

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Saturday, 29 October 2022

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

The Gabba

Zimbabwe

Craig Ervine

Pre Match Media Conference

Q. Craig, you must be very happy with the result of the past two matches, the results of your side, because you already have three points, and your games against top two of the three sides has already finished. How are you seeing things before the Bangladesh game? What are your thoughts and what is the planning for the Bangladesh game?

CRAIG ERVINE: Look, obviously the win against Pakistan was absolutely massive for us, just to keep our chances alive of making the semis. But we know that we've only had to have a travel day yesterday, practiced today and tomorrow is our game against Bangladesh, so it's a very quick turnaround, and we can't sort of dwell on that win last night too much. We've got to concentrate on our next game, and Bangladesh is also a great side.

We'll have to come here and play some exceptionally good cricket again tomorrow.

Q. The team must be over the moon after the Pakistan game, but how important will it be to keep the focus on Bangladesh? They're not playing well, a bit struggling. Do you think you could have the upper hand on this team?

CRAIG ERVINE: Look, I think we have a great chance in every game, and T20 cricket is the sort of game that if you do have a couple guys that come off on the day, you can beat any side. We know that Bangladesh is a quality side, so we're definitely going to have to bring our A-game tomorrow.

The guys -- obviously got their tails up. We've got a lot of confidence obviously with the win against Pakistan, but we just know how fragile this game is and how quickly it can turn around.

Q. It's barely been a couple of days since it happened and everybody is talking about it. You would have seen Zimbabwe cricket come a long way. I'm sure you don't feel it's a surprise because you are pretty used to it by now, but also do you feel with these sort of results, this also opens the window for boards to consider to play more international cricket so that the more you play you'll kind of regain that



old reputation and history that you had?

CRAIG ERVINE: Look, that's obviously the long-term goal is to try and play the bigger nations. In coming to a World Cup like this, there's no better stage to put out performances like that, especially against the bigger sides like Pakistan and India.

It was a huge win, not only in the tournament but for us as a team and a country going forward.

Hopefully it's not just a once off. We'd like to try and repeat those kind of wins going forward to try and make sure that we can get an away tour to England or England can come to us or Australia or India.

It does open up opportunities, but we need to do it a little bit more consistently.

Q. Zimbabwe now has a chance to be part of the semifinal. Do you believe that it is a big chance for Zimbabwe cricket?

CRAIG ERVINE: Look, we've got a huge chance to make the semis. Again, it requires us to win against Bangladesh and also to beat Netherlands, and then we've got our final game against India, and depending on some other results. But we can't look too far ahead right now. I think we're probably just looking at tomorrow and trying to concentrate on tomorrow's game and putting in a good performance tomorrow, and then after that, then we can look at Netherlands and plan our way forward from there.

Q. Unfortunately Zimbabwe couldn't play last year's World Cup. This year you guys have come through the qualifier. Are you guys trying to put a statement that we are capable of not playing the qualifiers and the ICC should not try to get the teams not to qualify and play directly with 12 teams or 16 teams? Like Namibia has played also well; if the teams play directly, now you guys are playing your sixth match. Are you trying to put a statement that you guys deserve to play in the direct rounds?

CRAIG ERVINE: Look, I don't think that we're trying to put a statement out there. I think that with the upset between us and Pakistan and the upset between Ireland and England, I think the statement is already out there. It would be really good to involve some of the lesser teams because it creates that bit of excitement around the World Cup, especially when you do have the upsets, and



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it opens both groups up really nicely.

I think going forward, obviously for us to play the qualifiers back in Zimbabwe and then coming to the World Cup to play another qualifiers is quite strenuous on the heart. I think for all the supporters and the country, as well, to have to go through both qualifiers to get into the World Cup.

But I think the statement is already there that us lesser teams belong in the World Cup.

Q. Craig, obviously Sikandar Raza had a huge impact this year and also the World Cup with the bat and the ball. You're seeing through all the ups and downs, especially after his minor scare last year where there was a bit of a different situation where he could have had a serious illness, and then to see him do so well this year, what's there to learn from him, and what does the team think about him?

CRAIG ERVINE: Yeah, look, he's been absolutely phenomenal over the last few months. I think a lot of credit has got to go to his personality and his determination to never give up. We've seen over the years that he is so passionate about cricket and about succeeding and about winning.

I think everybody plays around him really well. He's been such a good performer for us over the last couple months.

We're going to need him to continue that for us because he's a huge key in the bowling and the batting department. On the day that he doesn't get runs, he contributes with the ball, as well.

He's one of my good friends, and we've started our career a long time ago, but to see his development over the last couple years, it's so rewarding because he puts so much work into it.

Q. About your captaincy, someone asked you about going to qualification, and it's a very unique sort of a challenge for a World Cup captain to go through so many levels to get to this stage, and now you are quite near a semifinal spot. What does it mean for you as a captain?

CRAIG ERVINE: Oh, it means the world. You always question whether you're doing the right things through all the different games, and I think to get the results we've gotten, it's been such a pleasure to have guys like Sean Williams, Sikandar Raza, Regis Chakabva on the field that I can consult with on a regular basis in pressure situations because it's very difficult for me just to make all of those decisions on my own. It's good to have different ideas and bounce things around.

At the end of the day, I've got to go with my gut feeling, and fortunately it's been working pretty well so far.

Q. The likes of you yourself and Sikandar Raza and Sean Williams, you guys are playing for so long and you've had so many ups and downs in cricket. You are making such progress on the world stage. How satisfying is it for you?

CRAIG ERVINE: It's very satisfying. Throughout your career, one of your goals is obviously to play in World Cups. We've played in quite a few World Cups, and it's not only participating in the World Cup but it's also making memories along the way. That win against Pakistan I think will live in our memories for a very, very long time.

Q. Earlier this year, obviously Houghton came in as the coach and there was a change in the whole team ecosystem. What do you think has gone in Zimbabwe's favour ever since because earlier here and there the performance was not up to the marks of the senior players who either dressed or dropped. Suddenly you see the same bunch of players, same set of people are suddenly delivering. What was the success mantra under a new coach or new system that actually worked?

CRAIG ERVINE: Look, I think when Dave took over, he basically changed the way that we did our training, and basically installed a lot of belief back into each and every player. Every time he speaks, you can just look around the room and you can tell that everybody is paying attention. Everybody is taking it in. Everybody respects him.

He's managed to just change the mentality of every single player in the squad, and I think through the performances, I think it's reassured everybody that what Dave is doing for us works.

His sort of calmness and just the way he constructs things in and around practice I think has been amazing, and I think everybody has taken it on board.

He's allowed guys to have that extra bit of energy because our training sessions are kept a lot shorter, and sometimes he actually chases people away from the nets, which has been really good, because everybody has the talent. It's not always about hitting thousands and thousands of balls.

But I think everybody -- I think the main thing is everybody really respects him. When he does stand up and say something, people are listening.

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