

## **ICC World Cricket League Division 6 Singapore 2009**

### **PREVIEW**

Guernsey Press

'Replacing Oliver a problem – captain' by Rob Batiste

Matt Oliver's unavailability for the trip to Singapore in September has given the Guernsey cricket selectors a big headache. The initial 18-man squad from which 14 players will be chosen to represent the island in the World League Division Six tournament includes just one recognised keeper in young Tom Kimber. But, as skipper Stuart Le Prevost admitted, there is also the option to use one or two part-timers, men such as Jeremy Frith and TJ Ozzanne, who have both kept before.

The squad welcomes back GH Smit and Tim Duke, both of whom were unavailable for the successful Division Seven campaign in Guernsey in May. "They make a massive difference," said the skipper, who is glad to see them back and available for final selection. "I'm pretty happy with the squad overall but missing Olly [Oliver] is a big blow."

Replacing a skilful gloveman who also opens the batting is never easy, but in the current climate where the island has never been so short of keeping choices, is a concern.

The squad includes a number of emerging youngsters other than Kimber. James Warr's all-round ability will surely make him a strong contender for a place in the 14, while David Hooper has been pressing hard all summer so far and Tom Kirk is an emerging talent who can hit the ball hard, bowl off-spin and field well.

"People have still got a bit of time to prove their worth," said the captain and two such individuals are TJ Ozzanne, the versatile Cobo player, and Kris Moherndl who this week hit their maiden centuries in a re-arranged Barclays Wealth Evening League Division One game. In scoring 219 for nought in 20 overs against St Pierre, Ozzanne struck 104 and Moherndl 109.

Provisional 18-man squad:

Stuart Le Prevost (captain), Stuart Bisson, Tim Duke, Ben Ferbrache, Jeremy Frith, David Hooper, Tom Kimber, Tom Kirk, Ross Kneller, Peter Le Hegarat, Kris Moherndl, Jamie Nussbaumer, TJ Ozzanne, Blane Queripel, Gary Rich, Lee Savident, GH Smit, James Warr.

'World's best to umpire Greens'

by Aaron Scoones

Ricky Ponting's loss could be Stuart Le Prevost's gain. Australia's captain has asked to allow the world's best umpire Simon Taufel to officiate in the Ashes series. But, as an Australian, Taufel, the ICC umpire-of-the-year for five years running, is not permitted to do so. Instead he is being lined up to officiate at the ICC World Cricket League Division Six in Singapore at the end of the month, where Guernsey are one of the six competing sides.

Although it is not 100% confirmed by the ICC as there could be last minute changes to Taufel's schedule and his visa has yet to be arranged, the world governing body have named him as one of the week-long tournament's eight umpires on their website.

"This is fantastic news and I have nothing but the utmost respect for Taufel," said Le Prevost. "In my eyes he is the best umpire in the world, and it will be an honour and a privilege to be on the same field as him. Plus, it's nice to have something that Ricky Ponting can't have. It adds to what I'm sure will be a great week. Me and the boys can't wait to get out there now."

The youngest member of the Emirates Elite Panel of ICC Umpires, Taufel umpired his first Test in 2000 at just 28 years old. He has since officiated in 59 Test matches and 139 one-day internationals.

His appointment in WCL Division Six follows former West Indian Test umpire Steve Bucknor who stood at WCL Division Seven which was held on the island in May.

"After having the great pleasure of Steve Bucknor here in May to officiate for Division Seven, which further raised the profile of the tournament, to have Simons Taufel for Division Six is amazing," said Guernsey Cricket Board chairman, Dave Piesing. "Many rate him as the very best in the world game today and the impact on the fellow tournament umpires and on the participating players will be enormous. It's a brilliant initiative by the ICC and it's fantastic that he is able to commit the time to do the tournament in Singapore."

The pair now join Malaysia, Botswana, Norway and the hosts Singapore, who are coached by former Australian test cricketer Trevor Chappell, the younger brother of former test captains Ian and Greg. However, the youngest Chappell is best known for bowling an underarm delivery, under the instructions of captain Greg, in the final ball of a limited overs match between Australia and New Zealand in 1981, when the Kiwis needed a six to win. Although not

illegal, it was considered grossly unsportsmanlike and has been called the lowest point in cricket.

Division Six gets underway on Saturday 29 August.

CONSOLIDATION is the goal for the Guernsey cricket team as they begin their Singapore adventure this weekend. The Sarnians fly out to Gatwick at 2pm tomorrow before flying overnight to the Southeast Asian city-state in the evening. They will spend the rest of the week training and acclimatising before their first match in the ICC World Cricket League Division Six against the hosts next Saturday. Along with the islanders and Singapore, the other sides in the week-long competition are Bahrain, Malaysia, Norway and Botswana. The top two nations will go up to WCL Division Five which is being held in Nepal in February.

The bottom two will be relegated to Division Seven, while the third and fourth-placed teams stay in the division.

'Our ultimate aim is come first or second,' said Guernsey team manager Dave Hearse yesterday.

'That's obviously very difficult to achieve when we don't know the opposition, apart from Bahrain. We think it's going to be very hard to get first or second place. If that's the case the main objective is to come third or fourth and stay in the league.'

The Greens' first two games are considered to be the toughest they will encounter in the tournament.

Singapore, playing on their home grounds, are expected to be gunning for promotion along with Bahrain, who Guernsey play on Sunday.

It will be the third time that the island side have played the Bahrainis this year. The Middle East team, which is mainly made up of Pakistanis, defeated Guernsey twice on their way to victory in WCL Division Seven when it was held on the island in May. Hearse believes his side could have them in Singapore.

'We weren't that far away from them and we've got a stronger squad this time,' he said. 'If we get a win out of the first two games we'll be very happy.' The opposition is not the only thing that they are going to be up against. With Singapore lying little more than 100 miles north of the equator, the conditions promise to be hot and stiflingly humid.

'We've picked a quite young squad because the environment is going to be draining,' said Hearse. 'You need a fit 14 players to cope with the heat and

the humidity. Obviously, we need to make sure that we use the squad to get people sufficiently rested. 'We're taking a lot of bowling options which is essential in a week-long tournament as they are the ones most likely to get crocked. But if the batsmen keep scoring big runs they are exposing themselves to dehydration problems as well.'

However, the weather conditions in Singapore at the moment are even less conducive to cricket. They are experiencing thunderstorms that are expected to last all week and could play havoc with Guernsey's preparations.

On Tuesday the Greens are due to play a Twenty20 game against a Singapore Select side before netting and training in the following days leading up to Saturday. 'The weather is awful and there's a lot of rain around Singapore, but we're not playing until the tail-end of next week so hopefully it will dry up,' said Hearse.

While there is uncertainty over the weather in Singapore, there was also uncertainty as to whether Guernsey's influential captain Stuart Le Prevost was going to be able to make the trip.

SINGAPORE in late August is proving to be similarly wet to Guernsey, except it's wetter and much warmer. Tomorrow Guernsey begin their World League Division Six campaign against Singapore and while the Sarnians report no injury worries, doubts remain whether they will get a game in at all. It's been pouring much of the week to back up temperatures of 30C.

'It's very wet. We've had masses of rain and it is a worry because it has been raining in the day,' said Guernsey manager Dave Hearse. 'It's coming down in sheets,' he added.

Similar rain in Guernsey would probably render the island's grass wickets unplayable, but Hearse is confident that should the downpours relent there is every chance of cricket.

'Being windy and humid it dries quickly. The boys have trained very hard Tuesday and Wednesday, so we gave them a day off today [Thursday].'

He would not give a clue to the team line-up for tomorrow's game but said nobody was ruled out at this stage. 'All 14 have got a chance of playing as they have all been doing very well.'

In the few days the squad have been in the busy city, they have been able to view two of the tournament grounds. 'We have seen two of the three, namely

SCC and Indian Sports Club,’ said GCB chairman Dave Piesing. ‘The third one at Kallang is further away and we won’t see that until tomorrow’s practice.

‘The SCC ground is right in the heart of the city at the Padang, surrounded by skyscrapers, and has extremely impressive facilities. The wicket apparently has pace and bounce, and Kallang is meant to play in a similar way. ‘The Indian Sports Ground wicket is lower and slower and is right next door to the Ceylon Sports Club ground where we played on Tuesday.

Not all the teams had arrived yesterday, but Piesing had take the opportunity to see one in warm-up action. ‘I saw half an hour of Bahrain in a friendly yesterday and they have two changes from their last squad in Guernsey. They have not played since as a team, having focused on fitness. ‘Botswana arrived on Tuesday after three warm-up games in Sri Lanka and Norway arrived last night.

The other teams from Malaysia and Singapore arrive tomorrow along with the umpires.’

GUERNSEY manager Dave Hearse will wait until the last minute before he names his team to face hosts Singapore today in the opening match of the Pepsi ICC World Cricket League Division Six at the Singapore Cricket Club. ‘It depends on the weather and it depends on the wicket,’ he said yesterday evening.

‘Because of the weather we’ve not seen any wickets. It’s been under cover most of the time. It’s been very wet and the outfield was wet today.’

All week, the east Asian city state has had steamy 30C-plus temperatures. And like clockwork, it has also experienced early morning thunder showers around 4am each day that last for a couple of hours.

But Hearse expects today’s game to get under way without a hitch. ‘They have a lot of rain in the last three weeks but, having said that, the Singapore Cricket Club is a fantastic ground and it is obviously well looked after. It drains quickly,’ he said.

Hearse is expected to name near enough the same 11 that defeated Jersey in the inter-insular earlier this month with wicket-keeper Tom Kimber coming in for the non-travelling Matt Oliver.

Captain Stuart Le Prevost, Jeremy Frith, former Hampshire professional Lee Savident, GH Smit, Ross Kneller, Stuart Bisson, Gary Rich, Blane Queripel and

Jamie Nussbaumer should all feature. The question mark hangs over whether they want to play an extra batsman in either Kris Moherndl or Ben Ferbrache or play an extra bowler in Johnny Warr. Whoever does step on to the field knows they have an important match on their hands.

Singapore are arguably the pre-tournament favourites. 'We don't know anything about them, but they will be a fairly good side,' said Hearse. 'They are used to the conditions and they play on these pitches. They are going to come out strong and there might be a good crowd being a Saturday so we've got to be prepared for that as well. 'We're looking for a positive start from the donkeys.'

The Greens arrived in Singapore on Monday. They have had one warm-up match against a Singapore Select side on Tuesday, which they won at a canter. They have been training and netting on the other days apart from a rest day on Thursday. 'The mood in the camp is good and positive and we've had two or three fairly testing practice sessions to get used to the atmospherics,' said Hearse. 'Everything is fantastic. The ICC have picked a good hotel in a good location. 'Hopefully we're looking for a win first up.' Le Prevost echoed his manager's sentiments. 'The boys are feeling good and everyone seems nice and relaxed,' he said. 'We're just looking forward to hitting the ground running.'

The Guernsey and Singapore match starts at 10am local time (3am GMT). The day's other matches sees Bahrain meet Malaysia at the Indian Association and Botswana versus Norway at the Kalang.