

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

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Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
Sydney Cricket Ground



South Africa

Lungi Ngidi

Pre Match Media Conference

Q. Clearly there's a lot of pace in your attack. You're obviously one of them, and Heinrich, as well. Do you feel like you're playing a side in Bangladesh who could be vulnerable to that pace that you have and is that something you'll be targeting them with tomorrow?

LUNGI NGIDI: I think at the moment we're just playing towards our strengths. From the games that we've watched, pace has been probably the most successful throughout this tournament, so we're going with our strengths. Towards the Bangladesh side, obviously we'd like to attack them with our strength, and that is the pace.

You know, depending on how they handle that, I guess we'll see tomorrow, but all in all, we pretty much run with what we're good at.

Q. On that, the seam bowlers, pace bowlers have had some help early in this tournament. Do you think that makes for better T20 cricket? Do you think T20 is better when the bowlers have a say in it?

LUNGI NGIDI: Yeah, definitely. I think when it's competitive, we saw the India-Pakistan game, it got really tight. I think that's what people want to see, not absolute blowouts of teams scoring 240 and then you pretty much struggle to try and get there. I think when the competition gets a lot closer, it makes for better cricket.

Q. The past is the past; you can't do anything about what happened in Hobart, but it would have added to the pressure of trying to get through to the semis, and tomorrow's forecast is a little iffy. How closely are you watching the weather and is that an added pressure that you might not get a game in?

LUNGI NGIDI: To be honest, you control what you can, and the weather is one thing we don't have a say in. We were eager to get out on the park in Hobart, and I think everyone who was there did their bit in trying to get a game to get going.

Appreciative in that sense, but at the end of the day, we couldn't control what happens with the rain.

It does put us under a bit of pressure. It would have been nice to get a win.

Yeah, tomorrow another forecast of rain. I think we've just got a bit of bad luck, to be honest, following us. But yeah, we've got no say in how the weather plays out. The only thing we can do is we'll get here and we'll be prepared to play.

Q. It was a funny game in Hobart for that reason. What do you think you learnt about your readiness for going forward in this tournament from that game, as a team?

LUNGI NGIDI: Yeah, you know, from just the energy that we had, I think the guys were really up for it, in terms of the mental spaces the guys are in. I think we saw by the way Quinton came out and played, the guys are here to compete and here to win.

Yeah, that's pretty much the mindset we're going with throughout the tournament. Yeah, obviously it's not nice to start off with a 9-over game, but it's better than nothing, so we'll take it.

We got a bit of momentum there, and obviously whatever mistakes we made, we're going to fix them the next game.

Q. Just talking briefly to Heinrich about the bowling attack in general, looking at all three formats you could argue that South Africa have the best quick bowling attack in the world. Is that something you guys kind of thrive on? Is it something that kind of galvanizes you as a bowling attack? Do you take pride in that?

LUNGI NGIDI: 100 per cent we do. For people to be able to say that about the guys we have in the changing room, it's an honour and a privilege to hear those words about the guys we have. It does give us a lot of confidence, as well. Helps the guys walk with their heads held up high. You go out there, and obviously if people are speaking about you like that, you want to showcase what you have, so definitely makes for a good show when we get out there.

Q. The likes of say Marco Jansen coming into the squad, as well, everyone in that group kind of brings something a little bit different. How nice is it for you to have a clearly defined role in a bowling plan, whether it be against Bangladesh tomorrow or in the



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tournament in general?

LUNGI NGIDI: It really does make your job a lot easier. I think it's difficult when you have pretty much two seamers that are going to have to do everything, whereas we probably have three or four, and everyone is probably better at something than someone else. We can always turn to someone else if things aren't going well, so it does give you that sense of calm.

But it also gives you that bit of confidence that you need going into a tournament like this.

Q. I'm not sure if you saw, but there are a few headlines floating around yesterday, Tim Paine released his book, and he made claims that there was ball tampering in the Australia-South Africa series in 2018 in the fourth Test from South Africa, and it was covered up. Was that something that raised eyebrows at all in your group, or have you guys spoken about those claims from Tim Paine?

LUNGI NGIDI: No, we haven't spoken about anything in terms of our team now. No, we definitely haven't. That stuff the guys that are writing in their own books, I guess we'll see it when we get a chance to read it, but for now, to be honest, our focus is here, so we're kind of just brushing past those things.

Q. Do you find it strange that four years later we're still talking about it? Obviously Tim has done his book, Faf has his coming out in a couple weeks' time. That's also created a few headlines about that series. Do you find it strange that it's all being revisited again, and is it at all a distraction in that sense?

LUNGI NGIDI: I don't find it strange because I think at some point it was always going to be spoken about again. Now the guys, they're retiring; they're writing books. Obviously they're sharing their stories, so it was bound to come back.

It's obviously come back at a time when there's a lot of media around this tournament, as well, so it probably does highlight that sort of situation, but in terms of distracting us, I don't think it has at all. It's got nothing to do with us right now, so we're pretty chilled about that.

Q. Part of the good pace attack of South Africa, you also have Marco Jansen, the left-armer. What is the advantage having a left-armer sharing the attack? Also you have a player against Arshdeep Singh, and you've seen him in the IPL. How has he developed?

LUNGI NGIDI: I think obviously there's a lot to learn from the way Arshdeep bowled against us in India, and I think we're fortunate to have a tall left-arm fast bowler, as well, so it helps us prepare in terms of going forward knowing

what we're going to be facing.

We know that Bangladesh will serve a left-arm seamer in Fiz, and I think with the skills and sets that Marco has, he actually does help us prepare well for what's about to happen.

You know, just having him in our attack, as well, it brings a different variation. The guy is, what, seven foot tall, as well, so that kind of helps. Yeah, it is different, but it is a massive bonus for us.

Q. Shakib Al Hasan today said that South Africa will be desperate to win and that you guys will be under more pressure than Bangladesh, so what do you feel?

LUNGI NGIDI: I think everyone is under pressure in this tournament if you're looking to win. You know, with that claim that we'll be hungry to win, that's definitely true. I mean, obviously we would have loved to win in the first game, and we know now that what pressure we have in terms of going forward in the tournament.

But to say that we're under more pressure, I'd probably say it's pretty equal if you're looking to win the World Cup. So may the best team win.

Q. As a unit, South Africa batting and bowling unit, which part do you want to take Bangladesh, do to win the game because of Bangladesh wants to win the game by all attack?

LUNGI NGIDI: Well, I think the last time we played Bangladesh, their batsmen came out pretty aggressive against us, so we're very cognizant of that fact, so we'll definitely be targeting their top order. We know they have Shakib to control the middle and Fiz at the back end. I'm pretty sure the batsmen have plans for that, but as the bowling unit, we're definitely looking to cut the head of the snake, which is probably take out their top order and try to restrict them to as low a total as possible, if that answers your question.

Q. Just to go back to bowling in this tournament, I know your first game was heavily reduced by rain. I don't know how much you've watched the other games on television, but are you getting a sense that from a bowling perspective there's some Test match skills that are actually going to work in this tournament because it's quite early season here in Australia? The pitches are doing a bit. Are you thinking in a bit of a Test match mode at times with the ball?

LUNGI NGIDI: Well, you could call it, yeah, Test match mode, but I think it's just trying to keep it simple. There's pace and bounce in Australia. I think we were all aware of that fact before we came here. I think we've seen it

even more now in the first few games that we've watched.

You know, as the bowlers, they've probably tried to keep it very simple. The guys have bashed it into the wicket at good pace, and it's been successful.

Yeah, in that sense probably, yeah, Test match mode in terms of just keeping it simple and just being patient for what the batsman is going to do next.

Q. In the recent past in ODIs, Bangladesh have beaten South Africa on your home soil, but it's a different format. Will you still not take Bangladesh lightly in this format, also?

LUNGI NGIDI: I don't think anyone should be taken lightly in this tournament. Yes, they did beat us on our home soil in an ODI, and they outplayed us. It's that simple. Tomorrow is a new day, it's a new game, and we're definitely aware of the fact of what they did in the past. But like I said, tomorrow is a new day, and we shall see what happens.

Q. Apart from the pacers, what about the spinners? Will they play a big role in the match?

LUNGI NGIDI: Well, I don't know. The team hasn't been selected yet. I guess we'll find out tomorrow.

Q. For all the talk of only one point against Zimbabwe, it's actually one point more than you had after your first game in the last World Cup and you obviously went on to win all four. Is that the mention in the changing room, that we win all our games and our destiny is in our own hands?

LUNGI NGIDI: Definitely. I mean, everyone is probably talking about it in a negative sense. There was a possibility we weren't even going to get on to the field. Yeah, it's one point, like you said, one point more than we had last tournament, and from here on in we've got to win all our games, and that's the only mindset that we have, so we're going to carry on with that.

Q. Just in terms of you spoke about keeping it simple; you've become quite accustomed to bowling change-ups, slow cutters in T20 cricket. Is this more of going back to hitting odd lengths instead of all the change-ups that you usually do?

LUNGI NGIDI: Well, to be honest, I go with my gut feeling, and that's how I play T20 cricket. If I have that gut feeling of bowling a slow ball, then I'll do it.

Sometimes it comes off, sometimes it doesn't, but it's been successful for me, and it's what's gotten me here. Whatever I'm feeling on the day, that's what I'm going to go with.

Q. Just talk us through the importance of Quinton de Kock. When he has a squad round, it's reflected in South Africa's results, especially ODI cricket. Just talking in particular how South Africa get very close to the small target even before the weather intervened, but just talk us through how important will it be for a player of his ability to push through again tomorrow and for the rest of the tournament.

LUNGI NGIDI: Well, I think we all know the importance of Quinton de Kock. He's a world-renowned cricketer and he opens the batting for us. I think that's an important position that he knows he has and an important role in our team.

Yeah, obviously we expect him to do well, but cricket happens and sometimes you go through bad patches, but we saw the other night when Quinton is on fire what can happen. I think the other teams are well aware of what can happen if he's firing on the day. Yeah, he has a very important role in our team, and I think he's well aware of that fact.

Q. I know that India-Pakistan will probably be the one of the two hotter games in your group, so how important does it make -- how important does it become to actually get a win against Bangladesh tomorrow?

LUNGI NGIDI: I think, like I've said, every game is important. Even the last year's tournament, we won all our games and still didn't qualify. I don't think there's a point in looking at it as one team is more important than another. Every game you play is important. All the points you get are important.

I think as a team, we've wrapped our minds around having to win everything in order to try and give ourselves the best chance to go through to the semis.

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