

11th Feb, 2008 - AMERICAS DIVISION 3 TOURNAMENT BEGINS TODAY

The first tournament in the ICC Americas divisional series starts today in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with five teams competing to claim the Americas Division 3 Championship, as well as gain promotion to Division 2 of regional competition.

Belize, Brazil, Chile, Peru and the Turks & Caicos Islands will be fighting it out on neutral ground in host nation Argentina in an event where it is supremely difficult to predict a winner. The round-robin event starts today and finishes on Saturday.

Perhaps only newcomers Peru might be ranked as outsiders, and more so because they will be an unknown quantity rather than a lack of talent. They play in their first ever ICC competition since becoming an Affiliate member of the ICC as recently as 2007. Lack of experience at this level will count against them, but they should by means be written off. Inspirational skipper Harry Hildebrand will no doubt be looking for Peru's entrance into international cricket to be a memorable one.

Belize probably start as slight favourites, perhaps only because they were surprisingly relegated from Division 2 in 2006, and will no doubt be looking to bounce straight back up again. Judging by the appointment of former West Indies international Clayton Lambert as coach, the certainly mean business. Young batting sensation Conway Young will be one of the players hoping to shine.

The Turks & Caicos Islands have brought an experienced squad to Division 3, and their explosive batting will pose a danger to all opposition. Veteran captain Ralph Doughty will have to be a major influence welding their individual talents together to ensure getting the best of them as a team.

Chile flattered to deceive in the previous Division 3 tournament held in Suriname, and having worked hard over the last two years towards this event, will always be a tough outfit to beat. Certainly with hard-hitting skipper Simon Shalders leading from the front, they will take no prisoners, and if he comes anywhere close to his heroic exploits of 2006, making an undefeated 180 in a losing cause, Chile could very well be the one to watch.

Brazil will once again rely heavily on the leadership and batting craft of former Kent cricketer Matt Featherstone, as well as the all-round ability of Rubabul Islam, but maybe lack the depth to mount a sustained challenge for the title. However, on any given day, they could certainly claim their first ever international victory in ICC competition, and could well have an impact on the eventual title and promotion race.

Scheduled fixtures and venues for the ICC Americas Division 3 Championship are as follows:

Monday 11 February

Belize v Chile – Hurlingham Club
Peru v Turks & Caicos Islands – St.Alban’s Club

Tuesday 12 February
Belize v Brasil – St.Alban’s Club
Chile v Turks & Caicos Islands – Hurlingham Club

Wednesday 13 February
Brasil v Turks & Caicos Islands – Hurlingham Club
Chile v **Peru** – St.Alban’s Club

Friday 15 February
Belize v **Peru** – Hurlingham Club
Brasil v Chile – Belgrano Athletic Club

Saturday 16 February
Belize v Turks & Caicos Islands – Belgrano Athletic Club
Brasil v **Peru** – Hurlingham Club

All matches are 50 over games, starting at 10.30am.



Simon Shalders (Chile)



Matt Featherstone (Brasil)