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ANDREW SMITH/PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Fans watch the first one-day international between West Indies and South Africa at Sabina Park in Kingston on May 7. Sabina Park will be renovated for the Cricket World Cup that will be held in the Caribbean in 2007. The topsoil has already been removed and the field resurfaced. When the entire project is completed Sabina is expected to have a seating capacity of 16,700.

CRICKET WORLD CUP WATCH

Sabina's new-look outfield gets top ranking

Anthony Foster
Youthlink Writer

THE NEWLY-SOWED Sabina Park outfield used for the first two one-day international cricket matches between the West Indies and South Africa two weekends ago has been identified as the best in the region.

South Africa captain Graeme Smith said the work done on the Sabina Park field is in keeping with the improvements which have to be done in time for the 2007 Cricket World Cup.

"The outfield is very good," said Smith. "It's one of the softest in the Caribbean. We enjoyed it."

The two one-day internationals were the 16th and 17th to be played at Sabina Park,

which has had its boundaries shortened. The cricket ground hosted its first one-day match on April of 1984.

"It looks very nice, and not just from afar either," said commentator and former West Indies and Jamaica quickie, Michael Holding, who believes it was the best he has ever seen Sabina Park. "When you actually walk on that (field), it is very cushioned first of all, and is also very relaxing on the feet."

FAST AND SMOOTH

It is now fast and smooth, Mr. Holding said. "Sabina Park in the past was a bit hard. It was green that time, yes, but underneath was very hard ... so when you try to dive around, it seems as if you were trying to hurt yourself."

He said, "I don't think anyone could be asking for more right now."

However, project manager, Chris Smith, believes more could be done to improve the outfield.

"It could be considered to be work in progress," the project manager said. "We still have some dressing work to do on it."

Chris Smith said the work will not stop until they satisfy themselves that they achieve what they want for the World Cup.

"The work is continuing," Smith said. "There are low areas here and there."

And they only had a period of six weeks to grow the grass, the project manager said. "We would have wanted eight weeks, but lucky for us, we got some rain."