

# ICC World Test Championship Final

Wednesday, 23 June 2021

Southampton, England, UK

Hampshire Bowl

## Virat Kohli

India Media Conference

**Q. Judging by what happened in the two innings here as well as what happened in the series against New Zealand, do you think that the batting lineup was kind of a little vulnerable in seaming conditions, and with England set to begin next month there's a bit of questions to answer there?**

VIRAT KOHLI: Well, we definitely need to work out better plans in terms of understanding how to score runs. We have to stay in sync with the momentum of the game and not let the game drift away too much.

I don't think there's any technical difficulties as such, but I think it's more down to game awareness and being a little more brave and putting bowlers under pressure and not allowing them to bowl in similar areas for longer periods of time, unless it's absolutely overcast and the ball is swinging all over the place like it did on day one.

I think outside of that, we need to be able to move the game forward and put the opposition under pressure, and that's key to playing and performing in difficult conditions.

**Q. I wanted to ask you, since there's now a month-long gap, there will be a break for the players and they will reassemble, is there a possibility that there can be a few games against the county sides or it will be intra-squad practice games only going into the England Test series? How do you look at the planning and preparation for the series?**

VIRAT KOHLI: Well, that doesn't depend on us. We obviously wanted first-class games, which I believe have not been given to us. I don't know what the reasons for that are. But yeah, other than that I think our preparation time will be ample for us to be ready for the first Test.

**Q. We all know Rishabh is a natural in terms of his shot making and it worked very well in Australia, as well, but in conditions where the ball is going a lot, do you think he needs to be a little more calculated in terms of his approach?**

VIRAT KOHLI: Look, Rishabh is just going to be a very



expressive player whenever he gets an opportunity. Whenever there is a situation that needs to be understood, I think he assesses it really well. When things don't come off, you can say that it was an error of judgment and that's acceptable in sport, but we don't want him to lose his positivity or his optimism in changing the situation for the team, and that's where his USP lies, and we will definitely continue to back him to play that way and find ways to put pressure on the opposition and find ways to score runs, which is his natural game.

We're not too worried about that. I think it's up to him to understand whether it was an error of judgment and rectify it moving forward because he has a long career with the Indian team, and certainly someone who could be a match maker for India on consistently many occasions in the future.

**Q. This is the third go for the Indian core of the batting unit. For a team that has done well in different conditions, why do you think they struggle when it comes to batting in English conditions? And what kind of suggestions would you give to India about batting?**

VIRAT KOHLI: Well, I don't need to give any suggestions. I think we are collectively trying to put enough runs on the board as a batting unit, and as I said, the mindset has to be to score runs and find ways to score runs. You can't be too worried about getting out because you're bringing the bowler into the game completely and not moving the game forward, as I mentioned.

Yeah, that's probably the only thing we need to focus. We know as a batting unit if we consistently put up 300 on the board then it's a different kind of pressure on the opposition with the kind of bowlers we have. We understand that and we will keep working on those plans and try to execute them every time that we bat.

**Q. You had earlier said that reaching the finals was a collective work of the hard work that you had done in the two years, so how much weight would you give to this performance and do you think those played a big role in today's performance because there were some unfamiliar shots?**

VIRAT KOHLI: Well, look, firstly, I'm not in absolute

agreement of the deciding the best Test side in the world over the course of one game, to be very honest. If it is a Test series, it has to be a test of character over three Tests, which team has the ability to come back into the series or totally blow away the other team. It can't just be a pressure applied over two days of good cricket and then you suddenly are not a good Test side anymore. I don't believe in that. I think it has to be a hard grind and something that definitely needs to be worked on in the future to really -- at the end of three matches, there's effort, there's ups and downs, there's situations changing throughout the course of the series, a chance to rectify the things that you've done wrong in the first game and then really see who's the better side over the course of a three-match series or something will be a good measure of how things really are, so we are not too bothered by this result because we understand, as I said, as a Test side what we've done over the last three, four years, not just over the last 18 months but over the last three, four years. So this is not a measure of who we are as a team and the ability and the potential we have had for so many years now.

**Q. Just to take the format thing forward since we're on it, do you see the two-year cycle as a perfect one, or would you ideally want a four-year cycle with more teams ending up playing each other before deciding the knockout or a final if it is required?**

VIRAT KOHLI: I have no idea. I haven't ever thought about this, and we've never had any discussions over it. There are other tournaments, as well, which are big tournaments, so this is not for me to put together. I just believe that it should be done over the course of three matches so that you as a side prepare accordingly and you have a chance to, as I said, either drive home the advantage or really test the other team out if you haven't had a good first game.

A four-year cycle or a two-year cycle, I think a two-year cycle has been good, but the four-year cycle discussion has not taken place.

**Q. I just wondered what you thought of the quality of the New Zealand bowling you faced in those conditions, and what made it especially tough to get scores against that attack?**

VIRAT KOHLI: Yeah, look, very consistent. Again, they're a very effective side. We've seen that over the years. They're a very structured side and they like to play their cricket in certain manner. As I said, you need to find ways to disrupt that. If you don't put their bowlers under pressure then they have the fitness and the consistency to bowl long spells and keep bowling all day in the same areas and trouble you, and the more momentum you give them, then invariably they get the breakthroughs they want.

As I said, the idea from here on will be to try to score runs and not worry about getting out in testing conditions.

That's the only way you can score and put the opposition under pressure, otherwise you're just literally standing there hoping that you don't get out and eventually you will because you're not being optimistic enough, and I think you have to take more risks and calculated risks and be confident about taking those risks against a quality bowling attack like New Zealand.

**Q. Generally when we talk about building teams and everything, we talk about four-year cycles for 50-over World Cup or a two-year cycle for T20 World Cup. When it comes to building a test team and looking ahead to the future, how do you see this World Test Championship cycle, keeping Indian cricket in mind, keeping that you have done a great job building a good pool of fastbowlers, now building a pool of batsmen or middle order batsmen; how do you plan for that?**

VIRAT KOHLI: Yeah, look, we will continue to reassess, continue to have conversations around what other things are required to strengthen our side and not follow or fall prey to a certain pattern. I think evolving with the game and improving yourself with the game is a very, very important thing, and when you've been a top side for a few years in a row, you don't want to suddenly drop your standards, and we need to keep up with the demands of the game and understand exactly where we need to rectify the areas that need to be rectified as a team and move in the right direction.

We will certainly take those decisions and have those conversations in the near future. It's not something that we will wait for a year or so because as I said, you have to plan ahead. If you see our white ball team now, as well, we've got great depth and guys are ready and guys are confident about their skills.

So I think the same thing has to be done with Test cricket, as well. You have to reassess and plan and understand what dynamics work for the team and how we can be fearless and bring in the right people who have the right mindset to perform.

**Q. You spoke about Kyle Jamieson in the presentation and your battle against him. How would you sum up that face-off and what makes him a challenging bowler with the red ball?**

VIRAT KOHLI: Well, he's a very good bowler, similar to many that I've faced in my career so far. His height I think gives him an added advantage. I truly believe that we did not put him under enough pressure. We allowed him to bowl in similar areas for long periods of time and probably didn't work out the areas that we could score against him, and that was probably down to his consistency, as well. For a tall guy like that to not miss

his length so often is quality, and his consistency is what made it very difficult for all of us.

So yeah, nothing drastically different from something that we have faced over the years, but yeah, just his consistency from the height which he bowls at and his accuracy was something that worked in his favour, and he's had a great start to his career and his numbers are what they are because he's very consistent with the ball.

**Q. What you were saying about the one-off game, obviously what we've seen this week, the quality of the cricket when it hasn't been raining has been superb. Do you think there would be the appetite to fit in a three-match World Test Championship on the evidence of what we've seen, and would you welcome it if it was?**

VIRAT KOHLI: Well, absolutely. I mean, if you saw the way the game went with whatever time we got on the field, as well, why wouldn't you want to see two more Tests of the same teams battling it out and eventually being the winners of the World Test Championship. I think historically all the great series that you've seen in Test cricket, you remember them over a period of three matches or five matches perhaps, but two teams going against each other and those series become memorable.

I think this definitely has to be brought in. I'm not saying this because we're not on the winning side, but just for Test cricket and for this saga to be absolutely memorable, I think it has to happen over a period of three games minimum so that you have a series to remember because there are going to be ups and downs through and through with two quality sides going at each other knowing that there's so much on the line.

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