

# ICC World Test Championship Final

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Southampton, England, UK

Hampshire Bowl

## Ramakrishnan Sridhar

India Media Conference



**Q. Just want to know, you already announced your 11. Because of the change in the conditions and stuff, do you think -- are you tempted to change that, how you look at the 11?**

RAMAKRISHNAN SRIDHAR: Hello, everyone. Well, I was expecting this to be the first question. I think the 11 which has been announced is 11 which takes the pitch and conditions out of the equation. I think it's an 11 which can play and perform on any given surface in any given weather conditions. So that is what I believe this 11 is all about which we will put in the park.

But having that said, the toss is not yet over, so we will -- if it needs to be taken, there will be a decision taken at the time of the toss.

**Q. Considering the fickle English weather, do you think the extra reserve day was a well-thought-out decision? Because many times things have gone wrong in major tournaments but now this reserve day will really come in handy with so much time being lost.**

RAMAKRISHNAN SRIDHAR: Absolutely. It's trial and refinement, isn't it? I mean, the experience ICC has got with organizing matches and tournaments, they know what it is about and we know how the English weather is, so I think they've been very prudent and wise in having the reserve day.

As it is if things start on time tomorrow, we're looking at four hours of play on the reserve day so that's going to make it a complete match, and that's exactly what the viewers and audience want, a full game.

**Q. I just wanted to ask you, with so much inclement weather around, how important is it to keep the guys motivated and how do you ensure that everyone is in the best mental shape?**

RAMAKRISHNAN SRIDHAR: That's a good question. As far as the first part of your question, as motivation goes, I don't think you need to motivate anyone who's representing their country. And in a World Test

Championship final, I think there is no further and better motivation than that.

Yes, to keep them in good mental space, that is something which is very important because they're going to be on and off the field with the weather, so they will have to know how to keep their concentration going, switching on, switching down, switching off, so that is something all the players are aware of.

They are a very, very experienced bunch of players. They have played a few finals, they have won a few tournaments and they've played a few test matches, each one of them in that 11. So yeah, they all know how to do it, and they are in a delicate frame of mind as of now. They are in good space.

**Q. My question is about Shubman Gill. From the time of the England Test matches, there was a bit of a patchy form and that continued in IPL, also. During this period when you got to work with him after the camp started, what kind of mindset or technical stuff that the coaches worked with Shubman from the England series to now?**

RAMAKRISHNAN SRIDHAR: Shubman Gill is a million-dollar cricketer, isn't he? The way he's batting now is brilliant. I'm not in a position to give you the technical word which is going to Shubman Gill because that would be an answer better given by the batting coach, Vikram, but I've seen him bat. I've done throw-outs to him on all these days and looking in good nick, and he's looking in excellent mindset.

He's very clear about his role. He's very clear about his game plan. He's very clear about what he wants to do. So that puts him in good stead for this test match irrespective of the weather. So yeah, he's looking great, Shubman Gill. As we all know, he's a very exciting prospect for India in the long term, and I just can't wait to watch him play and perform.

**Q. I just want to know how difficult it was for the players to pass time, and what were they doing when it was raining?**

RAMAKRISHNAN SRIDHAR: Yeah, I mean, they have the breakfast lounge there and in our rooms, so yeah, we are having chats, we were talking. Some of them were

playing Monorail, some of them were playing some darts, and a good bit of boys are playing table tennis all the time keeping an eye on the weather.

Yeah, it's easy to pass some time when such a good group of cricketers get together and they are like a family. We've all been very close because most of our time we have always been in bubble, so there's a great camaraderie on this team. So passing time amongst us is the easiest thing, so we play a lot of other games like we were doing just now until the game was called off and now everybody is back to their rooms.

Yeah, so there's a great camaraderie, and the chat and the games that they play is always on.

**Q. What challenge are the fielders going to face after a full day of rain? And what would be the better option, bat first or bowl first in these conditions after a full day of rain?**

RAMAKRISHNAN SRIDHAR: The challenges we face as a fielding unit in cold conditions, obviously, would be to keep our hands warm, and we have many methods to do that as a fielding team. And today being a complete washout, there is no mental challenge really because tomorrow is going to be the first day of the Test match. We'll go in as we go into any new game, so that's not a real big challenge for the boys.

As far as the second question is concerned, I think they'll best be answered when Virat wins the toss, so let's cross the bridge when we get to it.

**Q. Just wanted to ask when the match is not there on the off day, you can enjoy, you can pass time, but when you are supposed to play an important match like this and when the match is not happening because of the consistent rain, who is the biggest entertainer in the team and why and how does the keep the team atmosphere alive?**

RAMAKRISHNAN SRIDHAR: There are many in the team room who are good entertainers, so when the match is not called off yet, the boys have a very quiet focus on what's happening. They're waiting for the umpires to take a call. They're having an eye on the ground as to how wet it was. They also keep looking at the grounds staff who are working really, really hard to get the ground ready. But once it has been called off, obviously everyone is back to their room and relaxing.

As far as the entertainers are concerned, I think there are quite a few entertainers in the team and will entertain us in good sense, so there are a lot of people who are good mimics, they crack good jokes. Virat Kohli is terrific in taking care and giving us a good laugh, Ash in his own way, and we have Rishabh who's got the loudest laughter, and he keeps us in good humour whenever we

are in a group.

So we have many who keep us in good humour while we are waiting for the match to start. So there is no shortage of buzz and laughter in the team room while we are waiting.

**Q. Just wanted to ask you, the boys also keeping an eye out on how the girls are performing, particularly Shafali Verma? She got on the ledger with a half-century.**

RAMAKRISHNAN SRIDHAR: We have not missed a bit of the girls' game right from day one. We are almost in it whenever we can except for the times when we were out and practice. All of us have seen the game. It's been live going on in our rooms, in our team room, in our breakfast area, and even today while we are waiting for the rain to stop. All of us were sitting together and watching the girls' game and encouraging our girls.

We know they are fighting to get back into the game, claw their way back into the game. We're seeing they put up a strong performance there; she's played a few balls for a one-out runs when I left, and Shafali so much reminds us of Veda, doesn't she, the way she plays, and her mindset is so clear. Yeah, we are enjoying the innings from Shafali. I wish she had got 100 in the first innings, and well played to both Smriti and Shafali. What a rollicking start the game was in the first innings. Unfortunately, we couldn't capitalize on that, but yeah, it's a great Test match going there.

Looking at the wicket, we thought maybe we could play the finals there. The ball is turning a bit so we're just wondering if we shift the finals from here to Bristol. What do you reckon?

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