

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

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Sydney Cricket Ground

Pakistan

Matthew Hayden

Semi-Final Pre Match Media Conference

Q. How would you describe this roller coaster ride of Pakistan. Colorful, very sudden?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: Shadab actually said something very significant in the dugout the other day when we were playing our last match, and he said, Welcome to Pakistan cricket.

Meaning that on any given day, anything can happen. And on that particular day, when Netherlands beat South Africa, it was a significant moment for us in the tournament and a very, very significant moment for the team in general around the potential in reaching that potential.

Lots of prayers as Pakistan woke up to see that result. 232 million people can't be wrong. And as a result of that, I feel that there was very much an uplifting tempo in our group, which made that match against Bangladesh almost a certainty for Pakistan.

Incredible experience, as you say rightly, it's been a roller coaster ride, but a ride that I wouldn't have it any other way because the last World Cup that we went into were undefeated and Australia pipped us in the semifinal. So really significant for Pakistan.

Q. I know Babar and Rizwan is number one opening pair, but this World Cup is not good, did you not think that Babar should be one down in the middle of the order?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: Babar and Rizwan rightly are a number one combination. If I can take your minds way back to a different World Cup, that was the 2007 World Cup and Adam Gilchrist had a lean World Cup healed of that undefeated campaign for Australia.

If you remember that last match against Sri Lanka, he went on to score an incredible hundred and realised his potential in that tournament and awakened the world once again to the fact that he was such a premium batsman in that format of the game.

It's always nice to have two players that have felt the pressure, and we all feel the pressure at any given times



in our career. No different for the number one combination, no different for the number four ranked T20 player in Babar. And don't be surprised whatsoever if you don't see some fireworks because very special players don't often stay down for long.

Q. Neither Pakistan nor India has created the path of the line game, but still they're in the semifinal. Anything to look up to?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: Absolutely. Great point. As I said, the last campaign we were just on a high from pretty much the start of that tournament. Won all of the pool matches and then pipped by a better side on the day. It's particularly T20 cricket where you see such sways around the outcome of the wins and losses.

Rightly as you say, though, we've gone about our cricket in a pretty unique way. We've had Shaheen, who came into the tournament with some injuries and now is starting, through bowling efforts, he's starting to really hit his straps.

And that's a dangerous combination. We have four quicks. They're all significant players in their own right. Wasim Junior, the potential, the youngest of those but Naseem as well, who, if you remember the last match here against South Africa, bowled beautifully.

So those four guys, led by Shaheen, is such a significant parcel of this team. Haris Rauf had a lot of experience through the Big Bash league. And now batting, whilst it hasn't gone absolutely to plan, it's meant that our middle order players have had to step up and young Haris has been one of those.

Great story, really significant story of any World Cup. Not even in the squad and now performing like he should have been there from the start. So, yeah, there's ups and downs in this tournament, but I really believe yet with our best game, which is a huge threat to our opposition.

Q. Follow up on Haris. You mentioned he only just come in. Before he played that first game, did you say anything to him about how to approach it, or is it just naturally come in and play the way he wants to play?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: It's all him. I've watched him closely over the last month. And he was the one individual that came into every net session and placed all of our quicks. For me, that was like facing McGrath,

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Warne, Lee, Gillespie, if you could face those batters, those bowlers, and you're playing well, you knew you had a great chance of making runs in the actual game.

So it's no surprise to see how he came in and played so beautifully. He's got a very good technique on our fast bouncy wickets. He's got a freshness. One of the things as an outsider coming into this tournament is pretty much the entire cricketing community with the amount of programme is fatigued to some degree. Match officials, support staff, players, playing 24/7 around the clock; that's the programme. So to have a young, fresh face with nothing to lose, nothing really to gain, but just play with great freedom, it's been a wonderful expression for him personally but also for team Pakistan.

Q. We've seen you working closely with Babar at the nets. What advice have you given him because he's struggling at the moment? And in reply, what he said about his form?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: We all know that in any given career, you have significant moments of ups and downs. And the challenges and the humps along the way, they cement you and your greatness, how you achieve under adversity. There's no question that Babar has been under some adversity. That will make him not only an even greater player.

There's lots of people that talk, but those of us that have been in the changing rooms with Babar and realize that cricket, when it's all said and done, is a very difficult game. You can't continue to keep on punching out hundreds and 50s and strike rates of 140-plus. There's got to be moments in time where there's a lull. And as we all know about the weather, once there's a lull, there's often a storm that follows. So look out, rest of the world, because I think you're about to see something very special from Babar.

Q. There's been a lot of conversation about the parallels with the 1992 campaign. Has this been referenced, discussed as part of the processes in this camp?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: It hasn't directly been influenced. But one of the great parts about media is that all of us, players, support staff, we all understand the importance and significance of campaigns. And '92 was a memorable one for Pakistan cricket.

It was also a tournament that was plagued by the nuances of Pakistan cricket; that is, there's not a dominant performance. There's a performance that gets challenged and then Pakistan suddenly turn up and they're dangerous and formidable. And that tournament was exactly that.

I can remember watching that, actually, from the

bleachers, just as a fan, and thinking Pakistan cricket, with that fast bowling attack and that batting lineup, is something we really have to look out for as Australian cricketers. As it turned out, so did England.

It was a wonderful campaign. And those forefathers of cricket, a lot of these players, they grew up admiring, watching, looking at the way they played and then hoping one day that they could also be great like that side was.

Q. T20 is such a power game. Generally the subcontinent cricketers or batters are not (indiscernible), someone like yourself or from Australia or England. So how do you talk about generating that power game? And in terms of coaching, how have you gone about that?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: The power game in T20 cricket is still being explored because there is a mixture. And this tournament has shown that really significantly. That there is a threat still with the new ball. Everyone talks about overs one to six, the power play being something where a strike rate. And we're criticized about this in the last World Cup as well, six and seven runs and over.

But, in essence, that base, if you are four or five down in the power play, it doesn't really matter about your power because you're at the momentum and the mercy of the momentum of the game.

So, there's a tricky balance still being realised. I think the subcontinental players, when you look at the tournament so far, guys like Suryakumar Yadav who are playing beautifully through that middle to late stage, with a competency of all areas of the ground, with access shots, innovation and access, they become threats. So it's not always about the power. And as I said, I think as cricketers, we're all trying to come to grips with when is the power, when does that foot go down on the floor, when does it decelerate and look to preserve.

And a lot of the matches have been very close matches. And the tricky balance between preservation of wickets versus exploration of innovation have been really why I think a lot of the sides that are here now in this tournament are still here. Australia is a great case of that. Power to burn but hasn't been able to handle the new ball. And it's let itself be vulnerable through the middle of the order.

Q. Looking at your performance here against South Africa, probably one of your stronger performances over the course of the campaign, was there anything that sort of clicked in that particular game in terms of the campaign, or is there anything here at the SCG that you think might give you guys an edge over your opponent tomorrow?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: I loved the way in the match



against South Africa, it wasn't the Babar and Rizwan show, the batting lineup had to dig deep. And Shadab in that occasion was unbelievable. Middle order having to definitely stand up. It's been special. And it hasn't just been through one particular player. It has generally been three or four players that have really had a go with great intent. Haris was magnificent. That was a real turning point for our team. When he walked in to bat, it was basically a breath of fresh air that awakened Pakistan's batting lineup.

I sense, though, Sean Tait has done a really good job in preparing the fast bowlers for this track as well. Naseem put together a great performance that night. Good comeback as well from Haris Rauf, expansive in his first few overs, but bowled on this track really well.

If any conditions in Australia suit us as subcontinental players, I think this is the venue. So lots of positives came out of that match. And the arrival again of Shaheen, who is our premium and fast bowler and the leader of fast bowlers as well. Lots of solid performances went into that, but in particular the arrival of Haris and brilliance of Shadab and our four or five fast bowlers on the money.

Q. The Pakistan team, just your thoughts on Australia. Almost appeared, there was some thought ruthless in some ways, they finished their (indiscernible) which is a side that hasn't been normally associated with the Australian team particularly (indiscernible)?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: The Australian team has some thinking to do. There has to be some freshness. And I think one of the great strengths of Australian cricket has been its ability to be able to recognize when to make that gear change into a different playing roster. I think full credit and respect has to go to the players that played this tournament certainly deserve to be there.

And a little bit like Mark Waugh giving away to someone like myself after World Cup campaigns, it's been quite ruthlessly preparing for the next World Cup and they seemingly come around more often than not.

Just 12 months we were sitting here talking about the T20 champions and that was Australia. Here we are again on the eve of another semifinal. So the tournaments are coming around quick and fast. But certainly from an Australian cricket point of view, there has to be planning heading towards World Cups. They're the premium events. They're the events that everyone across the world plans for, and Australia, unfortunately, just didn't get it right.

Q. What's the difference between 12 months ago when Australia won and this time around when we have (indiscernible) the semifinal?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: Not a lot of difference. You and I have been involved in this game a very long time and understand that one or two performances can change and shift the momentum in a tournament. And Australia just got on the wrong side of the green.

Here I am saying that when we're relying on Netherlands beating South Africa. I think that would be not very prudent to make too many comments.

We all know the Australian cricket team, the culture of Australian cricket has been challenged over the last four or five years. There has to be some improvements in the departments, especially I think their fast bowling attack.

And I think strategically, as well, not playing Mitchell Starc, our premium bowler, ahead of that game was really significant as well. So little things, but just performances. Davey Warner, his performance in the World Cup wasn't as special as it was in the last World Cup. He's a premium player.

Our expectations, like Babar, like all the great players, are so high that when they don't quite get it right, they get exposed. And then they have to raise their game and challenge themselves and become better players and then play better tournament cricket. And tournament cricket is very hard. And it's very different for the common programme as well because you don't get second bites at the cherry typically.

Not a lot has changed. But what I'm suggesting is that there does have to be some planning ahead of the next World Cup, whichever one that is. It's coming thick and fast here in Australia as well.

Q. What do you think of New Zealand? What challenges or big challenges do they pose Pakistan in the semifinal?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: This match, they played against Australia and they got 200 on this particular wicket, actually. And Dev Conway was incredibly destructive during that particular match.

And Australia capitulated all out for 111. Clearly when you have a big batting effort, and I think New Zealand had some really destructive players, you can be put under pressure with the bat. And that almost was their perfect game, I felt, in the World Cup.

So, yes, huge balance. They've also got a terrific bowling attack, a well-balanced bowling attack. Good mixture of experience. I even played against Tim Southee, that goes to show you how much experience that team has got.

But again he turns up; he can swing the ball. Lockie

Ferguson has great pace, lots of experience in T20 cricket as well so poses good threats. And they've got good off-pace bowling as well.

I think like New Zealand sport, in general, they really punch above their weight. They believe they can win this tournament and they've got the potential to do that. So lots of threats to our camp, no question.

Q. You played them in Christ Church last month. Does that really have any relevance, do you think? You beat them in that final. Any relevance heading into tomorrow?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: No, I don't think specifically there's relevance, other than it's always nice to have the rub of the green on the cricket team.

Look, really it comes down to just that sense of belief and that purpose. And T20 cricket has a wonderful way of creating a roundabout where you get sped out the wrong side of it because someone's had a fantastic day.

It's one of the few versions of our sport where it's not just a test of skill sets under pressure. But it's also a test of innovation. And I think New Zealand have really shown some wonderful innovation through the course of this tournament and for the last number of years. Narrowly missing out also on the last World Cup.

So lots of threats for us, as I said. But on the day, in any given day, there can be one star player that can take away it from you, which is rare. In other formats of the game, you have to have multiple contributions.

Q. Last year, Pakistan lost the semifinal against Australia and this year Pakistan lost Asia Cup final against Sri Lanka. What is the change you've seen in this team to not lose another knockout match? And one more, are you missing your emotional friend Justin Langer in this World Cup?

MATTHEW HAYDEN: Emotional friend, yeah. I spent my 51st birthday with Justin Langer in Perth. That was lovely for me personally. But it's nice to have a brotherhood around the game of cricket. I see lots of those in the room amongst me as well.

We all understand that big games are about handling pressure and handling adversity and there's huge expectations and challenges.

One of the things I've always admired about Pakistan cricket is their ability to be able to turn up in big moments. And mind you, there's a big moment ahead of us tomorrow. Very, very special to be a part of it.

And also I've seen great changes, and this side has continued to challenge itself from the last World Cup.

Got on the wrong side of the results in the Asian Cup. But still that's a completely different tournament. So, the way we've prepared is excellent. The way that the middle order in particular from a batting stance has stepped up to the plate has been excellent.

And as I mentioned before, those fast bowlers, there's four of them. They come at good pace. That's exciting for the game, not just T20 cricket, but also test cricket.

And the lineup, as well, just beyond the Pakistan cricket as well producing wonderful fast bowlers, has been a great testament to the country itself, from Wasim, to Wasim to Waqar, just it's a beautiful synergy in Pakistan cricket. There's nothing like fast bowling against high-quality batting.

When I turn up in disguise with my sons at any game, that's what I want to see, is that challenge between bat and ball, in particular the new ball fast and velocity matters. Australia has poached on that for many years and has had good results because of it.

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