



## ISRAEL SET FOR EUROPEAN DIVISION 2 CHALLENGE

*Tournament takes place in Guernsey, Channel Islands, July 13 - 19*

For those fearing withdrawal symptoms following the completion of the soccer World Cup, they need not panic. Another major international sports event kicks off just two days after the final in Soccer City, and Israel will be even be participating in this one. Of course the event in question is the ICC Europe Division 2 Cricket Championships taking place in Guernsey from July 13 - 19.

Speaking of the World Cup, Israel has a clearly defined pathway to qualify for the 2016 cricket version of the Mundial. Basically a couple of slots at the World Cup are open to the so-called minnow (non test-playing countries), and global cricket has recently been structured into 8 divisions, each of approximately 6 teams, with the teams at the top of the pyramid come World Cup time, joining the illustrious test nations at the tournament. The bad news is Israel is currently not even amongst those approximately 50 countries within the global structure. The good news is it does have a realistic chance of joining that club, having been promoted back to European Division 2 following good results last year. Confused? Admittedly it's little complicated but to cut a very long story fractionally shorter, the bottom line is if Israel finishes above both Germany and France at next week's tournament they will win promotion to World Group Division 8 and a ticket to that tournament which takes place in Kuwait later this year. Win that tournament and its promotion to Division 7 in 2011. Win that and bring on Division 6 in 2012. Very simple.

The pathway may be clearly marked but just getting onto it will not be easy. Guernsey, already in World Group Division 6, will be the clear favorites to win the tournament. Cricket is very well established in the Channel Islands, the facilities are of the highest standard, and Israel does not realistically stand a chance against the host nation. Norway - yes Norway - has had excellent results in recent years and become one of the stronger nations in European cricket. The team is predominantly made up of Pakistani immigrants and if anybody will be challenging Guernsey for the title, it will be the Norwegians. Against the other three teams Israel will fancy their chances. Although both Gibraltar and Germany have had the better of contests with Israel in recent times, and results against France have at best been mixed, these are countries against which Israel will know they stand at least stand a chance. Priority number one will be to win at least one of these games and hopefully avoid relegation, priority number two win all three and get one foot on the path to World Cup 2016.

The Israel squad is very similar to the team which was so successful in winning last years' Division 3 tournament. Herschel Gutman, Israel's national cricket development officer, carries the dual responsibility of both captaining and coaching the team. Raymond Aston, recently appointed vice captain, will be expected to lead Israel's batting, although debutant Josh Evans should add much needed stability to the top of the innings. Safania Nagavkar and Gabi Schachat, who have both risen through the junior ranks into the full national team, will be looking to build on their experiences from last year and show they have the ability to perform at the senior level. Eshkol Solomon has been in superb form in the domestic league this year and will also want to really make his mark at an international tournament. All rounder's Yaniv Razpurker and David Massil are proven performers for the Israel team, as are spinner Steven Shein and wicketkeeper Shailesh Bangerra. Eliezer Samson, a revelation last year, will take the new ball, with his Lod Rangers teammate, medium pacer Raymond Talker, another debutant, keen to continue the good form he has shown that won him selection. Two more players embarking on their first tour with the senior team are Ra'anana batsman Daniel Hyman, the leading run scorer in the domestic league so far this season, and Neve Yonatan's Itamar Kehimkar, another to rise through the junior ranks.

## LEAGUE SEASON HEADING FOR EXCITING FINALE

The 2010 domestic season commenced in early April, with 56 games of cricket having taken place over the past 3 months. With the first round of matches almost complete in Division 1, Ra'anana enjoy a slight lead over Young Ashdod and Super Lions Lod as they chase their first title in almost 20 years, but with all three teams set to play each other again when the season resumes after the international break, the league will probably only be decided on the final day. Sri Lanka Jerusalem have swept all before them so far in Division 2 and seem almost certain to win promotion, but a couple of teams are still

### ISRAEL SQUAD

Herschel Gutman (Capt / Coach)  
Raymond Aston (v/c, Young Ashdod)  
Shailesh Bangerra (Super Lions Lod)  
Josh Evans (Ra'anana)  
Daniel Hyman (Ra'anana)  
Itamar Kehimkar (Neve Yonatan)  
David Massil (Super Lions Lod)  
Safania Nagavkar (Dimona C)  
Yaniv Razpurker (Neve Yonatan)  
Eliezer Samson (Lod Rangers)  
Gabi Schachat (Ra'anana)  
Eshkol Solomon (Super Lions Lod)  
Steven Shein (Ra'anana)  
Raymond Talker (Lod Rangers)  
  
Ezra Ben Yehuda (Manager)  
Avraham Penkar (Scorer)

### FIXTURES

Tues July 13: v NORWAY  
Wed July 14: v GUERNSEY  
Fri July 16: v FRANCE  
Sat July 17: v GIBRALTAR  
Mon July 19: v GERMANY

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chasing the second spot, which would earn them a promotion play-off match against the team second-from-bottom in Division 1. League reports, fixtures, results and tables can be found on the ICA website [www.israel.cricket.org](http://www.israel.cricket.org).