



MADRAS COSMOPOLITAN ROUND TABLE 94

Adventure Zone HR Overnighter

Table: MCRT 94

Date: 31st January & 1st February 2009

Venue: Adventure Zone, Madurantangam

Occasion: HR Overnighter

Introduction

In the ethos of MCRT 94, HR is inextricably linked to Fellowship and Tolerance, Bipartisan Acceptance and Brotherhood. It is to harness this energy of every '94 tabler coupled with how he relates to his peers that HR activities of MCRT 94 in general are constituted— playing a vital role in training new entrants and reminding the existing tablers of what our table stands for. We have seen in past HR programs, that nothing bonds tablers better than the heady success of a well earned victory, the bittersweet lessons of a failure, the shenanigans of teams, competitiveness of a close call and all in all- the rush of a game well played in true spirit of sportsmanship. MCRT 94 always does HR with a twist. And so we were back to Adventure Zone for the 2nd year, but with a slightly different agenda.

Having had a very popular boys only HR overnighter for the last 3 years, it was decided to broaden the canvas this time in 2008-09 and include circlers/ wives of tablers and twinklers as well – and the decision paid off. There were many surprises to boot and myriad colors of a large group.

Over one and half adventure packed days, there were adrenalin packed moments, physically taxing routines , competitive spirit, ingenuity, grit, and perseverance, on ample display together with great fellowship, sense of humor and an indomitable team spirit.

Following are few glimpses ... Buckle up!

Recounting Day 1:

The Adventure began at Woodlands Hotel at 9am on 31st Jan. After a sumptuous breakfast, we began our two and half hour ride to Adventure Zone. The camaraderie had already begun over dosas and uppamas and excitement and anticipation was palpable as was the speculation about the physical fitness and agility of some tablers. All docked at quarters at Adventure Zone, Madurantangam by 12:00 hours. We selected our bunks in the smart looking tents provided or rather the bunks selected us- with a natural selection of kids and wives, somber couples and the temporary bachelors finding their own kind. A quick look at the modern toilets reassured us that any accidents in the next two days will be on the field only. We settled in and lunch was soon served to arm, equip & sustain us for what ended up being a highly eventful rest-of-the-day.

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Guys outside the tents



We are family !!



Kids Corner



Wives chatting up



Lunch



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After lunch, we presented ourselves to Maj. Roy who was impressed to see a sizeable & mixed group of 33 enthusiasts from MCRT 94 – 16 tablers and 9 circler/tablet-wives to boot with another 8 twinklers to cheer on. Maj. Roy gave us an introduction to the program, the rules and spirit of the games to be played over the next 2 days, and highlights of past performances to beat in his characteristic dead pan expression of military humor.

Without any ado, Teams were formed- two groups of members – battle lines clearly drawn for the next 2 days and all games being played to WIN. It was clearly do or die – but in the true spirit of '94, the friendly banter, backslapping and innocuous sledging continued unabated, adding a critical component to this competitiveness - the characteristically '94 spirit of true sportsmanship.

Team 1: Ganja Team

1. Tr. Rajesh
2. Ch. Neville Billimoria
3. Tr. Imran Pasha
4. Tr. Shailesh Vummudi
5. Tr. Rajith Mhetras
6. Tr. Mehul Nanavati
7. Tr. Samir Singla
8. Tr. Raghu Kailas
9. HT Ketan Bagadia
10. Prospective Tr. Gopi
11. Kavita Rajesh
12. Farheen Pasha
13. Nethra Krishna

Team 2: Banja Team

1. Tr. Nauzer Dadabhoy
2. Tr. Ashish Ahuja
3. Tr. JS Krishna
4. Tr. Krishna Ravindran
5. Tr. Senthil Kumar
6. Tr. Dinshaw Parakh
7. Anisha Nanavati
8. Amuda Senthil Kumar
9. Guneet Singla
10. Sushma Vummudi
11. Kinnera Ravindran
12. Shalini Ahuja

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Team 1: Ganja Team



Team 2: Banja Team

Challenge 1: Cross the River: Strategizing at its best!

Maj. Roy and his team explained the rules of this game designed to test our ingenuity to weary looking faces who struggled to comprehend the presence of drums, sticks, ropes, cans, bamboo sticks to be used as props to cross the imaginary marsh infested with crocodiles without touching the props to the ground. This seemed like a daunting task – made more difficult – as we were to be evaluated on two parameters- speed and money spent to bid for props.

Banja Team captain Tr. Nauzer bid successfully for pre-identified props and proceeded to execute what looked from the onset a well crafted strategy, the only hitch being that having spent nearly all their money, they needed to complete the task at hand- of crossing the river, within a very challenging span of 13 minutes.

The clock was ticking! Ganja Team captain Tr. Shailesh, presented a completely contrasting picture of 'what not to do while strategizing'! Having bid for totally useless props with no shred of strategy in place, the Ganja team proceeded onto improvising and thinking out of the box and off the cuff. It race was ON! Though Kinnera, Shalini and Nauzer of Banja Team did a great job using their paint cans to walk across to the other side, it proved to be no match for the grit of the Ganja Team.

Chairman Neville displayed his fitness by single handedly using large water drums harnessed together with a rope to get across. The true highlight was the team work, coordination and acrobatics displayed to the utter amazement of onlookers by Nethra and Farheen - who replicated Neville's technique to get across the marsh, taking the Ganja team to its first victory of the day! Way to go girls!

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Cross The River: Teams Strategizing...



Team Banja: Crossing on Cans!



Team Ganja: Improvising!

Challenge 2: Obstacle Course: Speed and Stamina of the jungle

How to replicate the performance of the two 'Ganja ladies' was very much on every body's mind's when we were ushered to the Obstacle course. That overcoming ten challenging obstacles in 20 minutes would jointly test our stamina, speed and strategy was clear from the moment Maj. Roy introduced the obstacles to us. This time to our delight (and not embarrassment) we saw team members transforming into animals on all fours as they expertly (and some not-so-expertly) negotiated the 'cheetah cave', 'crocodile rope', 'tigers wood', 'monkey nets', etc. Claustrophobia, arachnophobia, and various other phobias were forgotten as every giddy enthusiast went out on a limb in team spirit to secure those additional crucial points for his/her team. Though the performance of both teams was exemplary; the star performer was undoubtedly 'paploo' – the imaginary team member for both teams that had to be 'escorted' through obstacle courses for double the points. Ganja team won this round albeit with a small margin- retaining its lead. Things were hotting up!

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Challenge 3: Rappelling: A Leap of Faith

By this time, adrenalin was pumping and how! There was no better time than this, to bring on the most competitive and dangerous of all challenges to separate the men/women from the boys/girls! Within the designated 50 minutes, both teams were to secure points for the maximum number of drops/falls. This was an exercise in confidence and trust – as every daredevil rappeller put his/her faith in their team-members to secure the harness, guide them down and handle the safety rope. Myriad reactions could be seen atop the 5 storey building from “Its no big deal, Trust me!” (Sam) to “Are you bloody crazy?!” (Imran), but all found it to be one of the most exhilarating experiences of their lives. The most noteworthy was Guneet Singla who, after being precariously perched battling fear for close to 1 hour, finally took the leap of faith amid hoots and cheers and is alive and well to tell the tale! Three cheers for Guneet!! With Tr. Samir and Tr. Dinshaw expertly mentoring their respective teams Ganja and Banja, both teams had performed exceptionally well and the final scores of the day were subject of much speculation, with wagers being swung left, right and center.



Rappelling teams



Our smallest and biggest Rappellers!

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The hectic activities of the day called for cooling off with ice cold showers. The toilets were converted into community wash areas- to the embarrassment of many in the group.

The Tabling Open House :

Camaraderie continued over drinks and eats and a 'no frills attached' military camp dinner. Recognizing that there were not too many opportunities for tablers and circlers to sit together and take stock of where we stand, we took this opportunity to have an open house discussion to explore how we could do things better to be more effective to our stakeholders.

Ex Chairmen Raghu Kailas and Dinshaw heightened the mood of the moment by reiterating for us what '94 truly stands for – Conviction to cause and Fellowship above all. Recounting how past chairmanships of last few years have consistently raised the bar for MCRT 94, we looked forward to inducting fresh blood and perspective into tabling – with new and prospective tablers looking on. We heard from new tablers – Rajesh, Imran and Nauzer about their experience in '94, and what emerged as a common thread was MCRT '94s bi-partisan nature and whole-hearted acceptance of new members.

There was plenty of valuable feedback from tablers and circlers – new and old about what we could do to make tabling more interesting and better. This open house would serve us as a start in doing some long term planning for the table. In a continuing spirit of fellowship - we gathered around a crackling bonfire- made warmer by the presence of our friends and their families and brought in Tr. Dinshaws birthday.

After few attempts at Antakshiri, we settled into enjoying the warmth of the bon fire, steaming desserts and company of friends. Soon after, we turned in for the night for a well deserved rest, with aching limbs but an indomitable spirit- geared up for MORE. Early the next morning, for those who would dare – was to lie the absolute highlight of the Adventure Zone...



Bonfire



Bringing in Dinshaws birthday!

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Recounting Day 2:

The day broke with strange animal-like sounds heard across tents, as we braced ourselves for any eventuality in the middle of the wilderness.. "it's a wild animal", "no, its sounds like an engine!", but lo and behold- it was Samir Singla clearing his throat in a regular morning ritual to which we all were reluctantly familiarized! After hot cups of tea and aborted attempts at bathing in the (now unwelcome) ice cold water of the community loo, we dug into a hearty breakfast, and headed out for our first challenge of the day in 4 rugged army jeeps.



Challenge 1: 4X4 Module on the Palar River: Grit & Resilience

As we approached the arid bed of the Palar River across the wildly undulating terrain and crossed a stream on 4 wheel drive, Maj. Roy and other highly trained drivers instilled confidence by recounting the car rallies which they have won on this very terrain. With the hot summer sun and sweat and thirst fading fast into insignificance, their pep talk and military grit enthused all of us to take on impossible looking dunes. Soon, the army jeeps had transformed its occupants into adrenaline pumping cavalry charging at enemy behind sand barracks. With charged cries of "Go for it!" JS, Imran, Raghu, Senthil, Shai, took on the 10 feet dunes – in all their might.

The raw, pulsating power of the engine proved to be a heady mix as some of us who tried it for the first time- got hooked on to it forever! Sam ofcourse, in the now famous incident, took perseverance to another level with 35 attempts to scale the same sand dune, multiple jumpstarts and palpable frustration of Maj. Roy notwithstanding. Kudos to the newly crowned King of the Palar River! The ladies were not to be left behind with Shalini, Kinnera, Farheen, Kavitha, and Amuda showed tremendous grit behind the wheel. Though most of us lost our hearts to this new sport and vowed to return again and again- RK unfortunately lost much more- including the side view and rear view mirrors of his Corolla car which was parked at the banks of the river for few hours. Memorable trip for many reasons!

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The 4X4 Module at Palar River



Challenge 2: Rock climbing, Shooting

This went on parallelly at the adventure zone venue as did the 4X4 module elsewhere at Palar river. Circlers/ Tablers wives and twinklers also part-took of the shooting and obstacle course again.

Chairman Neville demonstrated his fitness level beyond compare – as he reached the highest level in rock climbing. The hard core race in the grueling sun had most of us sizzling and cooling off with cold showers brought soaring temperatures down. A relaxed lunch with chilled beers concluded the session.



Chairman Neville scaling new heights literally !

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Conclusion:

MCRT 94 has been one of the few tables in the area that has been doing overnight HR events for the last 4 years in a row. Part of this is due to the willingness and enthusiasm of the tablers in participating. The HR overnights are now a looked forward to event in our calendar. All in all, our HR & Fellowship Program at Adventure Zone was a resounding success – a true testimony to our fellowship and sportsmanship spirit. Kudos to all involved and here is to many more!

A special thanks to –

- Chairman Neville Billimoria who urged tablers and their families to join in the event and witness the bonding and spirit of sportsmanship at an event of this nature.
- All participating tablers, HT circlers/tabler wives, twinklers for being such good sports and making this event a great success.
- Maj. Roy (retd.) and the staff of Adventure Zone, for coordinating the activities at Adventure Zone with great professionalism.

Prepared By:

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HR Conveners, 2008-2009

MCRT 94
Area 2, Round Table India

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