

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Tuesday, 1 November 2022

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

The Gabba

England

Jos Buttler

Post Match Media Conference

England - 179/6, New Zealand - 159/6

THE MODERATOR: Go ahead evening and welcome to post match press conference with England captain Jos Buttler.

Q. Jos, it felt quite tense out there as it probably usually does against New Zealand. I suppose that must be hugely satisfying to get over the line.

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, absolutely. I thought we put in a very good performance. Any time you take on New Zealand, you know you're up for a really tough challenge.

Yeah, I'm really proud of the guys tonight in a must win game to come out and play with freedom and express ourselves and show off our talent. I was really proud of the character we showed.

Q. There was a lot of pressure going into tonight, but you guys haven't played in a while, six days. Were you a bit like a cold spring, just desperate to get out there and sort of get back on track?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, definitely. We've played a lot of cricket over the short amount of time recently, but certainly that felt like such a long break. We were desperate to get back out there and show how good we are as a team.

We're a really dangerous team. We've got match winners throughout. Having not quite sort of played our best, we were desperate to show that today.

Q. Just on your knock as well, nice return -- I suppose there was only two matches, but like a good knock to sort of underpin the side's total?

JOS BUTTLER: You wanted to say return to form there, didn't you? It's tough to please you guys sometimes. No, got a bit lucky, and I felt really good in the middle, enjoyed it.

I think a lot of the time watching is harder. You just want to be in the middle and have some semblance of control. Felt in a really good place in the middle today.



Q. Did you feel like you had enough at halfway?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, I thought we did. I was sort of aiming, sort of 165. I thought, if we could get up to 170, I thought it would be a really good score.

The only thing I was worried about was if it got really wet and the wicket changed. But Moeen Ali's first over showed it was going to be tough for New Zealand to chase those runs.

Q. Well played. Obviously satisfied with the bats, but I just wondered -- and the gloves actually. And I fear you're going to give me a terribly modest answer, but is that a particularly satisfying game as a captain? You had quite a lot of work to do, didn't you? There were a lot of bowling changes, six bowlers in the first seven overs. I don't know, is that a particularly satisfying game as a captain?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, it is, absolutely. To come through that game as captain and score some runs for the team and then to sort of a couple of times you make a decision and it sort of comes off straight away, that's always nice when it happens.

And I just think I've asked the guys to be sort of ready and bowl at different times and fulfil different roles in different games, and I think everyone has sort of really grown to that. So I feel like I have many options I can throw the ball to, and I've got to trust my instinct as to who I feel is best for that particular time.

Q. We take it for granted, but actually knowing how many overs that each have got left and the matchups and all that stuff, that's quite hard, though, isn't it?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, it can be. I think there's a fine balance between sort of doing your preparation against players, and you can look at numbers till the cows come home really in this day and age. But I think the feel on the day is a really important part of it.

I think my own captaincy journey is still pretty young. As that evolves over time, I think I'll get even more of a feel of exactly what I like. But came off today having batted, and thought Moeen Ali should bowl the first over and didn't think that sort of leading into the game really, having not seen the wicket as well.

So it's important to see what's in front of you and then

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trust your instincts and your experiences.

Q. One thing that's helping must be that you seem to have developed -- well, Sam Curran seems to have developed into a really, really good death bowler.

JOS BUTTLER: Well, he's just a really good cricketer. I think he's a fantastic player. I love his mindset towards the game as well. He always wants to bowl the tough overs. He wants the ball in his hand. He wants to take wickets.

I think you just forget how young he is sometimes as well. You're just going to see him go from strength to strength.

Q. It did seem like a game where pace off was obviously going to be key. Just wondering your thoughts on bowlers like Mark Wood coming back after being perhaps hit around a bit early with a crucial wicket and the role that Chris Woakes made as well, I guess, in supporting Sam.

JOS BUTTLER: Definitely. Those guys -- Mark Wood is someone I don't worry too much about the runs. I know he's going to create chances. He very nearly got Glenn Phillips with his first ball as well, didn't he? And when you bowl that pace, the ball can fly off a little bit.

So don't worry too much about how many runs he goes for. He always steams in and bowls as fast as he can trying to get wickets. The wicket of Neesham was crucial.

Q. The next game is sort of a different circumstance now where after Australia and Afghanistan you'll know exactly what you'll have to do. How then is that a challenge for your captaincy as well in knowing that you've got to win, but depending on what happens, you might have to do it a certain way?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, we've just got to wait and see exactly what happens. There is a little bit of a benefit obviously playing that last game to know exactly what is required of us. We're going to expect a really tough match against Sri Lanka, really, really good team. Every game is tough in this tournament.

But, yeah, to know exactly what we'll need to do to try and get through will obviously be a bit beneficial.

Q. How satisfying and important, I guess, was it for you to lead from the front tonight with the bat?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, really satisfying. It's always as a captain, you want to try to lead by example and do your job for the team as well as sort of doing the captaincy role as well.

I think first and foremost probably the most important thing is to make sure I focus a lot on my own game and spend time thinking about my batting and my wicket keeping and make sure I fulfil that role really well and do what's required for the team.

Q. George was talking about the complexities, the death in a T20 game. I think a lot of people don't quite realize how much you have to kind of run through your head and stuff. I was wondering, does what happened in 2019, that final at Lord's, your kind of threshold for feeling nerves is kind of higher than maybe some other players?

JOS BUTTLER: It helps. I think any time you can draw on experience and situations you've been in, whether good or bad, I think it allows you to have some learnings from that.

Again, as I mentioned, any time you have a semblance of control and you're in the middle, certainly for me personally feels a lot more calming than, say, sat watching it and turning into not a very good watcher of the game. But out in the middle and you can sort of back your decision.

It doesn't mean you'll always make the right one, and sometimes you'll get away with making the wrong one and it just comes off. But certainly knowing you are making those decisions allows it to rest pretty easy.

Q. How confident are you and the group as a whole that you can kind of finish off the job and make sure you get into that last four against Sri Lanka on Saturday?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, we'll prepare really well. I think it's a big relief to be heading to that last game knowing we have a chance at progressing. It would be a tough flight tomorrow if we'd lost tonight especially.

So, yeah, we go there really excited. I think the team is in a really good place after tonight. Again, as I said earlier, it showed great character in a must win match.

We'll head to Sydney full of confidence and expecting a really tough game against Sri Lanka.

Q. Is Liam Livingstone okay? I notice he didn't field for the last three, four overs.

JOS BUTTLER: He's fine, I think. He's obviously got his ankle injury that he's come back from. He's probably playing cricket a little bit earlier than you may have done with that injury. He's just got to manage it a little bit. He's feeling quite sore. He said, if he wasn't needed to bowl, the smart decision was to get off.

Q. Does it make it quite comforting when you see

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Chris Jordan on the field to make a bit of an impact?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, I said to C.J., I think any time a ball goes up, I think it would be my number one pick in the world to be under it.

Again, I think it shows great character for him to come on. It's not easy when you're missing out on the 11, and the selections have been really, really tough. Those four guys who haven't been playing contribute so much, and to come into a high pressure game as a 12th man is never easy.

So to take two incredible catches, I think shows great character about him even though he's obviously going to be disappointed not to be in the 11 at the minute.

Q. In terms of the batting order, we saw promotions for Mo and Liam today. What was the thinking there?

JOS BUTTLER: I think for Moeen, he's obviously a fantastic striker against spin. We had two right-handers in at that point and was still finding it pretty tough against Sodhi and Santner. So I think Moeen was our best option to take those guys on.

Liam Livingstone is someone who's got incredible power. You see him even taking on the long boundaries tonight. Think again, it's a good marker of the group that everyone is comfortable with the flexibility we show with the batting order and with the ball that anyone on any given day may fulfil a different role.

Q. And in terms of your kind of opening partnership with Alex, it was kind of maybe him that went first, and you were almost a bit like when you played in the IPL when you were starting a little slower and kind of accelerating after that. Is that sort of the plan?

JOS BUTTLER: No, not at all, but he certainly took the pressure off. I thought he played some fantastic shots. He's an intimidating guy to bowl at. He struck the ball incredibly cleanly, and I thought the way he got us off to that start settled maybe a lot of nerves.

Certainly when you're watching the team being down after the first six, being in strong position, especially when you've won the toss and batted as well. So great knock from him.

Q. You mentioned a bit how you and Alex were struggling a little against the Kiwi spinners. Was there ever a point there where you were struggling to get the ball away and taking singles that you thought you were in danger of kind of letting the innings slip a little bit? Were you ever worried that the pace had fallen off?

JOS BUTTLER: No.

Q. Okay. Because obviously there's a lot of talk in the buildup to this and every game, yeah, there was just a short period where it felt like it went a little flat. But you were never concerned?

JOS BUTTLER: No, never concerned. It gave both of us in the position we're in a chance to be really positive in attacking against those guys.

Alex got out running down a wicket trying to hit him. I was trying to turn around and bat left-handed against Sodhi. We didn't have any fear of getting out. Maybe we could have got a few more, but I think you saw spin was tricky tonight on that surface.

Q. And Matthew Mott came out at the drinks break. What did you discuss at that point?

JOS BUTTLER: Maybe batting order, yeah.

Q. Finally, you got out -- I mean, having gone all the way through the innings and got near the end, to get out the way you did, was that -- it must have been gutting, eyeing that last over and a half and what you could do with it.

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, definitely. I think in hindsight I probably would have just taken a one when Ben got that two. I think obviously as the right-hander, with a bit of a shorter corner, would have suited me to try and take that on.

So, yeah, potentially could have been sort of turned down the second run and maybe stayed on striker.

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