

ICC Europe Division 2 Scotland 2006

PREVIEW

'Piesing waits as Jersey lose out' by Rob Batiste

Guernsey cricket officials hope that news of Jersey losing the services of their top player for next month's European Championships is not the portent of the GCB losing its appeal on its own two stars.

Jersey will definitely have to do without former county star Ryan Driver for the week-long championships in Glasgow, and Guernsey are still sweating on the availability of Lee Savident and Jeremy Frith, both of whom were deemed ineligible by the European Cricket Council. 'There's no news yet on our appeals but I understand ours were submitted two or three days after Jersey's and as they are based on different facts there was no reason why they should be heard at the same time,' said Dave Piesing. 'Last week was a week full of ICC annual meetings and it seems that Jersey's may have been heard by the relevant ICC people before their involvement in those ICC meetings, whereas ours appear to be getting dealt with afterwards. It's preventing us from finalising our squad,' Piesing added.

Driver's eligibility has been blocked because he has not been an island resident for the four years required by ICC rules. Jersey applied for dispensation but were refused. He will now act as coach.

'Hearse grateful for match despite defeat' by Gareth Le Prevost

From this showing Jersey should go to the European Second Division Championship in Scotland in confident mood. On the other hand, it is difficult to gauge Guernsey's position because they were severely under-strength at the KGV, despite the conditions of this warm-up being that both sides could utilise all their 14-man squad.

By the time the hosts came around to chase a target of 260 in 50 overs none of the top five Dave Hearse would like on the scorecard were there. Lee Savident and Jeremy Frith did not come back to the island for the fixture, Tim Duke and Mark Jefferies were unavailable, Ami Banerjee did not play as he rested an injured shoulder and Matt Oliver hurt a finger while keeping wicket so couldn't bat.

S, whereas Jersey played their cards perfectly to the rules and had quality batsmen in the shape of Jonny Gough and Andy Dewhurst coming in at nine and 10, Guernsey were forced into pushing Stuart Bisson up to open. Hearse, who admitted that it would be nice to know who we are allowed to take to

Scotland with regards to the appeal on the eligibility of Savident and Frith, was not too downbeat, though, after his side were dismissed for 146.

'Lee will be a big player for us in Scotland if he can play. If you bring in Lee, Ami, Tim Duke and Matt Oliver into the batting, that's four out of the top five you would expect to score the bulk of your runs,' Hearse said. He added that Oliver's finger had not been broken 'so that's a positive.'

On the day, two teenagers were the home side's best batsmen. Jamie Nussbaumer, coming in at number three, was tentative early on against some accurate Jersey bowling, but he grew in confidence as his innings progressed and fully deserved his half century.

Later on, Kris Moherndl contributed a classy 31 when the cause was long lost. GH Smit's 30 was the only other double-figure score as the hosts struggled to keep the board ticking over as Jersey's medium pacers continuously hit the ideal line and length, Mark Saralis was the pick of them with a fine 10-over spell in which he claimed two for 12. 'Young Kris and Jamie batted well. Jamie was perhaps a bit slow early on but without his contribution it would have been a lot worse and when you think in a full island team he would be batting nine, 10 or jack, it's pleasing to have that depth,' Hearse said.

Earlier, the two Queripels – Blane and Steve – both produced decent opening spells as Jersey were restricted to just 18 runs from the first 12 overs. But, after Saralis had fallen to Steve Queripel, Ian Crocker and top scorer Mathew Hague laid the foundations for a big total, with a second-wicket stand of 93. Captain Hague was particularly fluent and you would normally expect more than four boundaries when he scores 6s, but he worked the ones and twos well to set the tone for the innings. If there was something Jersey did infinitely better than Guernsey it was rotate the strike and utilise the big outfield.

Spinners Gary Rich and Aaron Scoones turned the ball considerably in the middle of the innings as they collected five wickets between them and bowled well in tandem, but once Jersey had seen them off, they accelerated over the final 10 overs, scoring 109 in that period.

Jamie Brewster supplied the big blows in his quick-fire 32 while Gough and Dewhurst added an unbeaten 80 for the ninth wicket. 'Steve and Blane bowled very well at the start and both spinners bowled tidily,' said the island manager. 'There were some fielding positions we will have to look at and, when we played Bermuda and Namibia last year, we have got to have bowlers to bowl the last 10 overs who have weapons to keep the total down. In saying that, it

was possibly a slightly false total because you would not normally have batsmen like Gough and Dewhurst coming in at nine and 10. If we could have beaten them with the team we had, it would have been a good boost, but it was another good training game for us and Jersey. They will obviously be pleased to have beaten us and it will give them a confidence boost but we are not going to read too much into the result, especially with us being five or six players down.'

'Duke ruled out as problems pile up' by Gareth Le Prevost

Guernsey cricket officials may have to wait until after the weekend to learn the fate of their appeals to the International Cricket Council on star players Lee Savident and Jeremy Frith. With the European Championships in Glasgow only 13 days away there remains no news on whether two of the island's top guns will be available, having initially been rejected by the ICC.

No less a cricketing legend than Indian Sunil Gavaskar is involved in the appeals process and Guernsey Cricket Board chairman Dave Piesing has been assured a decision by Monday at the latest. But, as the frustration builds, the eligibility of Savident and Frith is the least of the problems facing island manager Dave Hearse.

Rovers all-rounder Tim Duke, one of the stars of last summer's friendly one-day internationals against Namibia and Bermuda, is definitely out of the week-long European tournament due to personal reasons. Also, two others, including Frith, have broken bones in their hands. Frith has broken a finger in two places and batsmen Richard Veillard has broken the knuckle on his left hand, although the latter remains hopeful of being fit.

'It makes planning very difficult,' said Piesing, who confirmed that Pessimists all-rounder Pierre Moody will now definitely play in Scotland. Meanwhile, batting prodigy Tim Ravenscroft hit an unbeaten 90 as the Channel Islands under-14s beat Huntingdonshire yesterday.

'Double appeal victory toasted' by Rob Batiste

The odds on Guernsey winning next month's European Championships and with it promotion from Division Two will have been cut with the news that Lee Savident and Jeremy Frith have been given the green light to play. The International Cricket Council in Dubai upheld both appeals made on the players' behalf by the Guernsey Cricket Board.

Skipper Andy Biggins is a relieved man. 'This is obviously great news for us and will dramatically improve the depth in the squad, offering us yet more

options with both bat and ball,' he said. 'Both Jeremy and Lee have made a big contribution to the Guernsey squad over the past two years and I am delighted they have been given the chance they have worked hard for,' he added. The captain said the aims remained the same and that was to win five games. 'We owe that much to those who now find themselves not selected but who have worked just as hard as all of the squad.'

Dave Piesing, the GCB chairman, admits that he was pleasantly surprised by the judgement after both players were deemed ineligible. 'We are obviously delighted that both appeals have been upheld. The circumstances of the two players and the basis upon which the respective appeals were made were totally different in each case. While I was reasonably confident about Lee's situation, Jeremy situation was more complex and it was much harder to predict the outcome,' he said. 'The ICC appeals committee clearly took all the relevant points into account and deemed the very close connections of both players with the island, albeit very different in nature, to be sufficient to make them eligible for this forthcoming tournament.'

Piesing understands that the ICC upheld both appeals because the two players concerned have both already previously satisfied the criteria. In Savident's case, once he has represented Guernsey in Glasgow, he will remain eligible for all future tournaments as he was born in the island. In Frith's case, while he has been granted special dispensation this year, his eligibility will be subject to review on an annual basis in relation to his residential circumstances and ongoing commitment to Guernsey cricket on the development front.

'Savident and Frith ready to conquer' by Aaron Scoones

Dave Hearse has called on Guernsey to return home from Glasgow in nine day's time with the European Second Division Championship. Today the island manager and his team start their journey to Scotland for their first International Cricket Council tournament since being granted affiliate membership last year.

Hearse is in a bullish mood. 'The goal is to go and win it,' he said. 'There are bigger and better things to be had like the European First Division, the ICC Trophy and then the World Cup in 2011. If the team plays to maximum effect then they have a good chance. 'Obviously we don't know how we'll do because we don't know what the other sides are like.'

After a training session tomorrow afternoon, the Sarnians take on Gibraltar in their opening group game on Thursday. 'I think it's important we get a good

start to get players to their maximum capacity early on,' said Hearse. 'We don't know too much about the opposition, but they don't know too much about us.'

On Saturday, Guernsey face Germany and then on Sunday Greece. Jersey are in the other group along with Norway, France and Israel. The two top teams from both groups go through to next Tuesday's semi-finals. The final is the following day.

Guernsey's chance of reaching that final have been boosted by the availability of Lee Savident and Jeremy Frith. The Guernsey Cricket Board successfully appealed after the ICC ruled that they were ineligible. They had both been picked for the inaugural European squad that took on the MCC in Rotterdam at the end of June. Frith subsequently dropped out when the problem initially came up while Savident opened the batting in the fixture. The two all-rounders are undoubtedly Guernsey's finest players. 'In Jeremy and Lee we've got two outstanding bowlers and batsmen,' said Hearse. 'They have lots of experience and they are two outstanding fielders as well. They are key. 'I wouldn't say we wouldn't have a chance without them but it will be easier.' Savident, 28, was born and bred in the island and he left in 1996 to pursue a professional career with Hampshire. When his eligibility was questioned, it did raise some eyebrows. I was surprised there was a problem and I wasn't surprised that my appeal went through,' said Savident. 'I'm glad it's gone through. It was silly; it was a bit like telling Beckham that he can't play for England because he works in Spain. What difference should it make where you work. It's your birthright.' Frith lives outside Southampton and has special dispensation to play for Guernsey given the amount of hours he spends yearly in the Bailiwick in developing the sport. The 28-year-old also turns out for Total Cobo in the Carey Olsen Weekend League. 'I was a little bit surprised to be going after all the fuss but I'm pleasantly surprised,' he said. 'It will be a nice few days away. A good few days of cricket and it will be good to see the boys again.'

Both Savident and Frith admit that they do not know too much about the teams they will be facing over the next week. 'I don't know how good the opposition will be until we play our first game,' said Savident. 'But I don't imagine the opposition will be as good as Namibia, Bermuda and the Scottish Academy sides that we played last year. I think that now we've got a full side we should be all right if we get off to a good start.'

The tournament runs side by side in Glasgow with the First Division Championship that feature the big guns of European cricket – Ireland, Scotland, Holland and Denmark. The ICC European development manager, Richard Holdsworth, has dismissed the questions of the lower division competition playing second fiddle to the first division contest. 'The biggest winners of the tournament will be winners of the second division and we are going to keep a close eye on it,' he said.

Guernsey squad: Andy Biggins (capt), Ami Banerjee, Mark Jefferies, Blane Queripel (all Optimists), Stuart Le Prevost (vice capt), Jeremy Frith, Matt Oliver, Jamie Nussbaumer, Kris Moherndl, Gary Rich (all Cobo), Richard Veillard, Pierre Moody (Wanderers), Stuart Bisson (Rovers), and Lee Savident.

'Israelis not so welcome' by Aaron Scoones

Israel's escalating war with Hezbollah has overshadowed Guernsey and Jersey's preparations for the European Championships which start in Glasgow today. Jersey's opening match of the tournament against Israel has been called off due to security fears and Dave Hearse's Guernsey side could play the Israelis in the play-off stages. Muslim groups held a rally in the Scottish city which saw more than 400 people protest the escalating middle-east crisis. Protesters have since contacted Strathclyde police to warn that double this number would be present at Israel's match with Jersey at the Glasgow Academicals ground. In light of this, the host ground made it known that they would not be able to stage the match as a children's nursery was also being run there and it was deemed too much of a risk. With no other ground with sufficient security facilities willing to host the fixture the European Cricket Council opted to cancel it and award both teams a point.

'I think they called it off on the advice of the police and all the other people they speak to about security,' said Jersey's manager Dave Gorman. 'They're trying to make sure the players and all those involved are safe and if a game is to be called off then all the best.' Jersey were fancying taking all the points against the side that is widely regarded as the weakest in their group, 'We're disappointed to be the unlucky side to miss out on the prospect of two points instead of one,' said Gorman. 'It's just one of those things and we've got to try and deal with it and try to get maximum points from the two games we will play.'

Guernsey manager Dave Hearse was staying tight-lipped on the Israeli team situation. 'We've been asked not to comment by the ECC for the sake of

everyone here,' he said. 'We're here to play cricket and Israel are here to play cricket and apart from that I've got nothing to say.'

The ECC insists, however, that Israel's remaining two matches against France and Norway this coming weekend will take place at the Academicals ground.

On arrival in Scotland the Israeli team were given a police escort to the hotel in the centre of Glasgow where all the teams in the competition are staying.

Security has been stepped up with all the players having to wear identification badges at all times while on the premises. Guernsey arrived in Scotland late on Tuesday and after a training session yesterday that was disrupted by rain, Hearse named his side to face Gibraltar today at Old Anniesland. Out of the squad of 14, batsman Richard Veillard and seam bowlers Steve Queripel and Kris Moherndl were the ones to miss out.