

# ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Thursday, 20 October 2022

Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

Bellerive Oval



## Ireland

### Andrew Balbirnie

#### Pre Match Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. We've got Andy Balbirnie for today's pre-match press conference.

**Q. Obviously, you know, massive comeback results. I know Curtis's role is normally to come in early when a fielder gets their form down. Given that role, did you think that he had it in him considering he normally does play a little more conservatively?**

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, we did think he had it in him. We've seen him enough to know how good a player he is and how adaptive he is to the way the game is going. We're lucky with that kind of middle order and how flexible George, Gareth, and Curtis all are.

The feeling at the moment is we never really feel out of the game, particularly with our batting. We obviously showed that yesterday.

**Q. Is it a deliberate ploy to have those two guys with two different strengths around the square in at the same time?**

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Not really, no. That was always kind of the order we had in mind: Curtis at 5, George at 6. Obviously if it gets further down the line and we need really quick runs, we might speak about changing it up.

But it obviously paid off yesterday. It's not always going to pay off, but we were very fortunate that they produced one of the best partnerships we've ever had in T20 Internationals.

**Q. Where does that game rank for you in World Cup wins? It's not against the test playing nation, so maybe not up with Bangalore, but in terms of the comeback nature of it, it probably seems right up there?**

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: I think it's just a really good win, I think. Scotland is obviously a very good team, and they know they've got a very balanced team at the moment, and they've got a lot of guys that I think kind of are at the peak of their career.

We knew that when you are playing back-to-the-wall cricket, you have to come out fighting. I think we did that. I don't know how it ranks. That's not for me to kind of judge. That's for other people to talk about.

But certainly from just a must-win game, to pull something like that out of the bag was pretty impressive, but it also means nothing if we can't get our job done tomorrow.

**Q. Just looking at the figures there, you obviously bowled very well, as well did Curtis. I know different bowlers have set plans for bowling at different stages, but is there an argument for maybe giving him another over here or there?**

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, it's flexible. A lot of this is hindsight. Some people bowl well the first game and it doesn't go as well the second game. It's very much heat of the moment and going for what you think when you are out there.

It's easy to say we've got 2 for whatever, and you should have bowled another one. But the way our top three bowlers have been bowling over the last few weeks, they have the full backing, but it's also nice to be able to just throw the ball to Curtis as well whenever I feel like it.

**Q. Looking ahead to the Windies. All or nothing. Is that the same attitude you have to take into this match as you did against Scotland?**

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, absolutely. I mentioned it's kind of backs-to-the-wall cricket, and I think all four teams are going to be playing that tomorrow. There is obviously a lot of pressure on West Indies coming in as probably the group favorites, and maybe starting slower than they would have liked.

But I think we know each other pretty well. We've played quite a bit of cricket against each other. Mainly 50-over cricket. It will certainly be a big challenge for us tomorrow.

I think the confidence we got from yesterday will hopefully show tomorrow. Yeah, it's a really exciting place to be, particularly after that first game to be able to sit down tomorrow and say if we win through. Hopefully we can do something special tomorrow.

**Q. Do you get a sense that there is a bit of pressure on the West Indies, having started with that defeat to**



**Scotland, that it might just be something you can play on there to try and help you?**

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: I think so. I think they're going to be expected to win. I think a lot of people are going to expect them to win. They've won the competition twice, and they've got some hugely experienced T20 players.

But we're a good team in our own right too, and we've played some pretty good cricket. For us to be successful in this competition, we're going to have to play good cricket, and that starts tomorrow.

Like I said, the group, there's some real confidence in the group now after yesterday. That was just really special to be there and be part of and have friends and family there. It just kind of lifted the group even further.

So like I said, it will be disappointing if we can't back it up tomorrow. If we don't back it up, we'll be on the plane on Saturday.

**Q. Just what you said most people will be expecting the West Indies to win from the outside, but personally do you kind of not see it necessarily that way? As you said, you've had some success against them in both T20 and 50-over cricket in the past. You've got some experienced players yourself that are well used to this kind of pressure actually from within your camp. Do you feel that it is a much more even contest?**

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: The confidence in the group has shown over the last eight to ten months. I think we don't go out easy anymore. That's kind of gone out of our mindset.

Sometimes a team might be more skillful than us on the day and not show up in a bad way, but there's definitely no fear of my opposition when we go into a game.

There's been a bit of a shift in the thinking over the past number of years with this Irish group, and that's driven by the top, from the coaches, and all the support staff. We try to drill that into the players, that we're playing on an even playing field. Hopefully that shows in the way we perform.

**Q. What would a win tomorrow mean for you? Would it be the biggest of your career as far as it goes, or is that too much?**

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, it certainly will be up there. I think it's such a big occasion, a World Cup in Australia. There's a lot of Irish people in Australia who would show a great interest if we played in some of the famous grounds around Australia, just pitting ourselves against some of the best in the world. It's something we strive for.

I certainly think from a personal point of view, if we could get out the line tomorrow, it would be a huge achievement just for the group.

As long as we go out there and put in a really good performance we can be proud of, that's all we can really ask, and we'll see where we're sat at the end of the day tomorrow.

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