

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Monday, 31 October 2022

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

The Gabba

Ireland

Andrew Balbirnie

Post Match Media Conference

Australia 179/5, Ireland 137

THE MODERATOR: Good evening, all, and welcome to this post-match press conference with Ireland Captain Andrew Balbirnie. We will start with those in the room here.

Q. I think we all know where that match was lost with whatever innings by Lorton Tucker?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Brilliant innings. He has had a really good World Cup for us. I think these wickets suit him.

He has played with such freedom and clear plans. Kept us in the game, although towards the back end 7 or 8 wickets down was always tough. But certainly the way he was playing, if we maybe got him on the strike to face a bit more at the end, who knows?

Certainly the character and the fight that we showed after that start is a positive to take, I suppose, towards the end of the week.

Q. How do you explain the start? Was it good bowling or disappointed in some of the shots?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, I think there were two or three dismissals that we maybe could have done a bit better, but at the same time I don't like dwelling too much on dismissals because you can't really do anything.

Certainly that Mitchell Starc over swung the momentum completely in their favor quick. In-swing at the stumps it's not easy, but that's why he is one of the best bowlers out there.

But, yeah, I think the start being 5 down from not a lot, we were certainly staring down the barrel but showed a bit of fight towards the end and managed to stay in the game.

Q. The bowlers certainly stuck to their task?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, and it was a pretty good wicket. Probably maybe the truest wicket we've played



on since we've been here.

Certainly the guys bowled with clear plans. There were a couple of overs that didn't go our way, but that's the nature of the beast in T20 cricket. We took wickets as well which was important at key times.

It feels like a bit of a missed opportunity, but I suppose having been 20 or 30 out for 5 and still having that feeling is, I suppose, a bit of a positive in a round-about way. I still feel like we're doing some good stuff.

Q. In the middle of one of those overs obviously with that very spectacular bowling by Barry McCarthy, what was your take on that?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, Barry loves the limelight. It was outstanding. He is one of the most athletic people in our group, and the commitment he showed to get around to it in the first place and then have the awareness to catch it and throw back was superb.

That's the kind of commitment we want to show on the field. Yeah, that was certainly an amazing moment for him.

Q. 4-overs for George Dockrell. You had faith in him. Today was his day.

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: I have huge amount of faith in George. His record in T20 cricket as a bowler is pretty impressive. He has a very cool head. It suited him out there today with the dimensions.

Himself and Gareth bowled with really clear plans. George got the fourth today because he bowled so well in the first three. He is always someone I'll throw the ball to. I've known him for a long time, and he is very clear with what he wants to do, and it's nice to have that option as well.

Q. Difficult third over for Mark Adair obviously. Did you consider at that point you had a fair few other bowling options, maybe giving the ball to Curtis Campher or one of the other bowlers for the final over?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: No. Mark has been one of our best T20 bowler over the last couple of years. He is the sort of character that if an over doesn't go well, I would still potentially throw the ball to him because he has such confidence and a skill set.



T20 cricket that can happen. Those sort of overs can happen. You just have to keep faith and back your bowlers as often as possible, and you'll get the benefits in the long run.

Q. You said that today feels like a bit of a missed opportunity. Was there a particular reason you felt Australia were potentially there for the taking?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: I suppose there was naturally a lot of pressure on them, the home team, with a bit of rain around in the previous games. They probably have to win two games by a certain amount. I'm not too sure. I'm terrible at math, so the run rate has really kind of fried my head over the last couple of weeks.

But, yeah, I think we knew it was an amazing opportunity. It was a great atmosphere here, an amazing crowd and one we really enjoyed. It kind of does feel like a missed opportunity because the wicket was pretty good, and there was two or three dismisses, including myself up top, that could have maybe not happened. But, like I said, that's the game, and you can't dwell too much on it.

Q. Despite being obviously a missed opportunity, does it feel good that you have taken a chunk out of Australia's net run rate in terms of they probably expected a bigger win at 5 for 25?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: No, I'll not sitting here satisfied because we've done that to Australia. I think we came here to win, and we're disappointed we didn't win.

We haven't really kept too much of an eye on that run rate because if we do, we had to go out and win the game, and we didn't do that. Certainly a 25 for 5, I've been in dugouts where you are seriously struggling to think how we're going to get to a score here.

But certainly the way Lorcan played when his back was against the wall, he came out throwing punches, and that's the kind of message we've given to the guys all summer and coming into this tournament.

Yeah, it was a pretty topsy-turvy game. Certainly with three or four overs left, even though we were 7 down, I felt that anything could have happened. It wasn't to be.

Q. Andy, I know you mentioned that the pitch tonight was perhaps the truest that you had played on, but just your general thoughts on playing in the World Cup at this time of year in Australia and the fact that there has been a bit (indiscernible) in the wickets. Your guys have been able to get the ball to swing at various times. Has that added another dimension, I suppose?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, it's certainly helped our

bowlers a bit. It swung a bit out there tonight. Probably swung a bit later, maybe more in the second innings.

Certainly T20 in the last couple of years, it's been mainly a batter's game. There has certainly been a few complaints from our bowlers about how good the wickets are around the world.

There's some really entertaining games. I wouldn't a big cricket watcher generally, but I've found myself in the room watching most of the games because they're very entertaining. There's a lot happening.

Loads of pressure on different teams and stuff like that and the net run rate and all of that. It certainly makes for exciting cricket.

Q. Have you found yourself as a captain in a few scenarios that maybe you hadn't been expecting if, you know, the wickets had been, I suppose, sort of the blocks of concrete that sometimes they tend to be in T20?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, I think certainly having played here in 2015, I think that was a very high-scoring World Cup. Particularly for our team when we were involved in some big run chases and certainly some big scores.

I think there is that sort of preconceived idea about Australia being fast and bouncy wickets. They're just really good cricket wickets. We're really enjoying playing here. It's my favorite place to tour.

The people have been great. The sport has been great. We haven't copped too much, which is always nice.

Yeah, we've enjoyed our time here, and we want to go out with a bang on Friday.

Q. We've spoken about this before. Just wondering if you kind of have a comment on the context of this game. Obviously, the start with the bat is the headline.

But over 7 to 15 with the ball. I think plus 96 runs after quite a good start. You have spoken before about how important that middle period is with the ball. What are your reflections on where that went wrong slightly this evening?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, I think the trends have slightly changed in the sense that the power play isn't maybe as important as the middle now.

The middle is very important when, particularly on pretty flat wickets, you need to find out how to get wickets. Yeah, I mean, it got away from us a bit at stages, but we were also able to claw it back at stages. You have to

kind of remind yourself that you are playing the world champions in their own backyard, and they've got some unbelievable players in their line-up and sitting on the bench as well.

So I can't be too critical to our bowlers because they've won us games so often. So, yeah, like you said, the start with the bat was certainly disappointing from us as a group. We pride ourselves on kind of keeping us in the game, and we weren't able to really do that at the start today.

Q. There was three excellent sets of figures from Barry, Josh, and George. Is there any frustration then that given all those guys were run a ball or below basically, that they still managed to get to 180?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Not really. I think sort of similar to what I said in the last question is some guys are going to have good days, some guys are going to have bad days. That's the way T20 works.

We've just got to kind of ride the waves with that sort of stuff. I think the guys that have played enough cricket now to know that when it's your day, you need to make it count, and some days it won't be your day.

We play so often that that can happen, and we just have to make sure that we dress ourselves down. We've got three or four days until our next game and try to give New Zealand a good crack.

Q. In terms of the consistency of results in this tournament, it kind of feels like there's been a win followed by a defeat that was less competitive. Think about to Sri Lanka. Think back to today. How much of that is kind of acceptable, so to speak, given the vagaries of T20 cricket and the quality of opposition, and how much of that do you need to see those gaps and the consistency getting a little bit higher?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: I think as a cricketer and as a team you always crave consistency. I think it's probably the hardest format as a kind of skill set, so a batter or bowler to find consistency because a player can come off or a player can have a dream spell, and sometimes it can be very difficult to counter that.

I suppose our main aim was to get into this stage of the World Cup. We did that playing decent. We turned over England last week, which kept us in the hunt, and we had high hopes going into this game.

I think the confidence from the group all talking about how we can go out and beat Australia, that's certainly a different kind of mindset than we've had in previous years. And even that is a big plus for us.

But, yeah, it's a results business, so you want to win, but you have to sometimes accept that a team who are world champions can have a decent day out and turn you over.

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