

## 16/02/08: Peru vs Brazil

O day of days, game of games, bowling of bowling, fielding of fielding, batting of bat...., well let's not get ahead of ourselves just yet..... here goes the account of the mightiest day in the young life of the Peruvian Llamas to date.

On another beautiful sunny day at the Hurlingham Club, where Peru had been the day before and were thus more confident of their surroundings, the lads were beginning to look like the cast of Dad's army, carrying more aches and pains than you'd find at conference for hypochondriacs. Gary had pulled out, his calf (pulled muscle) and foot (manky looking blisters) had forced him to stand aside to allow Peru to present Alejandro Tirado with his first cap for the country and also the first true Peruvian into the team. A fine ceremony at the beginning of the day under the tree of deceptively little shade with Manager Champion presenting Ale (pronounced 'Alleh') with his cap. Add Ale's father, sister and friend turning up and you had auspicious omens for the day. It also meant Vishy had to be 12<sup>th</sup> man and Atul Sharma making his way back into the team to replace Gary's rapier like bowling on the frontline. The writer had a dodgy moment with Javed in the lift, who was walking around like John Wayne after saying he had pulled his groin and that he may not be able to play, and could he replace him, but was hastily assured that his bowling was going to be rather needed.

So Harry wins the toss and decides to bat and once again Peru were off to a flyer ably assisted by Mr Extras. With the score on 21, Chris Abbott got a ball that did a little bit and he was dismissed by a ball ricocheting to first slip off the keeper. Sadly he wasn't able to repeat his heroics of the day before. Hans came in and played with Harry for the longest partnership of the innings, scratching about like a piglet looking for truffles and none to be found. He was seeing the ball like a peanut apparently, according to Harry, as opposed to a beach ball. Harry was carrying on in his own inimitable manner and was on 37 at the drinks before being undone LBW by a ball that kept straight. Not a happy bunny was our skip, heard muttering to himself, afterwards that he'd not come all the way to Argentina to be given out like that. Second time he'd suffered, dear reader, in two days from apparently substandard umpiring. So Dinesh (10 not out) came in and the fireworks began to explode before going after one roman candle too many and getting a ball in the mouth and a cut like a lunar crater above the lip and in the gum for his troubles. Gazza rushed him off to the hospital to have him repaired hopefully in time to bat again.

The batting kind of went into its shell after this and no one really did anything with the bat unless you call the comedy moment that was Hans calling Atul for an easy single and the languid Indian not moving his ground and with the team yelling at Hans to literally pull Atul out of the crease so the better batsman would not be sacrificed. Atul was having none of it and Hans was the batsman who had to go, run out on 37 and a fine innings it turned out to be. 37 very valuable runs. Ale on debut was not able to put into practice the coaching that Chris had been giving him all week, 'Play straight lad, play straight', and was heard to be telling his Dad after that he had been shaking so much, due to nerves, that he couldn't hold the bat properly. So Peru were dismissed for 136 for 9, the first time they were not all

out this week, mainly because Dinesh was still at the hospital and arrived just too late to have another bat. Third highest scorer was Mr. Extras on 30.

So 45 minutes before lunch to bowl at the Samba Boys, and what a start. Harry had told the boys it was 'shit or bust' time. The Llamas were going to have to bowl and field out of their skins. And so they did. In the first over Atul managed to remove the opener for 0 with a ball that was mean and straight, undoing the batsman for pace. Nadeem came on from the other end. He has gone through a mighty transformation this past week. This was a man who was inconsolable on Monday after throwing his wicket away, with a nothing shot, but slowly and surely pulled himself back into contention for Peru's unofficial man of the tournament. He was asked to bowl fast on a wicket that was doing something. Normally a slow off spin bowler, Nadeem was soon hurling down custard pies and jaffers that were completely unplayable. It took 26 balls before anyone was able to score any runs off him. The incredible bowling continued and soon the other opener was in trouble caught at mid off trying to fend off the speed of Atul. Then the moment of the match came, when Nadeem bowled Matt Featherstone (ex-county player) a ball of such venom that lesser mortals would not have been able to get close to it. Feathers managed to tickle it to Prabhu keeping. Atul was able to sucker their number 4 into a false shot with Nadeem making sure he was not going to repeat his 'school for clowns' catching of the day before, safely taking it. Brazil going into lunch at 24 for four.

After a lovely piece of pulverized flattened meat and chips, (the club lunches not being one of the highlights of the tour) The Llamass could barely eat, driven by the anticipation of what was to follow. Gazza was heard to mutter if we get a quick wicket in the next few overs after lunch then we can do it. Immediately after lunch, second ball Nadeem had their number 6 caught at gully by Hans falling like a Californian Redwood to reach it. Brazil had anticipated that after Atul (3-34) and Nadeem (3-23) had bowled their spells that there would be little powder left in the bag. How wrong they were. The veterans of the team Tony and Javed came on and spun their magic webs around the dwindling Samba Boys who could not produce the rumba required. Tony bowled magnificently, snatching 3-15 and Javed miserly in his own way with handsome looking figures of 4 overs, 3 maidens, 1 wicket, 1 run.....

And so basically that was that except for the plucky batting of their numbers 7 and 8. Brazil were eventually all out for 73. All the wickets that fell bar one were catches and never is there a greater maxim in cricket than catches win matches. The tide of bad luck turned that day. Brazil is a team who had beaten the second placed team Chile by 34 after scoring 356 runs the previous day and who like Peru had made history the day before by claiming their maiden official ICC victory in the tournament. So congratulations are in order for Brazil for also making history.

We should not detract from the fact that this was a magnificent team performance, Peru, to a man, stood up and were counted. Rob as Manager made sure that drinks and sugar intake and masseuse were all supplied. The scorer, lest we forget him, he did his bit. Recording a proud historical moment such as this is always a fine job for anyone.

**Peru we made history.** When was the last time Brazil got beaten by Peru at anything?????? Next time Chile, and make sure we celebrate it with our own finest Pisco, not the moonshine, parading as Pisco they were handing out as presents for the other teams.

**Viva Peru, carajo!**