoming a First Class cricketer with Nottingham.

The knockout tournament started in 1964 and up to 1981 the Club won the trophy no less than 11 times. The league started in 1970 and the Club was champion 9 times up to 1982 and between 1976 and 1982 the Club won the Uhuru Cup 3 times.



Sir Ali Muslim Club, 1971 Triple Winners

Volleyball, Football, Hockey, Tennis and Squash were the other outdoor sports that the Club was represented in. Sir Ali Muslim Club had one of the best volleyball teams in East Africa and many trophies were won and to date the most trophies displayed in the club are for this event. Indoor games included snooker, darts and card games.

Weddings are held at the Club and the ground is regularly used for Eid prayers. In our time in Nairobi, fun fare and games at the Club was something to look forward to every Eid. Although the sports activities have declined recently, the Club remains a thriving social centre.

In 1968 many cricketers migrated to England and 7 members of the Club, namely Farouk Malik, Bashir Ahmed, Shabbir Diwan, Nisar Butt, Ghafoor Chaudhry, Shakoor Chaudhry and Zubair Awan started Sir Ali Sports Club, London. This cricket team played some of the best teams in and around London for some 30 years, but was finally closed because it was difficult to buy a ground and the distance members had to travel to play from various parts of London.