

# ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Sunday, 16 October 2022

Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Kardinia Park

**Namibia**

**Gerhard Erasmus**

Post Match Media Conference

Namibia 163/7, Sri Lanka 108

**Q. Where did it all go so right do you think?**

GERHARD ERASMUS: Yeah, I think if you look at last year's game compared to this, it's basically tables that have been turned. I think it's a period of 12 months really; it's not just the areas that played on before us. I think it's basically we tried a solid preparation and hard work you put in for a 12-month period as opposed to just the 20 overs and we just have to execute on the 20 overs we had to bat. Like I said, hard work and preparation.

**Q. I'm sure that's exactly right, but were you surprised that they took their foot off the gas? They threw your innings and almost stopped trying to get you guys out and started bowling a whole bunch of slow balls. Was that a surprise for you?**

GERHARD ERASMUS: Yeah, it is. That's the tactics that they thought would be the most difficult to score off, and I believe that those guys really played good innings. Jan Frylinck and JJ Smit played good innings and they still had to put away those bad balls.

I suppose we followed similar tactics toward the end of our innings, and it proved quite tough to score. So we just executed better on the day, I guess, and that's the game of cricket, and I believe we did so for longer periods, as well, hence the result.

But yeah, at 90 for 6 there's some pressure on. You were right in saying we had to resurrect the innings or finish stronger, and I would say 164 was probably quite a lot of runs on the wicket, and the sort of batting conditions were quite tough. I think we got well above par.

**Q. Where do you go from here? How do you stay on the high? It's easy to say you can keep winning, but what do you need to do?**

GERHARD ERASMUS: Yeah, basically it's going to take a massive mental reset from our point because you can get carried away with celebrations and historic events like this happening. Everyone, rightly so, is very glad at



winning at this nation, Sri Lankan side, for the first time ever and on the world stage in the opening game. A massive event in our lives, and as such it should be celebrated, but like you're right. I think the recovery periods being so quick between these games, we kind of have to put the celebrations up for a little bit, I guess, because yeah, it's a new start to the tournament, and two or three games in we really want to get our eye on qualifying for the Super 12s, which is really the main goal from here on in.

**Q. You mentioned the work of a 12-month period. You were 6 for 80 I think against Sri Lanka last year in the same game. Can you tell us about some of the big gains you've made as a group and the things you have implemented that have helped you execute against a bigger team in this moment to have this result?**

GERHARD ERASMUS: Well, I guess for one, the experiences we had from last year's World Cup. The type of experience that we gained from there really showed and sort of gave us a great idea and a clear idea of what type of skill we need to be able to compete on this oval. For one, the speed on the ball is more. The quality of the skills and the percentage of execution that guys are playing at is higher.

Basically in training we sort of looked at that. We did a lot of work on playing the short ball, did a lot of skill work on playing different options, and I guess that showed.

We got some powerplay boundaries today which were scored behind square on the leg side, on the off side. We looked much more comfortable in playing the mystery spin and the great googly off Hasaranga toward the middle, and I guess towards the later end, this wicket probably didn't suit bowling into the wicket that much, so that kind of suited our type of skill, which is maybe just bludgeoning the ball a bit harder, and that showed with JJ Smit getting a few over the ropes and Jan Frylinck always plays those very smart innings, also squaring behind square and running wide in front of square.

Those are the types of skills we've had to sort of put together over the last 12 months, but still, our strengths remain our strengths, and I think we sort of stuck to that more today rather than the newish skills, if we can call it that, that we've gained over the last 12 months.

I think we're a team that all chip in. Our strength is really pulling together and getting everyone in their roles where

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they're most effective, and I think with both bat and ball we managed to do that to an extent. The way JJ Smit, for example, placed his innings to get balls in his area and made the Sri Lankans pay in the way Jan Frylinck ran between the wickets and upped the intensity of the innings.

Those are their strengths, and they executed well on the day, both with the ball and sort of also in all-round performance in the field by filling around and taking good catches.

All in all, I think those are the old strengths of ours rather than the new strengths, but you need all those skill sets to compete at the highest level because you're going to be tested or they're going to ask questions and push buttons if they do see any sort of weaknesses.

**Q. Your bowling and fielding was flawless from where we were sitting. Can you tell us about Morne's influence on the group?**

GERHARD ERASMUS: Yeah, absolutely. Morne is another experienced cricketer. The freshness and the experience he's brought over the last four months or so has been brilliant. He's such a nice guy to work with, as well.

Being a team that's often quite close and often there's not many fresh faces, not many fresh players coming in because of our small player base, I guess it's always brilliant to have someone new on the coaching staff, and the way that I think Coach Pierre De Bruyn has put this together has been awesome for us. The impact that consultant coaches and assistant coaches have made over the years have been phenomenal. It goes to show in our performances in tournament cricket.

**Q. How did you find the pitch and the conditions out there?**

GERHARD ERASMUS: Yeah, I think kind of a bit slower. I think it wasn't the easiest for batting. With the square boundaries, I think probably weren't in the game as much as we thought it would be because of the slowness of the pitch.

Probably had to hit a bit straighter on the day and find pockets to score, I guess run your runs and then try and capitalise on something loose.

But I think only after a good period of two, three games on perhaps the same wicket, we'll see what good scores are, and yeah, I felt 164 was above par. Any side that bowls just disciplined and quite simple plans and well I think would be about 145, 150.

**Q. Obviously last year you had a fairy-tale run in the first round and then I suppose maybe a little bit**

**overawed once you got to the big teams in the Super 12s. It seems like that's changed. Can you talk a little bit about what work you've done on the mental processes and how to handle situations where you're playing against big teams?**

GERHARD ERASMUS: Yeah, I think obviously mental training you can do with mental coaches, but I think the experience side of it is what for me as a captain I've seen over the years as something that is even more important.

You only get to try and test your mental skills by playing high-quality cricket at the tournament like we did last year at the World Cup, for example. Those experiences last year put us in a good stead for this tournament, and I guess playing a team like Zimbabwe over the last eight months or so, those are the kind of experiences that mentally will challenge you.

As I said earlier, the execution levels are higher, so that challenges you mentally to be better for longer. There's not something loose waiting around the corner on a platter for you. You need to make the play, and I think by playing high-quality teams like Zimbabwe and others have mentally made us stronger.

Yeah, experienced coaches like Albie Morkel, Morne, Pierre De Bruyn, those types of experienced coaches and chats that we've had with our mental coach, as well, back home, yeah, it's a whole package that comes together, and really like we strength and conditioning, we have mental sessions.

As I said earlier, all in all, we're a team that relies on each and every individual in the team to contribute and mentally more so than anything else.

**Q. I just want to understand how much relief was in the group that you could topple a team like Sri Lanka. Obviously teams talk about winning all the time, but how much belief was really there, and was it spoken about amongst the coaching group and the players that this would really set the standard for this tournament at the start?**

GERHARD ERASMUS: Yeah, if I can be really honest, I think there was more. I had this sort of childish belief last year before that game, and I think this year it was more something of we've played at the level and we can now mentally relate to that level. We can now physically and skillfully relate to that level. We've played India, Pakistan, all these teams before. We've seen it, we've tasted it, and because we've closed that gap by becoming one step closer to them and getting the physical feel for what it's like, I think that's really what gave us the belief this time around that well, this is a cricket game, and I think if we execute better on the day, we stand a good chance.

Reading the tabloids this morning, I think it was about 11 per cent, I guess, and after reading that, it sort of gives you just that underdog feel again, and having that underdog feel backed with a bit of real belief, not the childish behind the scenes one but the real belief that you've played at the level, I think that that's what happened today, I guess.

We just went on to the field on an equal footing to the Sri Lankan side. As I said, if more opportunities like these arise for associate nations, they've shown over the years that they do close the gap and get to the level, and they're good actually quite quickly. I guess that's a call for more of these games for us, I guess.

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