

Friday 15th Feb, 2008 - BRAZIL SHATTER CHILEAN TITLE HOPES

Belize and Turks & Caicos Islands set to meet in probable championship decider

An astonishing performance from Brazil, inspired by a magnificent 152 from skipper Matt Featherstone, all but destroyed Chile's hopes of an Americas Division 3 championship title. The 37 run defeat means only rain can prevent either Belize or the Turks & Caicos Islands from snatching the crown away on the final day.

After being asked to bat first, a solid second wicket partnership of 105 between Featherstone and Norman Baldwin (38 off 69 balls with 3 fours and a six) set the Brazilian innings up nicely. Featherstone took centre stage and punished the Chilean bowling to all corner of the Belgrano Athletic ground with classic clean hitting, hitting one particularly huge six clean over the pavilion and into nearby tennis courts.

In all man of the match Featherstone hit 16 fours and 9 sixes in his 109 ball innings, and when he was eventually dismissed in the 42nd over for 152 magnificent runs, the total was already up to 288, and for Chile, the bulk of the damage had been done. Featherstone was brilliantly supported in a 16-over third wicket partnership of 145, by Viren Narula, who almost unnoticed compiled a classy 81 in a mere 64 balls, with 11 fours and a six. Rubabul Islam added a quickfire 25 in 21 balls, and at the end of their 50 overs, Brazil had posted a mammoth 359 for 6.

For much of the innings it was damage control for the Chilean bowlers, but seamer Tim Messner showed his unquestioned ability with outstanding figures of 3 for 38 in 10 overs amidst the carnage.

Chile though came out fighting, showing why they had recorded such a fine run of results in the earlier rounds of the tournament. An opening stand of 63 in 10 overs set the tone, and a great second wicket partnership of 84 between Paul Wollocombe and captain Simon Shalders, taking the total to 147 after 25 overs, was the ideal platform for the prolific Shalders and the Chilean middle-order to launch an assault on their daunting target. Wollocombe's contribution was an elegant 66 from 81 balls with 11 fours.

Shalders and the reliable Guy Hooper (24 off 27 balls) kept hopes alive, but the departure of Shalders in the 38th over with the score at 232, brilliantly caught by Chaudhry into the sun at long-on, literally marked the beginning of the end. Shalders had completed another gem of an innings, 80 off 76 balls with 11 sizzling boundaries.

There was an entertaining cameo from Tim Messner which briefly allowed Chilean hopes to spark into life, with a 5 ball innings of 22 (4-4-6-4-4), but although the rest of the Chilean lower middle order and lower order chipped away bravely, the target, and the championship it seems, was just agonisingly beyond them.

Ravi Chanchlani continued his excellent bowling form, taking 3 for 56 in 10 overs, while Chaudhry and Randolph both picked up two wickets apiece. Mention must be made as well of a fine day behind the stumps for wicket-keeper Deepak Karunakar, who claimed four fine catches and a stumping.

So Chile, who have now completed their schedule of matches, must wait and see what tomorrow brings. They have led the field from the start, and sadly for a well-prepared and motivated squad, it seems the title will be snatched away from them.

Belize kept their title hopes well and truly alive with a hard-fought victory over an improving Peru side. At Hurlingham, Belize chose to bat first but struggled to gather any real momentum against a tidy and accurate Peruvian attack. Man of the match Javed Iqbal produced a wonderful spell of bowling, finishing with 3 for 32 in 10 overs, with excellent support from the miserly Tony Sanford, 2 for 29 in 10 overs, as well as Ahmed Nadeem, 2 for 29 in 8 overs.

Belize posted a solid if not spectacular total of 223 for 9 in their 50 overs, largely thanks to fine innings from Warren Anthony, 50 in 103 balls, 4 fours, and Mykelt Anthony, 35 in 46 balls with 7 fours. Vitally important to Belize's cause as well was a 43 run 9th wicket partnership between Kene Broaster, 29 in 38 balls with 4 fours, and Robert Casasola, 25 not out in 21 balls with 2 fours. They took the total from 162 for 8 in the 41st over past the 200 and made full use of their 50 overs.

In reply, the Peruvian side, growing in experience and confidence with every match, marched past the 100 mark in the 30th over, and with 7 wickets still in hand at that point, it was definitely still anybody's game. Opener Chris Abbott compiled an excellent 60 in 102 balls, with 7 fours, but the introduction of Warren Anthony and Kene Broaster into the attack proved to be a decisive turning point.

Anthony got Abbott to touch to wicket-keeper Flowers, and between Anthony and Broaster they took 6 wickets to reduce Peru to 148 for 8 in the 41st over. There was a brief flurry of resistance and hope as Javed Iqbal made an entertaining 28 off 17 balls with 4 fours and a six, but in the end the Peruvian innings and challenge ended on 189 in 48 overs and victory to Belize by 34 runs.

Warren Anthony finished with 3 for 23 in 7 overs, while Kene Broaster bowled his full 10 overs and took 3 for 41.

So all set for a final day of tension and drama. It now looks to be a straight shootout between Belize and Turks & Caicos Islands, as they face each other at Belgrano Athletic, but there is still a remote mathematical chance for Chile. With Chile on 12 points after 4 games, and Belize and Turks & Caicos Islands both on 8 points after 3 games, whoever wins between them tomorrow will be tied with Chile on 12 points, and then as per tournament regulations, the winner will be decided by net run rate. As things stand, both Belize and Turks & Caicos Islands have a superior net run rate to that of Chile.

In the other game of final day action, a Brazil team naturally buoyed by their stunning victory over Chile and with it their first ever ICC international win, will

meet a fast improving Peru, and although neither team is in the running for the title, it should be an entertaining clash, as a Brazil victory might see them end in third place, while a win for Peru would be a massive achievement for them in their first ICC event.

| | P | W | L | Pts | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|-----------|----------|
| 1. Chile | 4 | 3 | 1 | 12 | |
| 2. Turks & Caicos Islands | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 8 |
| 3. Belize | 3 | 2 | 1 | 8 | |
| 4. Brasil | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | |
| 5. Peru | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | |



Matt Featherstone (Brasil) 152 off 109 balls, 16 fours, 9 sixes



Captains contest – Chilean captain Simon Shalders defends solidly as Brazilian captain Matt Featherstone hovers in the gully.



Paul Wollocombe of Chile turns one down the legside on the way to 66 for Chile against Brazil. Norman Baldwin fielding.



Tim Messner (Chile) smashes another boundary in a 5-ball innings of 22 (4-4-6-4-4) but not enough to give Chile victory over Brazil. Brazilian wicket-keeper had a fine game with 5 dismissals (4 catches, 1 stumping)