Pochaji Nusserwanji Polishwala (1880-1936)

P.N. Polishwala was a well-known journalist and writer on Indian cricket with an additional flair for cricket statistics. He compiled a few books devoted to cricket scores and statistics that soon transformed his identity from mere journalist to the first known statistician of repute in India.

At a time when communication was poor and obtaining a score-card from every nook and corner of India and information round the world was a challenge, he developed relationships with cricket enthusiasts , scorers and statisticians from across the globe. While researching his profile, we came across letters written to him from the managing editor, H Drysdale Bett, The Australian Cricketer, FS Ashley-Cooper and even W. Findlay, M.C.C., indicating that they used to share information on scores and statistics.

He therefore, quite rightly, deserves the sobriquet ‘father’ of Indian cricket statistics. He was the first compiler of authentic statistics in India. He used the collected data, notes and information in the publishing of his yearly cricket in the form of Annuals, an important source for the history of Indian cricket.

He maintained his records at a time when there was no systematic statistic gathering, nor any means to do so besides the purely manual one. Perhaps, that was the area where he had to struggle, for although he titled his compilations as Annuals, these were in fact not published annually.. The Annual included English and Australian news and matches because there were few sources for that news at the time. The annual was an effort to raise the standard of Indian cricket and it was fascinating to read reminiscences of early cricket.

He died in Bombay on January 28, 1936 at the age of 56.

He compiled and edited the following books in cricket:

1. History of Indian Cricket, 1914

2. Indian Cricket Annual, 1917

3. All About Umpiring, 1918

4. Representative Cricket Matches, 1919

5. School and College Cricket in India, 1921

6. All India Cricket, 1923

7. Polishwala’s Score Book, 1924

8. Indian Cricket Annual, 1924

9. Indian Cricket Annual, 1926

10. Cricketer’s Almanack, 1928

11. Umpire’s Guide, 1929

12. History of Indian Cricket for past 75 Years (with 42 photographs), 1931

13. All India Cricket, 1933

14. All India Cricket, 1934

Besides these he had published: Disadvantages of Smoking 1917, Well Known Parsi Wrestlers 1925, Physical Culture 1930, Glorious and Most praiseworthy deeds of the valiant Parsi youths (with 45 photographs) 1932 and Tare Charne-Gujarati 1935.

“PN Polishwala of Bombay, has already done much as a Pioneer of Indian cricket literature, and one trusts that the support accorded him will induce him to continue with what must be chiefly a labour of love for many years to come” – The Times of India 16-11-1922.