

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

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Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Adelaide Oval



India

Rahul Dravid

Pre Match Media Conference

Q. Rahul, just going to repeat what was said last night announcing the team; he said, no worries, no problems, you guys are going to win the World Cup.

RAHUL DRAVID: I haven't heard what he said, but I'm glad he's very confident. We'll have to play well to win. There's no question about it. Yeah, we started well. A little bit of a disappointing game at Perth. I thought we fought really well and fought really hard. A little bit of luck here and there, we made a few mistakes, as well, and that could have been slightly different result.

But having said that, the Pakistan game could have gone the other way, as well. These things happen in T20 cricket. But yeah, we're very confident, but we know we have to play very, very well from here on end if we want to win. It's really a question of winning the next four games, really. You have to win the next four games to be able to win this tournament.

Q. Rahul, the question is how are you assessing -- is there a problem with technique or mindset as far as KL Rahul is concerned? Is there something that's bothering you, his approach?

RAHUL DRAVID: No, not at all. I think he's a fantastic player and he's got a proven track record. He's done really well. I thought he's been batting superbly. These things can happen in a T20 game sometimes. It's been a tough -- it's not been that easy for the sort of top order batsmen. This tournament has been pretty challenging. I thought he was superb -- maybe a lot of you were not there, but in the practice game against Australia with Mitchell Starc and Patrick Cummins. It was a pretty good attack, and I thought he batted superbly that day, to get 50 or 60. I'm not sure exactly how much. Quite a few.

So he's actually playing really well. Just hoping it all clicks together over the next three or four games, and yeah, we know his quality, we know his ability, and he's really well suited for these kind of conditions, these kind of pitches. He's got a good all-around game. He's got a very good strong back-foot game which is obviously very much required in these conditions.

So yeah, we're pretty confident and happy with the way

he's hitting it.

Q. Rahul, talking about this match, again there's some rain threat. What actually does the team do when there's a chance of rain that threatens a match, if it becomes a 10 over match, a 12 over match, what exactly is the approach or the team's take?

RAHUL DRAVID: I mean, from our general chat has always been to control what we can control. The weather and what is going to happen, unfortunately we can't really control it. I think considering one -- I think Afghanistan has been a bit unfortunate. They've missed two of the games have been washed out.

We've been lucky, we've been able to play all three of our games for full 20 overs, so we've been lucky I'd say. But yeah, we can only control what we can control. If the weather tomorrow challenges us or forces us to play a 10-, 12-over game, then we'll respond accordingly. We will play it like it is.

You can't go in thinking about it or planning for it. You don't know how many overs it will be. So you go in thinking it will be a 20-over game, and you just respond accordingly, so we'll control it as in when we get there.

Q. Just a quick follow-up on KL Rahul. When you tell us that KL Rahul has been batting really well, do you also address this issue in the dressing room and also tell him the same thing, that yes, you have been batting really well these conditions, or do you just let him be because it's fine as long as the team is doing well?

RAHUL DRAVID: No, we have a lot of conversations with our players. A lot of it is -- it's hard to get into exact details of what conversations you have with your players, but rest assured, I think both in words and in action, I think over the last year he knows he has our support. He's known that.

We've been very -- there's been a lot of clarity about what our side is going to be, what our squad is going to be coming into this tournament, and we haven't wavered from that for a very long time. Yes, because we play a lot of cricket, you might see a lot of different people playing in different situations, in different games. There have been a lot of injuries, including him. He's had phases where he's unfortunately been injured.

But in word and in action, I think with all of our players,

... when all is said, we're done.®



we've -- I think that's the great thing about Rohit, that he's really shown them that confidence and that belief.

Q. (Question not in English.)

RAHUL DRAVID: We have certain ideas in mind; we have certain belief in players. We've played the game enough to know that people will go through some ups and downs. We also understand the nature of Indian cricket, which there is -- once you've gone past Kohli, and Kohli has scored runs, who's the next guy. Then Rahul scores runs, okay, let's look around, who's the next guy.

That's part of the job. I don't mean that in a derogatory manner; that's just the nature of professional sport when we play this game. Actually it's not at all difficult for us because we're very clear; we don't get swayed by what is said outside and by what people are saying.

We have the confidence in our players. We have the belief in our players. We know especially in this T20 format which is such a -- how can you put it? High-risk format in the sense you're asking people to play a high-risk brand of cricket. You're asking them to play a positive brand of cricket. We've always had that belief that we need to give them that confidence and backing, and our players and whoever we've picked here in the 15, we can't always play everyone in the 15. We only play 11.

But everyone has our backing and support, and they've been here because we know their quality, and we also understand at times they might not be able to deliver for us. It doesn't make them bad players.

But yeah, we certainly back them, and they have our support. It's not difficult at all for us to back players and support players; not at all.

Q. I just wanted to know your assessment of India's death bowling so far in this tournament because against Pakistan and South Africa on both occasions we spend I think more than 90 runs in the last 10 overs?

RAHUL DRAVID: Look, it's an area of our game that we've wanted to look to address, to look to get better at. Obviously Bums was one of our guys who was penciled in to bowl two of those overs. It was really heartening for us to see the way young Arshdeep Singh has developed over the last few months.

If you were to ask me in November when I first took over and I had a list of bowlers in my mind, sure, Arshdeep was there, but he was -- certainly he hadn't had that kind of IPL. He had had one good IPL. But the way he's come along after that, he's come and forced his way into the side and done really well. So that's a fantastically

heartening thing to see.

Again, someone like Shami and Bhuvni bowled really well for us. So yeah, we have to keep developing and getting slightly better with our plans and our strategies around those games.

I think I won't read too much into the Netherlands game, to be very honest. We were trying to get a few wickets, and you're trying a few things at the back end.

Pakistan I think we considered 53 or 54 runs. There were a few balls there that -- Shaheen Shah Afridi hit us for a six, and there was another full toss which I think Haris Rauf hit for six, which we looked at it and thought maybe we could have done things slightly differently. Don't concede those six runs and actually a pretty good powerplay.

So there's one or two balls there that hopefully we can get right and get better as we go along, but yeah, certainly an area we -- in all areas we want to get better, but that's certainly one we're looking at.

Q. Rahul, how do you think Dinesh Karthik has gone in this tournament? He seemed to be a very solid partnership with Surya the other night, and then the problem with the back. What is his fitness status?

RAHUL DRAVID: Yeah, he's pulled up pretty well today. It was unfortunate had that spasm when he jumped to collect a bouncer. I think when he landed badly, he landed in a way that I think he just hurt his back a little bit. But with treatment and with the day -- this morning he's pulled up pretty well. He's come to training. So we'll be assessing it. We'll see how it goes, and we'll see how he pulls up tomorrow morning after a good practice session today. We'll put him through his paces and ensure that we've given him a good workout and then see how he pulls up tomorrow morning before making a final decision.

Again, tough for someone like DK to assess how he's gone. Didn't get to play many games. He got one ball against Pakistan at that back end, didn't bat against Netherlands. Thought he was building up a pretty good partnership with Surya at that stage. We needed that little bit of partnership just to get stabilizers, and just was set up for him, but again, that's the nature of this game. You play that high-risk shot and you can get out on that shot, which is why people need to be supported and backed as much as we possibly can in these formats because you hardly -- sometimes people, especially in positions like DK's at 5 and 6, you don't get enough balls. You don't get enough thing, and then when you have to go in, you have to really deliver high-risk shots without having much time to settle in.

Yeah, our belief has always been to back and support

players in those positions so that come the critical time, hopefully they'll be in the right frame of mind to be able to play those crunch shots for us.

Q. Rahul, Bangladesh have a poor record against India. They are not a confident team in this side actually, and Captain Shakib Al Hasan said it would be an upset if Bangladesh beat India. What is your take on that?

RAHUL DRAVID: I think we respect them a lot. I think they're a very good team. I think this format and this World Cup has really shown us that honestly you can't take any team lightly.

Ireland showed that against England. We've seen enough games in this competition.

I think the fact that it is already such a short format. 20 overs is such a short format of the game. The margins of victory and defeat sometimes even if they're 12 runs, 15 runs, it's actually just two hits. It's two hits one way or the other, and actually that's the game.

So it is already a shortened sort of rushed, noisy format, but it's very difficult to sometimes say who's a clear favourite in some of these games.

On top of that, I think these conditions. I think these conditions have actually leveled the playing field to a large extent because the boundaries are certainly bigger, and some of those big hits which you sometimes expect in the subcontinent to just go for six and you just know that I'll be able to make up those runs later on, it's not happening that easily. People are getting out.

I think it's really been a fantastic tournament from that perspective. Apart from the weather, I think it's been a terrific tournament in terms of just the nature of the games.

No, we certainly don't take Bangladesh lightly. Our preparation, our planning will be as meticulous as it was against South Africa at Perth. No different.

Q. As you rightly said, it's a high-risk format, and it's not fair to judge just on the numbers, but just that KL has not even yet been in a position to take a high risk, two of his dismissals are on defensive shots, does that concern you? Are you able to afford him that time to let him get in and then start playing his game?

RAHUL DRAVID: In these conditions, maybe we are able to afford him that time, and like I said, to answer the question, we completely back him. We have no concerns about him. We know that when he gets going, and I've seen it against Australia, against a top-class attack just a couple of weeks ago, I know the impact this

guy can make.

I think in Rohit's and my mind, there's absolutely no doubt about who's going to open for us. In this format, the nature -- I think every wicket is different. I think you've just got to -- that's one of the things, again, this tournament has shown playing in different parts of Australia. The grounds are so different. Certainly playing in Perth the other night where the boundaries were 80 yards. We come here, and it's certainly different. The kind of shots you'll play here will be very different to the kind of shots you'll play at Perth. You'll have to bowl different kind of balls, which I think is a unique nature of playing this tournament in this country, that almost game-to-game you're having to adapt your tactics, your strategies to different conditions. I think that's the uniqueness of that.

If the conditions so dictate that the ball is nipping around doing a bit, then we can afford our batsmen to maybe be a little bit more conservative, keep wickets in hand and then target.

I think it's about adapting and being smart. I don't think there's just one way to play T20 cricket on all conditions. Yes, there is a general template in which we understand T20 you have to be positive; you have to take the game on. That would be 80 per cent of most T20 games, but there is another 20 per cent, and that can come in big tournaments like this, wherein you've got to have the players, and we discussed that in our dressing room, who have to be able to adapt and understand and read a situation.

If it's not a 200-run wicket or it's not a 180-run wicket and 160 is going to get the job done for you, then let's figure out a way to get to 160. Last night, 150 might have done the job for us. I mean, 133 nearly did. 150 might have.

I think we can't -- we might be able to afford people a little bit more time here. We may not. Might be really flat when we come out here tomorrow, and it might become a 180 wicket and we might need to go harder. I think the key word for me is "adaptability" and reading these conditions, these boundaries really well, and the teams that do that best will probably be the ones that will end up in the top four and certainly in the top two.

Q. Rahul, concerning the incident with Virat in Perth regarding his hotel room and the security concern, have you spoken to him? Is he okay? What sort of support are you expecting as a team now you're in Adelaide?

RAHUL DRAVID: It's obviously disappointing. It's not very comfortable for anyone, let alone Virat. It is disappointing.

But yeah, we have flagged it with the relevant authorities.

They've taken action. Hopefully incidences like this will not happen in the future, and hopefully people are a lot more careful because it's the one place where you feel you are away from people's prying eyes and without the media glare on you and without the photographs that all of these players have to deal with. It's the one place where you hope to feel secure and safe. That's taken away, it's not really a nice feeling.

But yeah, I think he's dealt with it really well. He's fine. He's here at training. He's absolutely perfect. We've taken it up with the relevant authorities, and that's all we can do.

Lovely to be in Adelaide. Lovely city. Good memories.

Q. (Question not in English.)

RAHUL DRAVID: I mean, we've been good, and there were a few opportunities that we could have taken in the last game. That happens. I thought we were very good in the other two games. I thought we were very good against Pakistan in that game in some very difficult conditions.

So yeah, it is a very important format. Margins are so small. Every opportunity that you take, especially when you've only managed to score 133, you've got to take it. We didn't. It's not because of lack of effort or anything.

Again, it's just the nature of the game. Some days those direct ones hit. You hit those, and they hit from anywhere. Some days they don't, and the ball goes to the best fielder in the park. It can happen.

It's a great lesson in humility. This can happen to anyone. Can't read too much into these things. We keep doing our processes, keep working hard and keep doing the things that we need to do.

Q. Allow me to take you back just before nine days. After the 19th over, were you also a bit tense against the Pakistan match?

RAHUL DRAVID: A bit tense is an understatement. (Chuckling.) Yeah, I mean, to be honest with you, that game -- I think let's be honest, we were out of it for the most part of it, and then I thought with five overs to go, 60 runs to go, with Virat and Hardik at the crease, I thought wow, you sometimes back them to get 12. I know it was all still going to be tough, and then they bowled a couple of fantastic overs. They bowled two six-run overs. I think they bowled six and six.

I think it was Naseem and Haris, I think it was six and six, and then we needed 48 in 3, and you're thinking, wow, shucks, man, it's going to be tough for us. You need 28 in 8; you know the guy needs to hit two sixes for you. He does it. Phenomenal stuff. You need 16 at the last over,

you get 10 in one ball. You still need six balls to get the remaining six. So it was that up and down. It was such a roller coaster ride. It was an incredible match to be a part of, and yeah, being tense was probably an understatement.

I was pretty relaxed until then because I thought we were not in it. But then when you start thinking, well, I'm in this, then you get a bit more tense.

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