

## Barbados Cricket Tour 2008

With 27 boys and 4 staff, this was the biggest tour party of all of the four Barbados Tours that I have run and it was probably the most successful trip too.

Despite being dropped off at the wrong terminal at Gatwick and having seating problems with BA, we managed to leave on time and enjoyed a quick flight (8 hours!) with some fortunate members of the party upgraded to Club class!

We spent the first day on the cricket field preparing ourselves for the difficult matches that lay ahead, and then in the evening, headed on to Oistins for a street party in the evening. Some of the boys showed off their best moves on the stage in front of hundreds of onlookers.

The standard of cricket in Barbados remains extremely high but the boys should be really proud of their commendable results.

The 'B' team, coached superbly by Rob Temlett, played 5 matches and won 1 game, thus becoming the first Downsend 'B' team to win a match in Barbados. This team were admirably led on the field by their captain George Depree and Mr T was pleased with the progress of all of the boys. The highlights were George's 37

against St Giles School, Alex Sachak's 4 wickets and Harry Allingham's 3 wickets in their victorious match against St Catherine's School. They had a tough time as a lot of their opponents were 'A' standard.

The 'A' team produced some excellent performances, ably led by their captain James Trower. They won their first match against Boscobelle in fine fashion. Downsend posted 158 in 30 overs with Sam Morris scoring 62, Cameron McIntyre 29 and James Francis 20 not out. Then, with the opposition looking ominous at 89-2 in reply, Alex Culhane and James Hill produced wonderful bowling performances – each taking 4 wickets – to bowl the opposition out for just 97!

In the second fixture against Alexandra School our batting display was poor on a soft wicket (yes it does rain occasionally out there!) and we struggled to 60 all out. However the bowlers performed well again and the opposition took 16 overs to reach their target (61-3).

The third game against Lester Vaughan saw the team win their second match of the trip. We restricted the opposition to 129-9 in their 30 overs, with James Hill taking 3

wickets. Myles Pittam and James Trower (62 not out) put on 46 for the first wicket and Sam Morris (37 not out) batted superbly at number 4 as Downsend won convincingly by 8 wickets with 4 overs left.

The fourth challenge came against Wanderers, the only team that every Downsend tour party has played against and we nearly beat them for the first time. Alas 6 dropped catches and some nervous batting meant that we lost by just 24 runs, despite 21 not out by Alex Culhane. However the highlight of the game was watching Nick Williams bowl his leg-spin beautifully with excellent control and take 3 wickets in front of one of the greatest spinners that have lived, Lance Gibbs – the only West Indian spinner to take over 300 test wickets! In the final match, against YMPC, the bowlers once more led the way with a superb performance, allowing the opposition a miserly 127 all out in 35 overs with Nick Williams and James Hill taking 3 wickets each. Sadly, the batsmen did not apply themselves enough and we finished a mere 9 runs short.

Away from the cricket, the boys enjoyed the most action-packed tour to date. They swam with turtles

and amongst the coral; went on a fabulous submarine trip down to 140 feet to see the sealife in its natural environment and see a wreck; did water sports including banana rides (with one keen guest rider) and the dreaded 'Gladiator'; went on an island tour; counted the diamonds; enjoyed a relaxing day on a catamaran and visited the refurbished Kensington Oval, where they had a formal tour photo taken!

Throughout the tour the behaviour of the boys was fantastic! They were a real credit to Downsend and I lost count of the number of people (tourists and locals) who commented positively about their politeness and behaviour.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff (Helen Black, Rob Temlett & Amina Langridge) for all their help, support and fun – they were immense! I also want to thank and congratulate the boys. The cricket they played was excellent and bodes well for the season ahead for all the senior teams. I am sure that they have many fond and special memories of Barbados which will stay with them for ever.

*Jim Castle*

