

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Tuesday, 18 October 2022

Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

Bellerive Oval

Zimbabwe

Sikandar Raza

Post Match Media Conference



Zimbabwe - 174/7, Ireland 143/9

Q. Weather is nice. It's quite noticeable how teammates were struggling with some of the shorter bowling tactics. You seemed to deal with it pretty well.

SIKANDAR RAZA: I wouldn't say they were struggling. I think it was certainly a plan that our boys had, but I thought the wicket at the start of the new ball was quite sticky.

Especially back at the lair, you don't have to bowl short on the track for the ball to dip through. All in all, I thought it was a good wicket with a good zipper. They did try -- only one of us got out by pulling. But most of us ended up scoring quite a lot of runs as well.

A little risk/reward. We scored a lot of runs on that short. And by doing that if you've lost wicket, that's okay. But that's a short that most Zimbabweans players play really well.

Q. Trade-off you're happy with; you take risks take it on if you lose one wicket?

SIKANDAR RAZA: It's a risk/reward thing anyway. Especially with in a powerplay with one fielder out. I thought we had to take that.

Q. Do you think they are predictable with that tactic?

SIKANDAR RAZA: I thought the bowlers bowled pretty well. If you look at the spell from Madhever [phonetic], from Benny [phonetic] and from Little [phonetic] and even Camp [phonetic] for that matter, they were cut into the wicket. There was a wide yorker and there was a bumper.

I thought they were really unpredictable. I thought they bowled well to be fair.

Q. How nice is it for you to carry on the form, career last year with a bat into a big World Cup game?

SIKANDAR RAZA: It's nice, but you carry a lot of

pressure, a lot of responsibility with you as well. But it's something that I feel like players should take it and normally they thrive in it. But listen, it's nice and long may continue each other.

Q. Your striking about 150. You bat even, consistently good average as well. What's gone right this year that's different from previous years or is it just one of those things?

SIKANDAR RAZA: I guess it's just one of those things. But if anything I thought David has made a massive difference since he took over. David's understood the players and given us the freedom and brought a long list. I thought those top two, the fact that there's a lot of respect from the coaches and players, all those things he's allowed us to bloom and basically play with responsibility and freedom. So I think for that matter I think the credit goes to David and not me.

Q. Looking back at some of the scorecards in that Bangalore series, you had some success in that finisher type role earlier tonight. Did that change the attitude?

SIKANDAR RAZA: We practise a certain role. Regardless of what situation I find myself in, I genuinely believe that especially being a senior cricketer, regardless the situation, you just have to find a way, find a way quickly.

So I won and I wish and I pray our top three gets a lot of runs as well, but it's nice, if they don't, there is myself, Jongwe, Jongwe's cameo -- I thought I wasn't striking well in the end. I thought his cameo was really important for us. Took us from 160 to 165.

Q. This is your first game in the World Cup for five years. A lot has happened in Zimbabwe cricket since then. How nice is it to put it behind you, come up with a really good performance?

SIKANDAR RAZA: Listen, one of the things I try to do is take a lot of emotions out. I try and stay in a very balanced place where I'm not getting too angry or excited or up or down.

So I know we missed out on a few World Cups, but if I start thinking about that, then I felt emotions would have taken over. So for me it was just being here, stay in the present, trying and take one ball at a time and see where the team gets to. But it feels nice now.

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Q. Just on that, there seems to be a nice vibe about the Zimbabwe cricket team and Zimbabwe cricket in general. What do you put that down to?

SIKANDAR RAZA: I think we have a very good squad. We've got a very diverse squad that's actually gelling really well. I would say again the credit really goes to David, how he looked after individual needs, what needs to be done individually. And then he understands each and every individual player and brings us together. And I think that has been our strength and that's why we're gelling really well.

Q. And you spoke about him giving you guys the freedom to play your game. Is it like your cricketers love to say, allowing you to express yourself out there, or is it just freedom to be yourself on and off the field as well?

SIKANDAR RAZA: Yeah, for senior guys, I think we enjoy the freedom, but it comes with accountability as well and we would want that. You don't want to have that freedom that turns over to as reckless.

We've taken it upon ourselves, our senior guys, as much as he's given us freedom, we discussed among ourselves says we'll take accountability of that freedom as well to make sure we go in the right direction.

Q. And just finally about your batting, you spoke about how you are in a good space; you're really balanced. But just the tempo that you seem to have found with your batting and white ball cricket. What do you put that down to?

SIKANDAR RAZA: A lot of the things that we speak about or you guys see in the matches is basically behind the scene. A lot of my tempo that comes or what you're saying about it, it's basically in the nets. It's how I train. What sort of a mindset I had when I went into the nets, what I wanted to achieve out of that net.

A lot of this that we see out there sometimes I put it down -- it's showtime. A lot of the work, a lot of the planning, a lot of what needs to be done and what needs to be required on the match is behind the scenes which is in the nets.

If I have to put it down to something, it's how I train that helped me or allowed me to play my game slightly better, understand my role slightly better.

Q. Just about the bowling, from what we've seen so far, it could well be a World Cup where putting a total on the board and defending might be the way to go with these big boundaries. Just a word on your pretty tall, fast bowling unit and how that's coming about, especially in these conditions?

SIKANDAR RAZA: Yeah, listen, with blessing, it's lovely to have Chatara back. He's a senior guy who has taken Zimbabwe cricket forward. A lovely guy, works really hard. Lovely to have Chatara back. And to have a pace attack, which Chatara being spearheaded and Ngarava and blessing, and even Luke joining, I think we've got a really good mixture of variety, pace, bounce, swing, seam. So it's quite nice to have those good seamers back. We miss them. Couple of series played where everybody was injured. It's nice to have everybody back and have a squad at full strength which you actually need at World Cup, at mega events.

Q. You've answered a lot of questions about your batting. Could I ask a bit about your bowling. You've definitely got a different action. Looks like a bit of Sunil Narine in there. Could you tell us a little bit about how you remodelled and you're bringing your arm from the back. Is that more difficult, or kind of just talk us through that?

SIKANDAR RAZA: I don't think I have any other option. After those two surgeries, I lost a lot of strength in my shoulder so I couldn't really get my hand up. When I did, I felt like there was not a lot of zip on the ball. As we call it.

The ball wasn't coming out at a pace I wanted. And to be fair, Sunil Narayan has had played a huge role. I was at CPL, I remember that. And I was watching him very closely, just bugging him a lot of those questions. So after those surgeries, I felt like I just didn't want to be a batter on the team. I wanted to carry over the all-rounder role.

That's the first thing that came to mind. Took me a year and a half and, yeah, hopefully we give this some time soon. It's still a work in progress.

Q. You seem to have developed quite a few more variations as well. Is that just also -- you had time I suppose to work on things, I know you couldn't lift the arm but I suppose you had time to think about things?

SIKANDAR RAZA: I was thinking about it I feel like just being an off-spinner without any variation is quite hard to survive in white ball cricket. That led to the variation that I wanted to bowl again. And Sunil has played a huge role. I met him at BPL, and I had a very good chat with him for quite a few times. And to see some of the variations coming out of the hand, really nice, it's suddenly quite pleasing.

Q. I don't know if you were struggling a bit of a cramp or if something was hurting at the end there. You've got a quick turnaround. Do you think you'll be okay and also is there something kind of niggling

or kind of how are you feeling?

SIKANDAR RAZA: A niggling, hopefully just cramps. The body is just breaking up, but it is what it is. Hopefully try and -- but I was ill-disciplined with hydrating, being so cold, maybe didn't look after myself that properly. So hopefully trying to do all the right things so I can stay on the pack, do well for the team and the country.

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