

Oct 8th, 2009: Peru readies itself for victory in ICC Americas Division 3

Chris Hodgson, Team Manager for Peru, believes his side will put in the same level of passion and commitment as playing in an ICC Cricket World Cup when it takes part in the ICC Americas Division 3.

Peru will compete with Brazil, Belize and hosts Chile in the four-day event, which runs from 9-12 October.

How has the team prepared for the event?

This year's preparations have been the busiest yet for Peruvian cricket. New coach Blake Rutherford has had the team working hard at twice weekly sessions in Lima, focusing particularly on fielding drills and general fitness levels – areas where it was felt there was room for improvement following the last tournament. Meanwhile, Peru's Tacna-based players have held a series of net sessions, and will be looking forward to linking up with the rest of the squad in Santiago.

What factors you believe will help contribute to Peru's success in the event?

Excellent progress has been made in terms of fielding performance throughout the team, and it is hoped that the extra pressure this puts on the batting sides will help tip the scales in Peru's favour. This year will also see the debut of new captain Miles Buesst, who will be keen to make his mark on the competition and should invigorate his side with both bat and ball.

How popular is cricket as a game in the country?

Cricket is still very much a minority sport in Peru, though 2009 marks the 150th anniversary of the country's oldest (and sole remaining) cricket club. ICC Affiliate Member status has brought in a welcome injection of development funds, and the first fruits of this have been seen in a recent series of games between Lima school sides and in the establishment of a new artificial pitch at Cambridge College. Cricket Peru is looking to make great strides in developing cricket over the next few years, with the upcoming CSA Under-13 tournament offering an exciting target to work towards.

Can a side like Peru become more competitive on the international stage as time progresses?

Few players within Peru would disagree that major advances have been made by the Llamas in recent years, and in 2009 the side will be looking to build on its maiden victory at the last ICC tournament. Ultimately though, the country's long-term success will depend on the number of youngsters picking up the sport, and great efforts are being made – particularly by outgoing captain Harry Hildebrand – to ensure a maximum number of Peruvian boys and girls have the opportunity to pick up the game.

Do you dream of playing in the World Cup?

Every member of the Peruvian side will have dreamed of playing at the highest level at some point in their lives, though with the vast majority of players the wrong side of 30, most will have accepted that the current level of international competition will be the closest they come to it. As such, they will be looking to bring the same level of passion and commitment to Santiago as they would if stepping out at the Wanderers, MCG or Lords in the biggest tournament of all.