

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Sunday, 23 October 2022

Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

Bellerive Oval

Zimbabwe

Craig Ervine

Pre Match Media Conference

Q. Craig, just how special is this for Zimbabwe? How are you guys feeling in terms of getting through and then also starting your campaign against your neighbors?

CRAIG ERVINE: Look, we're obviously very happy to be through to the Super 12. The mood in the camp is very upbeat. Everybody's very excited for what lies ahead for us.

But we know that it is a quick turnaround, and we've got South Africa here in Hobart tomorrow, which is going to be a tough start to the Super 12s for us, but everyone is really looking forward to it. I think just looking forward to these new challenges up ahead.

Q. How important is Sikandar's performance in the Super 12 for you?

CRAIG ERVINE: He's always going to be a key performer for us in the order as well as with a ball. He's been doing extremely well for us over the last few months, and obviously going to need him desperately through that Super 12 stage.

His contributions are obviously always so important because he strikes the ball so well. He scores so quickly. And his four overs with the bowlers is huge and important for us, especially to slow down the run rate of the opposition.

So his performances are going to be vital for us, and I think if the guys can sort of bat around him, I think that will be important as well. His innings the other night took a huge amount of pressure off myself and just allowed me to hold the innings together.

But I think going through to the Super 12, his contribution is obviously going to be huge.

Q. Craig, can you just give us a word on your fast bowlers. Obviously the conditions there are quite well suited to them, and you're starting off your campaign there as well. First of all, how important have they been, and how do you see them progressing as you move to the different venues?



CRAIG ERVINE: They've been so good for us up front with the new ball. We've picked up a few early wickets, which has helped the cause. And here in Australia, I know Blessing's been able to extract a little bit of bounce. Richard Ngarava has been excellent up front as well, getting a little bit of movement with the new ball.

I think to slow sides down in the power play is crucial, and we're going to need them again to do that same sort of role.

I know we've had three games under lights, which I think has helped the seamers to extract that little bit of movement. Tendai Chatara has been excellent with the new ball, and he's been able to get it to go both ways.

Moving across to the different venues is going to be key for us to try to adapt as quickly as possible. We do have the chance of watching a few of the other sides play at the different venues, so we're trying to take as much information from those games as we can.

Q. Then just the flip side of that, people are talking about scoring in the power play has actually been quite slow, and I suppose in T20 cricket we talk a lot about strike rates. What are you looking for in terms of your batters, especially someone like a Regis or yourself up front. Just in terms of getting going, are you hoping to score quicker or bide a bit of time in the power play and maybe go big at the end?

CRAIG ERVINE: I think the first couple overs have been a little bit tricky in the lights just because there has been that little bit of movement around. So we are sort of looking to try and have a look and see those first couple overs, see what's happening and what sort of movement there is.

From then on, it's just kind of playing the bowlers on merit basically. Everybody's got all the shots, and I think just trying to exploit the right options on the different wickets, and I think that's what we'll probably look to do is be a little bit steady at the start of the power play and maybe try to capitalise towards the end of the power play.

The few games that we've seen so far, you know the guys that have built a decent platform are able to capitalise at the back end. And the teams that have lost quite a few early wickets have really struggled to get the momentum back on their side towards the back end of

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the innings.

Q. Can I just ask from a mindset point of view, Zimbabwe haven't played on this type of stage for several years now. I don't know if you are calling on memories from the last time you played at a major tournament, but what does it really feel like to finally be among the big teams and on the big stage again?

CRAIG ERVINE: It's probably a little bit nerve-racking to have to play all these big teams again, but it's a great opportunity for guys to put their hands up and get in some real solid performances.

Again, it does take away a little bit of the pressure that we have felt over the last week during the qualifiers. So I do think that guys will be able to express themselves a little bit more and just have a little bit more freedom to come out and just play the game of cricket.

So I think it's going to be quite exciting to see how we go.

Q. This is the first time Zimbabwe's been in the World T20 main event. So how is the mood in the camp? After the disappointment of 2019 qualifiers, and before that T20 qualifiers where you lost to UAE, how pleasing was it to make it through to the main round?

CRAIG ERVINE: The mood in the camp is pretty good. Everybody's really, really looking forward to playing the bigger teams and putting up some more good performances, I think, and just carrying on the momentum that we've built up so far.

I think it's been nice to qualify and put all those demons to bed from the UAE game. I think a lot of guys obviously had a few of those thoughts at the back of their minds. I think, once we lost two wickets in the first couple overs against Scotland, but to get over the line there was absolutely crucial for us.

So I think we can now -- you know, there's a bit of relief in the camp, and I think now obviously guys will have a lot of weight off their shoulders, and guys can now enjoy the next few games.

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