



Sammy, Richardson hail ICC Global Cricket Academy

Dubai: Oct 4, 2011

West Indies captain Darren Sammy and team manager Richie Richardson have hailed the "wonderful" facilities of the ICC Global Cricket Academy (ICC GCA) at the end of a week-long training camp at Dubai Sports City (DSC).

The West Indies squad's practice at the venue ahead of a tour to Bangladesh culminated in a five-wicket victory against Afghanistan on Monday evening, and Sammy said he was delighted with what was on offer for his players.

"The sign here says 'a centre of excellence for cricket' and it is, indeed, that," he said.

"The facilities are wonderful and I think every cricketer who gets an opportunity to use them would be very appreciative. You can get whatever you want here, in the indoor facility (there are pitches for) spin, pace, and there's the bowling machines. It's a great way to prepare before a tour," he added.

The facilities at the ICC GCA include indoor and outdoor nets with pitches replicating the conditions they are set to face in Bangladesh, as well as a state-of-the-art gymnasium and ProBatter, a bowling machine which replicates the deliveries of many of the world's leading bowlers.

Sammy and his team-mates have also used the Academy's cricket grounds to stage practice matches against the West Indies Academy players, who have also been using the ICC GCA, as well as the United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan national teams, with those two sides preparing for their ICC Intercontinental Cup match in Sharjah starting on Wednesday.

Richardson, a former West Indies captain, said: "I've heard a lot about this centre of excellence for cricket and I've always wanted to be here.

"Now, having come here, I'm really impressed with the quality of all the various equipment. The facilities are of a very high standard and it's just the place for anyone who wants to come and play and prepare for a tour. Everything's absolutely perfect."

The West Indies travel to Bangladesh this week for a tour featuring two Tests, three One-Day Internationals (ODIs) and one Twenty20 International (T20I).

Looking ahead to the tour, Sammy said: "Playing Bangladesh at home is always tough, as New Zealand found out last time they were there. An important factor for us will be how well we play spin. That will pose our biggest challenge. Also, our batting has to come to the fore (because) in the last series (versus India), until the last Test in Dominica, our batsmen didn't really dominate.

"These are the two areas we will definitely have to improve on."

Maqbul Dudhia, General Manager Sports Business at DSC, said: "DSC through the ICC Global Cricket Academy has been delighted to host West Indies over the past week.

"The ICC GCA is the perfect choice for sides to come and practice because it offers world-class facilities, can cater for all cricketing requirements and is a hub for teams as they crisscross the globe.

"And having the West Indies here over the past week has been the perfect reminder of the fantastic season of cricket we have coming up at the Dubai Cricket Stadium, our biggest and best yet."

The Dubai Cricket Stadium at Dubai Sports City is gearing up for its biggest cricket season since opening in 2009, with 34 days of international action over the next six months.

The venue sees Pakistan play Sri Lanka in one Test and three ODIs in October and November before England arrives to face Pakistan in two Tests, two ODIs and two T20Is in January and February 2012. Then, in March, the Dubai Cricket Stadium will host matches in the ICC World Twenty20 Qualifier.

Details of how to purchase tickets and hospitality packages will be announced in the very near future.