

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Friday, 4 November 2022

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Adelaide Oval

Ireland

Andrew Balbirnie

Post Match Media Conference

New Zealand - 185/6, Ireland - 150/9

Q. Andrew, six overs a spin, probably under today.

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, we kind of lost our way a bit after we got a fairly decent platform set. They obviously took the pace off with our spinners quite early, and we just weren't really able to counter that.

Slightly disappointing, but I think we've come a long way since the last World Cup, but I think the last couple of performances have showed we still need to get better to get closer to these big teams.

Q. Do you still continue to bat fearlessly?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, sometimes it's not going to come off, like I said before. Sometimes it will and will look amazing. As long as guys are clear with what they want to do and have that intent, we want to be a team that people want to watch whether we win or lose.

It's always nice to win, but I think over the last couple of weeks we've showed that we can play some pretty good cricket.

Q. Josh's hat trick summed up this tournament for him, didn't it?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yes, it did. He's been really impressive. He's had a great 12 to 18 months, kind of sets the tone from the off. Bowls really well in the power play.

But I think he's been backed up by most of the guys as well in the bowling unit with spin and seam. Yeah, he's got such a big future ahead of him, Josh, and he's a key asset for us, no doubt.

Q. It means another qualifying tournament for next summer?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, we knew that if we could get a result today, we'd kind of avoid that, but so be it.

We're playing a pretty good way at the moment, and I've



always said the more T20 games we play, we're going to get better. We've got a bit of cricket before then, so we'll have to kind of plan for that when it comes.

Q. Just wondering what you go away from this tournament with? Do you -- are there areas that you've identified that you go, right, this is what we need to do for next time with this team or as it comes through the qualifiers?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: I'm not too sure. I think we'll probably have a proper sitdown and review how we did things and how our prep went and all that sort of stuff.

I think at the start, certainly halfway through our chase against Scotland, if you'd told we'd be playing the last game in the Super 12s still mathematically able to get to the semifinals, I think we'd be pretty happy.

Like I said, there's a couple of moments in the last games where you thought what if, but at the same time, we're still a bit away from these top teams. We need to keep improving and playing regular cricket against them so we can improve and expand our squad as much as we can. We have guys who are ready to come in whenever they get the opportunity.

At the start of the tournament, I said getting to the Super 12s would be a bonus. That's our aim. It will be deemed successful. We've played some pretty good cricket, and it's just a shame that we couldn't create something really special.

Q. Just wondering your thoughts on regional qualifiers versus a global qualifying tournament to get into the next World Cup.

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: I don't think too much about it, to be honest. I've played enough of these qualifiers to know how tough they are. I think still, I've said it a couple of times, that Oman qualifier this side of the year is as pressurised cricket I've ever played in just because of what was at stake. And that gave the group massive confidence.

I suppose getting to play those tournaments in a place where you know the weather isn't going to come into it is a bonus.

Look, it's out of our control. We've got to play whatever team earns the right to qualify for those qualifiers. It is a bigger World Cup next time round, I think, but we

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certainly want to be there in the Caribbean.

Q. In the tournament as a whole, a lot of people have been wanting the shift in attitude and the side to be more aggressive. I don't know, it seems like sometimes it might get overplayed because it's not like this time last year you didn't know you need to play aggressive cricket to win T20. Is it fair enough to say, rather than you've become more aggressive, you've had more of a clarity around individual roles, and that has allowed individuals to know how to be more aggressive rather than waking up one day and say we need to hit boundaries?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Certainly clarity is the word. If you look at our batting order last year, guys were flouting a bit, not sure what role they need to play to get in the team. We sort of changed that a little bit. I think having a lot of games this year has definitely helped, and it's given the guys confidence in the clarity. It's all well and good having clarity of thought, but to actually go out and play with that is a big bonus.

We knew we needed to have a change, a shift of mindset after last year's World Cup. It's easy to say it, but I think the guys have worked so hard, we've given them roles, and they've adapted to them pretty well.

We're by no means the finished article, but we certainly are a better team than we were 12 months ago, and that's all you can ask. Hopefully in a month's time, we'll be even better than we are now.

Q. This probably ranks up there in terms of World Cup campaign as a whole for Ireland. How important was it for you personally and for the game and the country back home that you finally had a stellar career in the T20 cricket to catch up to some ODI success?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Yeah, our 50-over stuff has been really solid the last couple years with some really important wins. That World Cup is a huge title for us, as a 50-over team to try to qualify and play one in India, which will be pretty special.

Certainly we understand how important we are to try to sell our sport, if you know what I mean, and the women's team who are playing in Pakistan and I haven't actually seen any of the scores. I know the first game is today, but that's such an important tour for them as well and for the organisation as a whole.

T20 cricket naturally is a more attractive game for the non-cricket diehard, if you know what I mean. So certainly our T20 cricket has been inconsistent over the last couple of years. We want to get better, and I feel we are getting better. Hopefully that can kind of have a knock-on effect as it kind of ripples down the ranks.

Q. Obviously, there's the test match next year at Lord's. The FTP says there will be a few earlier, so a return to all three formats. A greater workload for you then presumably as skipper. You've never had to captain in all three formats before. Are you raring to go to taking on that challenge in terms of three different sides?

ANDREW BALBIRNIE: Someone came and asked for my signature today as the Irish test captain, and it felt a bit strange. I've got to get selected first and make sure I'm sticking on the blazer.

Certainly you want to play all formats. I've always said that first class cricket and test cricket are so important to the fundamentals of the game. That selection meeting for that first test next year is going to be very interesting because there's nothing really to go on.

But we do have very adaptive cricketers who can adapt to all conditions. We've seen that in the white ball game. I know how keen our young group of players are to play test cricket. That's hopefully going to spur us on to play a lot of test cricket over the next couple of years.

As disappointing as we finished this tournament, it's important to kind of know that this isn't our be all and end all. We've got so much cricket to look forward to. We'll have a few weeks off. I've got a honeymoon to go on, which I can't wait for.

Once the new year starts, we've got red ball, T20, ODI cricket to look forward to. It's been an amazing few weeks here, and I think all the guys have really enjoyed their stay. But that's just another tournament.

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