

## Cricket Peru

### Rio de Janiero 2013: The Amistad Cup

Even after the highs, lows, sudden hay fever bouts, Brazilian cheerleaders, Spry's romance with Hereford wine, a hotel full of Ukranian gameshow contestants ...etc etc ...of the last two tours, nobody could have predicted what was about to unfold.

#### **The build-up**

The addition of Nick Myers – ‘the man who has promised so much and delivered so little’ (Harry's words not mine) over the years – was a big boost to the cricketing quality of the squad.

The late entry into the squad of Chris Hodgson after a career break to have a baby had the bookmakers scurrying in the last week. Much like Kim Clijsters, post birth, he came back more successful than he left. Which Hodgson turned up was always going to determine the social tone of the tour, but having hit the sack and done a runner on a drink before leaving Sao Paulo, it was clear that Bad Hodgson was on board. For future reference, never tell him on day two of a stay in your spare room that you don't want him masturbating – that ship will have sailed.

Unfortunately, in the great traditions of Cameron Smith, one of our Mystery Players didn't make it through customs, but we had eleven and none of those was Jonny Lucas. We had a chance.

#### **Arrival in Rio**

#### **Friday – cricket on Ipanema beach, drinks at Astor's and a visit to Shenanigans**

The team had been well drilled on the drinking front at home, and apparently the hand eye coordination wasn't looking too shabby during the weekly games of frog (sapo). Just to be certain we didn't get over-confident, the team decided to stick to previous tournament preparation patterns and elected to get on it on the Friday night.

By all accounts, beach cricket went well (see some grainy but family friendly Dutch home video footage [here](#)). At Astor's Bar, early encounters between Alex

James (Harrow), Rob Wallace (Prince Harry's roommate at Eton) and Stephen Chew (home schooled by Prince Phillip?) in The Great South American Posh Off were apparently cagey, but fascinating to watch.

With the arrival of Hodgson, it was time to lay a platform and the (top pocket) kitty was assembled. Much to the disgust of Hans, cheap cachaca was downed and attempts were made to recruit a member for the Peruvian Barmy Army.

Showing all of his tour experience, Hodgson decided to get us lashed on Bombay Sapphire rather than cachaca. This was to prove a masterstroke, although this may not have been immediately apparent when I peeled my face off the pillow the next morning at 9.30 (for the 8.30 departure).

## Tournament Day 1

### **Game 1**

Despite only having 10 players at the ground, Captain Barsby pulled the tactical masterstroke of electing to field first. After two overs, we were up to our full compliment and picked up the dangerous players at the top of the Brazilian order. The quick fall of wickets around him forced the Brazilian captain, Matt Featherstone, to be circumspect until late on in their innings.

At the changeover, 128 looked a very gettable total. Less so after The Platform had laid a platform, and four wickets had fallen to leave us just past 30 with 10 overs gone. Yet again, the long-sightedness of the ex Tour Manager should not have been called into question. Peru started to apply some pressure with a few boundaries and aggressive running between the wickets.

Despite the fact that Body was batting at 11, I decided that our best chances of victory was to get him in as soon as possible and ran out Amir and Captain Barsby. Not wanting to rub salt into the wound too much, I waited until the end of the over before stealing Barsby's hefty new bat.

Fifty needed with 5 overs left and only one wicket remaining. Body strode to the middle, played like Viv Richards (back foot drive over long off? Don't mind if I do).

50 off 5 overs became 7 off the last 6 balls; Scores tied with one ball left, Rob Wallace obligingly dropped one short for me to plant to the offside boundary cueing a Peruvian pitch invasion.

Job done, never in doubt.

Body claims this is the first game of cricket he has played since childhood without a hangover. If he'd of stayed off the sauce in the mid-nineties, he may have been the answer to England's middle order problems.

## **Game 2**

The Peruvian team decided to add some interest to the tournament and took the afternoon off. We bowled badly and Brazilians took us for 178. Our top order wickets fell quickly, Barsby and Chubbs blocked the sh\*t out of it. We finished 30 odd short.

At the first day awards ceremony, I was singled out for a box full of Pisco for reasons which are not entirely clear to me now. Attention may have focused on arrival by taxi two overs in to the game and two run out victims, rather than my expert (batting) partner selection and a perfectly-paced run chase.

Bods claimed the Player of Day cap for his performance.

In the finest traditions of a Peruvian tour, the cork/screwcap was passed and a lot of bad Pisco was put away on the bus back into town.

## **Saturday night: Balcony Bar**

Saturday evening marked the arrival of President Hildebrand, a terrible performance in the naked arm wrestling and there was some interesting artwork for sale in the bar. I believe we laughed a lot.

Victory the following day was discussed to the point where it was a mathematical probability.

## **Day 3**

Hildebrand, with an impeccable sense of timing for the big occasion, was there for the first time in his baggy red to outline the momentousness of the opportunity we had in front of us. He may have lost a bit of pace – off what was already a fairly slow start – after the hip operation, but the verbal skills remain undiminished.

In a rare moment of professionalism, we completed a light warm-up and did a bit of catching practice, before proceeding to drop more catches in one game than in the two previous tours.

Electing to stick with the policy that had served us well 50% of the time on day one, Captain Barsby elected to take to the field first. Again we picked up early wickets with Barsby picking up the key wicket of Featherstone with a deceptive slower ball low full toss, which was obligingly stabbed back to the bowler. Greigor was also accounted for by Barsby with a Flintoffesque pick-up, throw and direct hit.

With Roughton and myself having gracefully bowed out of the bowling, Barsby turned to Super Hans for his full complement who showed all his true class, competitiveness and a cracking Monica Seles grunt. James, Myers and Nansi also bowled very tidily to press home our early advantage. When Hallet whipped off the bails off from the bowling of Kash to send Rob Wallace packing, the scent of a hot meal straight from a thermos that has been recently relieved of its rusty spork was definitely in the air. End result: Peru chasing a modest 132.

Babe and Wallet came out all guns blazing, crashing early boundaries to put us ahead of the game. The fall of Wallet didn't check Myers for long and the job was looking done and dusted when he was finally removed for 45 or so. Cue mini collapse and a couple of maiden overs, which put the momentum back with the Brazilians.

To stay in the game, the Brazilians had to bring back their best bowlers early. Bars and I showed some respect and picked up the boundaries as the part-timers came back into the attack, with Nick winning the game in style by smashing a four back over the bowlers head. Jubilant scenes on the Peruvian balcony (plastic garden furniture).

### **Awards ceremony**

Babe Myers claimed Player Of The Day and Most Valuable Player of the Tournament for his aggressive batting and tight bowling.

I undeservedly saw off another box of Pisco for the Peruvian team, with Rob Wallace seeing one off as the next poshest person available in Stephen Chew's absence.

## Sunday night: Popeye's

Having exceeded expectations on the pitch, we excelled at what we do off it, with Concept and Platform conducting proceedings from in front of and behind the bar respectively.

Babe wanted Popeye's and as Most Valuable Player, Popeye's he got. Brutus played a blinder. The Amistad Cup became a drinking vessel for numerous bottles of cachaca, selected by Nurse Esther, and one team vanilla milkshake.

Click right from [here](#) to get the gist of the night.

### Player profiles

Player 1 :	<b>Nick Myers</b>
Nickname	Babe
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get some runs and bowl tightly</li><li>• Prove his touring class both on and off the pitch</li><li>• Be wearing the player of the game hat until next April</li><li>• Be found in Popeye's</li></ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have pupils bigger than two pee holes in the snow at any point during the tour</li></ul>
Tour highlights / lowlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Winning Most Valuable Player / going to Popeye's on Sunday</li><li>• Founding 'do what you want night' on Monday</li></ul>

Player 2:	<b>Steve Hallett</b>
Nickname	Wallett
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Last be seen looking to couchsurf in a favela</li></ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be looking fresh in the morning</li></ul>
Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some quick runs at the top of the order, especially in the last game where he and Babe got us off to a flyer.</li><li>• Stumping of Rob in game 3 was a key moment series win</li></ul>

Player 3:	<b>Nick Barsby</b>	
Nickname	Team: Pay roll / Bars	Mercedes: Hijo de Puta / Soltero
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus his attentions on designing a new kit</li> <li>• Be seen talking to the missus on his mobile (one fears that more crisis talks with Mr Jara in McDonalds must be in the offing)</li> <li>• Say "Caipirinhas turn me into a retard" to a somewhat dubious audience of Roughton and I</li> </ul>	
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be getting married this year</li> </ul>	
Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing his new bat.</li> <li>• Took key wickets throughout.</li> <li>• Hitting the winning runs to be the first captain to bring home the highly coveted Amistad Cup</li> <li>• Lowlight - correctly identifying the one of the 'nuances' of different languages was that they have different words to say the same things.</li> </ul>	

Player 4 :	<b>Alex James</b>	
Nickname	Badger	
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bowl well</li> <li>• Find a tailor within a day of arriving</li> <li>• Shout "hunt it down" in the field (several Al Qaeeda operatives embedded in the Brazilian countryside are believed to have shat themselves. Hopefully somebody passed on my tip of tucking your trousers into your socks when you do so.)</li> <li>• Bring some niche shaving products on tour</li> <li>• Take a green item of clothing home for the mrs. She now has a hoodie to add to the Argentine leather jacket.</li> </ul>	
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be out pushed without a fight</li> </ul>	
Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revelation that he reminded Prince Harry that he needed to stand to attention for him</li> <li>• Lowlight - surely the Games Master at Harrow wouldn't have condoned someone taking a piss on the boundary when he was running in to bowl</li> </ul>	

Player 5 :	<b>Chris Hodgson</b>
Nickname	Platform / Bad Hodgson / Leukie
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lay a platform</li> <li>• Turn Brutus into a cult figure</li> <li>• Get behind the bar</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hit a boundary on the pitch or recognise any social ones off it</li> <li>• Be allowed onto his flight home</li> </ul>
Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led from the front in the drinking</li> <li>• Instrumental in the Popeye's night</li> <li>• Post-baby silverware</li> </ul>

Player 6 :	<b>Ian Roughton</b>
Nickname	The Body
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn down a bowl</li> <li>• Have a fag and/or drink in hand</li> <li>• Win a game from no.11</li> <li>• Crash a holiday. Are you a geeky American accountant or quiet Aussie English teacher? Think you've come on holiday to learn Portuguese or do some trekking? No, sorry, uncle Ian is here to school you on the Caiprinhas.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move above number 9 in the order despite winning the first game.</li> <li>• Repeat his day one performance on day two.</li> <li>• Ever arrive without a hangover again</li> </ul>
Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game 1 knock.</li> <li>• Being unable to stand after Popeye's</li> <li>• Receiving a courtesy sausage</li> </ul>

Player 7 :	<b>Kash Nansi</b>
Nickname	Balcony / Drew
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still be in the Balcony Bar</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hit the ball in front of square</li> </ul>

Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balcony bar</li> <li>• Tight bowling throughout</li> </ul>
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Player 8 :	<b>Hans De Witt</b>
Nickname	Super Hans
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a generous donation (to the kitty / Brazilian Cricket Association)</li> <li>• Push Babe close for tour all-rounder in the batting/ bowling/drinking stakes</li> <li>• Love tour</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay in a hostel</li> <li>• Keep roomie Bad Hodgson on the straight and narrow</li> </ul>
Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some great cameo batting</li> <li>• Bowled well throughout tournament and excellently in the final game</li> </ul>

Player 9:	<b>Chris Mahoney</b>
Nickname	Chubbs / Enigma
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look like he's escaped from rehab</li> <li>• Need rehab</li> <li>• Peak and trough within minutes</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look sharp in the field</li> </ul>
Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight: Popeye's</li> <li>• Lowlight: Popeye's</li> </ul>

Player 10 :	<b>Amir</b>
Nickname	Mystery Player no. 2
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a piss when someone is running in to bowl</li> <li>• Take his run out quite well</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember where he is fielding</li> </ul>

Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting two bats whilst playing the Johnny Lucas role must have been a bonus</li> <li>• Finding digs in Copacobana to be closer to The Balcony</li> </ul>
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Player 11 :	<b>Nick Jones</b>
Nickname	Don / Drapes
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose focus the night before a big game</li> <li>• Run someone out / run</li> <li>• Time a run chase</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be picked for the Brazilian team in the near future</li> </ul>
Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run chase in game one</li> <li>• Proud new owner of the most expensive taxi in Cricket Peru history</li> </ul>

Player 12 :	<b>Harry Hildebrand</b>
Nickname	The Concept / El Presidente
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time his appearance for maximum impact</li> <li>• Be pictured getting groped by a young Dutch girl with his wife guiding her hand (how does the man do it!?)</li> <li>• Flirt outrageously with the opposition's girlfriends</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak briefly at the presentation</li> </ul>
Tour highlight / lowlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting his hands on the Amistad Cup / Nurse Esther</li> <li>• Being inducted into the Popeye's Hall of Fame</li> </ul>

Backroom staff	<b>Esther Bartelds</b>
Nickname	Nurse Esther
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the momentousness of a Peruvian Cricket victory</li> <li>• Be looking at flights for SAC 2014</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave a man behind (would Chubbs be with us now if it wasn't for her?)</li> </ul>

Holiday/Cultural highlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting the Peruvian Cricket team</li> <li>• Presenting the Popeye's t-shirts</li> </ul>
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Backroom staff	<b>Nick Veldwijk</b>
Nickname	Jedward
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a very relaxed approach to his girlfriend getting on the lash with the Peru Cricket Team</li> </ul>
Least likely to	Win a game of footvolley against his Mrs.
Holiday/Cultural highlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popeye's</li> <li>• Presenting the First Lady of Peruvian Cricket (Vanessa) with her Popeye's t-shirt</li> </ul>

Backroom staff	<b>Ian Kibble</b>
Nickname	Tiger Grimshaw
Most likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use his washboard abs, square jaw and winning smile to sell you a Honda</li> </ul>
Least likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat any carbs after dark.</li> </ul>
Holiday/Cultural highlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting the Peruvian Cricket team</li> </ul>

## The aftermath

As the dust settled on a famous victory, there were few amongst us who could actually believe it, or Popeye's, had happened.

Under normal circumstances the day that followed would have been a classic. History will show it to have been a footnote to the Sunday, but, nonetheless, on that needs noting.

A long steak and beer lunch with Hildebrands took the edge of the hangover.

We returned to the hostel wondering how we could possibly follow the previous night. Luckily, a German resident stepped in to provide the entertainment for the evening. Asking if we had been in the hostel between 2 and 4 the previous morning, a fact which could neither be confirmed or denied, he proceeded to rant – please add your best guttural accent – about

the amount of noise we had been making (fair point probably), question our ability to afford a hotel (losing his was slightly at this point) and say that the whole thing `really sucked his dick' (totally off script).

I adopted the 1939 Munich Agreement tactic of appeasement, hoping for 'peace in our time'; Babe dismissed him with a 'pay no attention' that couldn't have been more Churchillian if he'd of replaced the Malboro with a cigar and the Itaipava with a brandy. The ANZAC forces stood their ground firmly, Mahoney with the giggles and Myers looking slightly confused as he wandered in mid-way through the assault still wearing the Player of Day cap (as he must do until next April).

With spirits lifting, we headed out. Babe founded the self-explanatory and highly successful 'Do What You Night'. Budget allocation decisions had to pass the (Austalian) 'etiquette' test, which should leave plenty of scope for future tours.

Roughton gratefully received the presentation of a coutesy sausage and various cachacas were sampled before Babe was waved off in the Ipaneman drizzle.

## **The future**

I'm still waiting for the invite to come through from Humala for the official reception at the Palace. Surely, BBC Sports Personality Team Of The Year is a shoe in.

With the SAC in Lima next year, victories in the Under 13s SAC and Amistad Cup behind the men, could this be Peru's moment to move beyond being the perennial piss heads of the tournament?

I look forward to seeing you all there.

Your Man in Sao Paulo,

Nick Jones