Twitter Thread by Vaitheeswaran K



Vaitheeswaran K
@vaitheek



We all love cricket. It gives us so much joy and pleasure. However, behind this great game lie some experiences which are not all pleasant. Here's one such true story. 1/n

Not many people know that years back I was a registered umpire with KSCA (Karnataka State Cricket Association). I used to play corporate cricket regularly in Madras but couldn't continue my cricket once I shifted to Bangalore in 1989 for a career move. 2/n

Instead, I became an ardent armchair follower like millions of Indians but it was not satisfying enough. Watching replays on TV is never as exciting and I was itching to be back on the ground. 3/n

After due consideration, I attempted (and cleared!) the written and verbal tests offered by KSCA. Surprise, surprise, I was now a registered umpire. I started at lower level league games but steadily moved up the ranks and even officiated inter-city school knockouts. 4/n

Over the years, I had many escapades and officiated some exciting matches. I once even got abused by a bunch of passionate stump-wielding school kids in a Bangalore-Hyderabad inter-city final for an LBW decision. Later replays (in my mind) even proved me right. Then one day...5/n

It was a Sunday morning game. It had rained the previous night and there was no chance of a game. As per rules, for a match to be called off, both umpires had to inspect the ground and formally declare a no-game result. I drove down in my uniform and reached the ground. 6/n

There, I was accosted by a young man on a bi-cycle. He introduced himself as Shrinivas, my co-umpire. He pointed out several huge water puddles and said we can declare the game as washed out. He then pulled out a form, all details filled in and requested me to sign fast. 7/n

I was surprised at his urgency and asked him why? Before he could respond, the marker, who managed the ground and equipments took me aside and shared the context. 8/n

Shrinivas was the sole bread winner in his family with aged parents and younger siblings. He did several odd jobs and cricket umpiring was one such job for him. While he was keen on the game, the meagre amount paid to umpires per game by KSCA was an added income stream. 9/n

I now turned to Shrinivas who was looking very embarrassed. He explained to me that he had to rush the signed form to KSCA office and request a cheque which he could clear from the bank before closing hours. They had some urgent family expenses. 10/n

Silently I signed the form and drove off. All my match earnings were in my account at UCO Bank, KSCA extension counter. I had never withdrawn anything. My only "earning" was the free ticket for all international games at Chinnaswamy stadium, courtesy being a KSCA umpire. 11/n

At home, I shared the incident to my wife. With the intelligence typical of wives, she told me to stop umpiring because every time I drove to a ground in a car to umpire a game because of some passion, I was stopping another Shrinivas from earning really useful money. 12/n

By this time, I also realised that building an umpiring career depended on other factors, some beyond my competence. I completed my season commitments and withdrew totally. All my umpiring now is on TV when I second guess third umpires. 13/n

Some careers are not meant to take off and you feel disappointed. Not this one though. I never met Shrinivas again. Not sure why but today I just thought of him. I hope he and his folks are doing well. God Bless. 14/n.