

15th Feb, 2008: Peru vs Belize

Set in the magnificent setting of the 128-year-old Hurlingham Polo Club, with marvellous facilities and beautifully kempt turf, a fantastic strip had been prepared for the Peruvian Llamas to do battle once more. And so they did.

Put into field on a muggy and hot day, Peru were soon not putting their plan into action with some cat-on-a-hot-tin-roof stuff, but Hans De Witt removed one opener in the second over.

Dinesh came on and managed to tighten the line considerably but with no luck. Gazza put in sterling stuff with blood dripping from his manky looking blisters, but was also without lady luck whispering in his ear. Once our spinners came on the story changed completely. Belize suddenly looked like they were swimming in golden syrup, and the wickets began to fall. Both Tony and Javed bowled magnificently, 2-29 and 3-32 respectively. Nadeem (2-29 off 8) came on and bagged a couple himself, but again, owing to the inexperience of Peru in 50 over games, Belize were able to mount a sizeable 223: they scored one fifty and a couple of useful twenties, but they never really put our bowling on the rack. Apart from a couple of dropped catches really, Peru both fielded and bowled excellently.

After a marvellous fish and pumpkin mash lunch, Chris and Harry went into bat and were as confident as teenagers. You wouldn't have believed the average age of this team is 38. However, the wretched luck that is cursing us on tour raised its head again and Harry was run out, with Peru on 30 odd and running like a train, trying to get back into his crease. It looked mighty close to us on the boundary. Hans came in. Chris and he added useful runs, pushing back the fielding team by running quick singles and being very positive. Hans was eventually caught at long on, in the low teens, trying to push the score on as it became more difficult to score. Sadly Dinesh could not repeat the fireworks of the day before yesterday and was caught just behind square leg for 2. Prabhu was able to score a few decent shots and ably assist Chris who looked like he had his own personal sauna out in the middle. Chris' batting was an example to us all, never being risky and playing some wonderful strokes. Chris hit seven boundaries and a delightful cover drive comes to mind. Chris was eventually out for 61 caught behind, with the team on 130. Nadeem and Javed put in a couple of cameos, 22 and 29 respectively. Simon and Vishy, not out 10 (on Peruvian debut) also batted for some. However the ask was too much and Peru fell short again by 34 runs. This is against a team that has 14 clubs in its country.

BUT THERE WAS A MASSIVE IMPROVEMENT FROM EVERYONE. This tour is doing us a lot of good and we can see where we have to go with greater clarity.

Tomorrow we play Brazil who managed to beat Chile by 22 runs after scoring 359.

God Willing, carajo, we are going to win!