

Calypso Warriors told to step up in regional series

By STEPHON NICHOLAS Tuesday, January 5 2010

THE national cricket team will leave for Jamaica today to bowl off the WICB Regional Four-Day Tournament and Dudnath Ramkessoon, chairman of the Selection Committee of the Trinidad and Tobago Cricket Board (TTCB), has called on the young players in the national team to step up.

The TT batting lineup will be tested with the absence of four key players including Kieron Pollard, Dwayne Bravo, Darren Bravo and Adrian Barath.

Ramkessoon revealed yesterday that he asked the senior players in the squad to lead by example and noted that those given the opportunity to wear the national colours must take advantage of it.

He admitted however that the majority of the squad was young but pointed out that most of the players have plied their trade on the regional level.

"Though they are young they have the experience at the regional or international level," he said. "It is an opportunity for them to perform well so when the other players return the selectors won't have to look to replace them," he added.

TT have not brought home the Four-Day title since 2006, and Ramkessoon explained, the officials and players are eager to correct this problem. The Calypso Warriors recently successfully defended their WICB One-Day regional title and have dominated the region in the Twenty20 format, winning the Stanford tournament and advancing to the final of the lucrative Airtel Twenty20 Champions League in India.

"We are seen as the regional champions but we have to show that we are capable of winning the Four-Day title to be seen as true champions," he said. He noted that because of their success regionally and internationally, TT will be targetted by the other teams who will see them as "the team to beat".

Jamaica have won the tournament for the past two years and with the first round of competition on home soil, they are keen for a three-peat. Ramkessoon is wary of the hosts but believes all teams must be taken seriously.

Indeed, TT open their account against the Combined Campuses and Colleges on January 8, a team which beat them outright last season inside three days.

Ramkessoon revealed, however, that the TT management and players are very confident going into their first match.

"Once we play to the best of our ability we can beat anybody," he declared.

He expressed satisfaction with the team's preparation considering the time constraints but admitted it could have been better.

"Only one day of our trial matches was affected by rain," he said.

The TTCB selectors have chosen five spinners in the squad including chinaman and googly specialist Dave Mohammed, off-spinner Amit Jaggernauth, Sunil Narine and Sherwin Ganga as well as "leggie" Imran Khan.

Ramkessoon, a former national captain predicted that spin will be TT's trump card as it has been in the recent past but noted the fast bowling of Richard Kelly, Ravi Rampaul and Rayad Emrit ensures TT has the attack to handle any pitch condition.

He expressed uncertainty surrounding the introduction of the pink ball in the day/night matches and noted that his team has yet to practice with it.

"We are not certain if it will last. This is new to us as it is to the other teams. We are venturing into unknown territory," he said with some concern.

TT SQUAD — Daren Ganga (captain), Dave Mohammed, Lendl Simmons, Jason Mohammed, Ravi Rampaul, Denesh Ramdin, Imran Khan, Sherwin Ganga, Sunil Narine, Rayad Emrit, Richard Kelly, Amit Jaggernauth, Justin Guillen.

Officials — Kelvin Williams (coach), Ronald Rogers (physio), Colin Borde (manager).

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