

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Saturday, 15 October 2022

Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Kardinia Park

Aaron Finch

Gerhard Erasmus

Kane Williamson

Dasun Shanaka

Jos Buttler

CP Rizwan

Mohammad Nabi

Scott Edwards

Media Day Conference

Q. Gerhard, Namibia's best ever T20 World Cup last year, so the preparation and execution was absolutely spot on. What can we expect from you guys, exactly the same game plan, a little bit of tweaking or something really bold and different?

GERHARD ERASMUS: I guess this year is a bit different to last year. We could sort of ride on that underdog factor and go with it and there's a bit more expectation perhaps this year to go one better.

Our preparations has been really nice getting to Wangaratta in the countryside of Australia quite early and getting accustomed to things around here. So I guess we'll try and stall the underdog tag for a little bit longer, but yeah, when the real stuff starts, you need to bring the high-level skill that the guys play at the World Cup if we can do that.

Q. You mentioned getting accustomed to the local traditions. One is AFL football, you're sitting next to Aaron Finch, I gather you're a Geelong Cats fan, are you?

GERHARD ERASMUS: I've just become one because all of Geelong is buzzing because if they win obviously. Finchy is from Geelong, and he's starting to teach me some of the AFL stuff, which I don't know much about. I like a bit more contact.

THE MODERATOR: Dasun, I'll go to you. As a Melbourne girl, I've grown up seeing but more so hearing a lot of Sri Lankan fans, more so at the G, but we'll be



hearing them at Geelong. Almost a home away from home for you. How much is the support of the Sri Lankan community going to help too side?

DASUN SHANAKA: It's been amazing playing in Melbourne. We've been enjoying ever since we played in Melbourne. Looking forward to the Geelong games where there will be a massive crowd, so we are looking forward for that.

Q. Finchy, my question for you today is when Australia won the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in 2020, what legacy do you think that left for girls playing cricket in Australia, and how can we build on that momentum?

AARON FINCH: Yeah, I think that was an amazing World Cup in total, and I think to have 86,000 people at the MCG to witness that final between Australia and India was unbelievable. In Australia we've seen cricket participation double in girls since that World Cup final.

So I think that's the legacy that it's leaving, that there's more participation in the game, which is going to create more opportunities hopefully for a long time to come.

We're very, very lucky that cricket is a game that is world leading in the women's space and the amount of opportunities and exposure that they get around the world is fantastic.

But obviously there's always more that we can do.

Q. Kane Williamson, even though New Zealand team's performance at the World level has been really good of late, but still nobody calls you favourite before the game. Do you love to fly under the radar?

KANE WILLIAMSON: Yeah, I mean, we don't really have a choice in what people call us, but for us we came here and try and focus on the cricket that we want to play and address what's in front of us.

We had a pretty memorable World Cup a few months back and played these guys in the final. It was a great game of cricket, and these sorts of tournaments are always pretty special to be a part of.

Yeah, everybody has different tags and rankings that go up and down throughout the year, and I suppose they end up with different names. But yeah, you come here in



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tournament sport on any day, anything can happen, especially looking across all these teams with match winners throughout.

Q. Jos, England played almost the perfect tournament up to the semifinals last year. How do you prepare for a tournament that is so ruthless and one loss can see you go out at any point? How do you mentally prepare for that sort of competition?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, I just think you have to accept it's really -- as Kane mentioned, it's fierce competition. There's some great players here, especially in T20 cricket, one person can take the game away from you. Very much just prepare for the next game. We've had good preparation. We look forward to this tournament and don't try and read too much into past tournaments or things. We try and learn and get better and improve every day, and look forward to starting this competition in the next week.

Q. (Question not in English).

MOHAMMAD NABI: Yeah, it's an honour to play in the first -- not playing qualifying rounds. We are from that stage, and it's a real proud moment for us, as well. That's why we've performed under pressure a lot when you're playing in the Super 8. We play qualifiers and then play in the top eight or ten, it's really good, and it give more opportunity to play with the big teams.

Q. Scott, when you were growing up learning the craft out of Blacky South, did you ever dream that you'd be here in Melbourne leading your country, and how much damage can your side do?

SCOTT EDWARDS: I suppose growing up playing in World Cups is always something you look forward to, so to be here representing the Netherlands is awesome. Yeah, we're pretty comfortable with the squad we've brought across. We've had a great preparation period, I think seven or eight practice games leading into the tournament. Hopefully, yeah, win a few games in this first round and then see where we go.

Q. Dasun, nobody is talking about Sri Lanka as one of the favourites to win the World Cup even though you've won the Asia Cup. Can you talk about how confident you are on a scale of 1 to 10 that you can upset the big teams, and what does Sri Lanka need to concentrate on if they want to go deep in the tournament?

DASUN SHANAKA: So after a very good Asia Cup, we are very much confident, the team is. The environment is really good. We are well focused on our batting. As it is the early summer, the conditions will be somewhat different, so we are really focusing on that.

Apart from that, I think the bowlers, they are really shaping up, so Chameera is back with us and Lahiru Kumara is back with us, so they are plus points coming from the Asia Cup.

Yeah, it depends on the day. T20 cricket we never know who will be good when. I think the better teams come out of the day with a win.

Yeah, we are prepared for the challenge so we are looking forward for a good tournament.

Q. Aaron, this Australian team is like a fully firing Ferrari. A Ferrari has eight cylinders. You have the luxury of 15 cylinders. When it comes to the matches, will your Ferrari of 11 people be better in front wheel drive or fully balanced all-wheel drive?

AARON FINCH: Obviously you go into a World Cup knowing that the makeup of your 15 men is really important. It's not just 11 players that win you a World Cup, it's the contribution of all around. I feel as though we've got a really well balanced side. We've got some match winners all throughout the batting lineup and with the ball, as well.

I think it's just about trying to peak at the right time. There's no point getting caught up with what we should be doing or shouldn't be doing in the lead-up to the tournament. I think it's important that everyone within the squad knows their roles and what role they're most likely to play throughout the tournament, and we can tweak things here and there, but there's a really good feeling in the squad.

Q. What color is your Ferrari, Finchy?

AARON FINCH: Oh, I wish. I think Jos is your man for that.

Q. Dasun, how are the preparations for tomorrow's game?

DASUN SHANAKA: Preparation has been good. We came out here a couple of weeks ago, so we had a good practice game. Yeah, boys are shaped up, so we are ready for the challenge.

Q. Aaron, can you talk a little bit about even though you won the last World Cup, your personal form has been up and down. Can you talk about that a little bit because the opening position obviously is very crucial in a T20 game.

AARON FINCH: Yeah, obviously it's a huge part of the game. I think T20 cricket as an opening batter, that comes with some risk and reward at times when you're trying to be aggressive and get the team off to a quick start. But it's not always going to go to plan. I'm okay

with that. I think when you play T20 for long enough, you understand that you just ride the highs and lows a little bit.

But I feel really good. There's some technical changes and stuff that I've been trying to make over the last little bit. Yeah, I feel ready to go for the World Cup.

Q. Mohammad, given the political situation in your country, how hard has it been to maintain the momentum and the games that Afghanistan has made over the last 10 or 15 years in light of those challenges?

MOHAMMAD NABI: Yes, it has been a challenge, back home country situation. It will be -- from last 50 years will be the same, not improvement. But as a sports, we try our best to always bring some happiness in the face of our country people. That's why always we work hard, play patient and everything, win some games in this kind of big events.

Q. You come up against Namibia tomorrow. You obviously want to get the tournament on the right foot. What do you know about them and the threats that they pose for you tomorrow?

DASUN SHANAKA: So we have played one time in Geelong, so we know the conditions really well about the diamond. We played the same opportunity last year in World Cup. We know exactly what is coming against us.

I think the Namibian side is also well prepared. They've got good players on their side, so yeah, that's it.

Q. Jos, I guess time has gone past coming down to Australia and playing in Australian conditions, the Aussies would be overwhelming favourites, but T20 cricket, the way it is, anyone can win on the day. Do you think conditions, perhaps in that case, there's a bit less of the fear factor around teams coming to Australia and playing against Australia in a big game coming out on top against them than probably years gone by?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, I think T20 is one of those games, as you mentioned, can be unpredictable. I think history tells you that generally the host nations are slight favourites in big tournaments, I think, especially when lots of people have played in Australia in those conditions, but of course no one is going to know the conditions or be as accustomed to them as the Australian team and the reigning champions, as well. You'd have to pick them out probably as the favourites for the tournament.

But as mentioned, T20 can be unpredictable. There's lots of very, very good teams here, very good players who will all have a say throughout this World Cup.

Q. Cricket in UAE is really growing fast. What does this tournament mean to you?

CP RIZWAN: It means a lot for us. There are a lot of good things coming up for UAE cricket. There's a league going to happen in UAE.

And yeah, coming back to this tournament, our boys are really preparing well. We want to really make an impact and show our skill set in this bigger platform and show to the world that we are here to make an impact.

Q. UAE captain again, it's such a good honour that you are representing in such a prestigious tournament. I wish you good luck, that you win the final. What position will you be happy to go with, at least semifinals, final? In your opinion with your ranking. Are you happy to do the upset?

CP RIZWAN: For sure first time it will be the second round. Having said that, we have to focus on the task at hand and take every match as equally important and try to take one step at a time and try to do our skill set and try to execute our skill set really well and take it from there.

Q. Kane Williamson, how's Daryl Mitchell and Lockie Ferguson tracking ahead of next week?

KANE WILLIAMSON: Yeah, Lockie is tracking quite well. Daryl is sort of a day-by-day case, so he'll start hitting fairly soon. Yeah, a few little niggles in the camp, but hopefully the timing is on our side and they can be fit and ready.

Q. Scott, how is it going to be for you, mate? Playing in Australia, I guess you've got requests for tickets all over the shop, but can you just describe what it's going to be like for you? It's obviously a dream come true. Can you just describe what it's going to be like playing a tournament, albeit not for the Australian country you probably grew up dreaming of, but for the Netherlands, a massive deal for a number of guys in the group?

SCOTT EDWARDS: Yeah, well, we've got a few guys in the group that have grown up in Australia or been across to Australia at certain times, so it's pretty cool. We've obviously got that little bit of experience over here, as well, with guys like Tom Cooper, who's been in the Big Bash, so exciting for that.

And as you said, yeah, lots of ticket requests from family and friends in Melbourne.

Yeah, looking forward to it, but more importantly, just the group we've got, yeah, really enjoying what we've got going, and hopefully, yeah, that leads into the second

round for us.

Q. Have you played sort of this size of game in Australia, the Netherlands guys as a group, or is it usually mostly overseas? You've probably never played a game of this size in Australia, would that be right?

SCOTT EDWARDS: Me or the team?

Q. Sort of both, I guess.

SCOTT EDWARDS: Not in Australia, no. Obviously there were some big games at World Cup last year and had some big games this summer, but no, not over here in Australia.

Q. Have you played on the G yourself in a sizable game? When was the last time you were out on the G?

SCOTT EDWARDS: No, I haven't actually. We were meant to be playing there in the practice game which got rained off. Haven't to this stage, but hopefully some stage in the World Cup would be cool.

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