

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Tuesday, 18 October 2022

Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

Bellerive Oval

Ireland

Andrew Balbirnie

Post Match Media Conference

Zimbabwe - 174/7, Ireland - 143/9

Q. They lost three in the power play. You guys lost four. So relatively even there. Sikandar was the difference between the two sides in the end?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: He's obviously a guy in great form. He didn't mis-hit many. He showed the form he is in the way he played. And I wouldn't say took it away because it was par score at halftime, but played key innings in getting to the total. When you go four down that early, chasing, it's very difficult. I thought the guys still came in and tried to put some impetus into the innings, but we just weren't able to get back from that and that was the kind of sucker blow, I suppose.

Q. Obviously the pitch was offering a little bit of off that back of the length. Josh had a lot of success there. They thought seem to think for them the risk/reward was taking it on, they might lose one or two, but get one or two runs, kind of what happened. For you a flip side of that, pick up a couple and could pick up more. There was a drop, and I think Barry had one that just evaded the leg?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: I thought both teams had pretty good power plays with the ball. We both knew what length was effective, how best to use that. I thought we were pretty good in the power play, created more chances. Weren't able to get a hand. There was a dropped catch. Didn't cost us. But it was kind of, I think they just batted well in that middle. I thought we bowled pretty well at the back end again. But that middle period just kind of took the innings away from us from the start we had.

Q. What do you think needs to improve then in that middle period with the ball?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: We've spoken that's how where the game is normally won or lost in the power play, anything can happen either way, but the middle period is the real time to strike that we kind of want to use our seamers in that period rather than just save them to bowl obviously to the death. We weren't really able to get any wickets in that period, which cost us a bit. But, yeah, I



think we'll continue with that sort of aggressive mindset if we can in that middle.

Q. Looking ahead to Wednesday, I mean, I don't know how much of the first game you saw, looking at Scotland, again, they look like a side they struggled a little bit a couple of guys getting out, pulling the ball, do you think that will be a weapon for you guys again going forward?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, we'll have to play pretty aggressive cricket now for the next two games we're chasing the group, but I suppose the beauty of it, we won our first game last year and didn't get through. So hopefully we can flip that this year and lose our first game and go through.

So it's disappointing because we had high hopes of having a really good week. And I said it outside that the way the tournament works, you can't really -- it's an nearly the day before the next game. So you don't have too much time to dwell on what's happened; you've just got to get on it and try to put your best foot forward for the next game.

Q. You spoke about the lengths that were bowled today. Do you think, we saw some test match like wickets fall, and your wicket included. Do you think moving forward on these pitches that could be something that fast bowlers might look to do during this World Cup?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: I think so. I think naturally the wickets over here are bouncier, and I wouldn't say rapid but they're just bouncier. That sort of back of the length is going to come into play more often than not. I don't think there were many drives in the power play both from Zimbabwe and also you've got to be -- whatever length you do bowl and whatever conditions, you've got to be accurate.

And I thought both sets of bowlers today were pretty accurate. But we just couldn't be accurate enough in that kind of key period in the middle today.

Q. Quick question about the toss. Obviously saw Sri Lanka and West Indies both lose chasing. What was your thinking batting first today?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: We wanted to chase. I don't think the games in Melbourne have any -- you know, that didn't play in what we wanted to do first today. We were

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comfortable with chasing 170-odd. We were happy at the halfway stage and just got blown away in that power play.

And, you know, if I'm going to be upset about winning tosses and losing games, it's going to be a long stint. I can't get too worked up about that. It's something I spoke about with some of the members of the squad and some of the management as well that's something I think we've done pretty well over the last number of months. Like I said, losing four wickets in that power play is -- you're rarely going to win games in that position.

Q. In terms of Josh Little, I guess not much positive today for you guys, but he's been so impressive over the last couple of months. What do you think makes him so special and would you say he's ranking right up there as one of Ireland's very best and what you need to do to keep him performing at this level?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yes, certainly from him gaining experience from all the top leagues around the world. He played a really good role for the Manchester Originals in The Hundred. He's getting exposure at that level. He's gone to the South Africa T20 competition. He's really clear with what he wants to do and he's got a clear game plan.

He backs his ability. And he's only 22. Feels like he's been around for a long time. But I think he's only going to get better. I think we're very lucky with a really good bowling coach at the moment who is helping him out as well. I hope he's going to go from strength to strength.

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