

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Sunday, 6 November 2022

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Adelaide Oval

South Africa

Mark Boucher

Post Match Media Conference

Netherlands 158/4, South Africa 145/8

Q. This is not the first time you're looking at the aftermath of a match like this. There's a long history. Would you say considering the opposition, this is the worst of all of them?

MARK BOUCHER: Probably as a coach, yes. I think it is quite frustrating because as a player you can at least still have a say in the game. As a coach, you're sort of left to leave it up to other individuals to go out there and try and perform. Yeah, certainly as a coach, yeah, it's up there.

Q. Where do you think it went so badly wrong today?

MARK BOUCHER: When we woke up.

I think if you look at the way that we started the game, our energies were low. Whether that's because it's a half-past-10 game, times have been quite difficult, I don't know, I haven't really put my finger on it. Haven't had a chance to speak to the guys yet and find out where they sort of feel it went wrong.

I think our plans were there, but we didn't quite use them well enough. I thought if you look at the game as a whole, I think Netherlands out-bowled us. They bowled with good plans, bowled to the longer side of the field, and they were just able to create more pressure on us than we were able to put pressure on them.

Q. Of course this is your last game as South Africa's coach.

MARK BOUCHER: Yeah.

Q. How does it feel to go out on a note like this?

MARK BOUCHER: Oh, it's not great, but as I said, I can honestly look at my coaching staff, and we ticked every single box that we needed to tick.

As I say, sometimes you're in control of things, sometimes you're not. I thought the guys were in a very



good space. I think we played some good cricket over a long period of time, especially T20 cricket. We stepped up the other night against Pakistan, and we just -- yeah, we looked a little bit flat today. It's not that we over-trained. I think our training sessions have been very short because we understand we've played a lot of cricket, but the energies didn't seem -- I don't know if that's the case. I haven't spoken to the players. It just didn't seem like it was quite there today, and we didn't bowl like I think we should have bowled.

But we didn't bat like I thought we should have batted, as well. I think the total that was put on for us was maybe a little bit more than we expected, but certainly one that our batting unit could definitely have chased down.

I think all in all, we deserved to be better in this tournament as a squad, but it didn't happen.

Q. Obviously there's a long list of white ball World Cup failures. Can they be linked, or is each one an individual event, if you understand what that means?

MARK BOUCHER: I think each one is an individual event. I know there's a lot of history behind South African cricket and World Cups and that, but the last World Cup I thought we played some very good cricket. We lost one game and were knocked out.

This time around if you would have said to us we've got Netherlands to play to get into a semifinal and we've got to beat them, we would have taken that at the start of the tournament.

But yeah, these things happen. It's not the only upset that's happened in the tournament.

I think in T20 cricket you can get on to a bit of a roll, one or two batters come off, create a bit of pressure, and this happens. There's been some very good sides that have been beaten by -- if you want to call them the "lesser countries", but I think it's made some exciting cricket throughout the whole competition.

Q. Just wondering how Keshav is.

MARK BOUCHER: I don't know. He looked like he was hobbling towards the back end there, so it looks like something serious, but we'll obviously get our medical team to assess what he's done. It looked like a groin injury.



Q. Just generally, things are difficult for South Africa when it comes to the ODI World Cup next year, too, and having sacrificed, I guess, the possible points on offer for that series against Australia. Leaving as coach now, where do you see South African cricket when it comes to white ball cricket and the positions that they're now in?

MARK BOUCHER: Look, I think if you look at our T20 side, we've got a good team. We believe that on our day, we can beat anyone. That's why I say, it's disappointing to have an exit like this with this particular squad because I do believe we deserve better as a squad. We've got ourselves to blame, but yeah, I think our T20 side is in a good position.

Our white ball stuff, I think we've got ourselves to blame as South African cricket with where we are at the moment. We also understand that we've been through tough times, and there are certain things that have to happen with the guys to even close out; they didn't go to different tournaments and all that type of stuff, and it's all just amalgamated into the situation where we find ourselves having to qualify. But if that's the case, we've got to go do it the hard way, then so be it, we have to do it the hard way.

I think that we just need a bit of continuity with the guys in One Day cricket, get the guys playing together, but you might look at this team and go, there's quite a bit of experience, but if you actually look at the numbers, compared to the rest of the world, the numbers are still quite low.

These guys are still building up on their experience. We have got one or two good experienced players around the unit. But yeah, there's certainly good players; we just need to put that all together and get good combinations going forward for the next World Cup.

Q. Just on the whole thing about South Africa and World Cups, while you say they are all different, is there a possibility that something gets in their heads, even if it's not discussed or it might be there because of that history?

MARK BOUCHER: I think the more you don't do well in World Cups, I think it does start playing in your head a bit. I think that's just natural.

I don't think that's been the case of late. We've played in some tight games in World Cups and we've actually won them.

You know, having a look at that, using the past, we've tended to lose those games. We were never really in this game today, to be fair, so it's not like you look at it and go, from the start of the game on paper, yes, we should have won the game, but the game is not played on

paper. It's actually played out there in the middle where we got out there, we just didn't start off well. I think they batted well. They were brave. They can come out and play brave cricket, the situation that they're in, as well, which makes them dangerous and then we weren't able to get momentum back on our side.

We put ourselves under pressure with the bat a bit up front by losing a few wickets, and I think, as I said, they read the conditions really well, and they adapted quicker than what we did, and it made it very tough for us.

Yeah, and that's it.

Q. Do you think there was in hindsight a bit too much pressure on three or four batters with a longish day and then perhaps Temba not quite in the form that maybe South Africa wanted so there was perhaps too much pressure on three or four batters in the middle?

MARK BOUCHER: You can look at it now and you can say, yes, that's the case, but all those batters that have been batting in the middle have been in great form, and they've come off at certain times.

I think you can't look at one or two players. I think we've got to look at it as a unit, as a squad, and everyone has got to put their hands up and say, we just weren't good enough on the day today.

As I said, we played some good cricket in the past, recent past, as well. We just weren't good enough as a squad today. Simple as that.

Q. I guess that game in Hobart now looks even more important. Is there frustration around the way the fickle nature of T20 World Cups, you get five more minutes in perhaps and you're potentially through to the semifinals?

MARK BOUCHER: Those are the rules. We don't make them. We've just got to play by them.

Q. Mark, the toss, I think it's now 10 matches in a row that the team batting second has lost now at the Adelaide oval. The pitch certainly was only going to slow down. What was the thinking behind choosing to bat second?

MARK BOUCHER: I think all those stats are stats later on in the day. We went through everything. We went through what this wicket plays like early morning, sort of Test match and first class, and the history was the wicket was a little bit cold this morning, and we decided to go in with the extra seamer and also decided because of that to bowl first.

We were maybe looking to make a bit of headway into

their top order and middle order early doors, but we just didn't bowl well enough.

I still think that in hindsight you can look at it now, and yes, it actually did start to slow up a bit. We didn't think it was going to do that. We got here yesterday and the wicket was quite wet. It was quite tacky this morning, as well, but it dried out a lot quicker than what we expected.

Yeah, we can look at a lot of things. We can look at playing four seamers or maybe should have played an extra spinner. We can talk about batting first.

Bottom line is we just weren't up to standard today as a team. We just weren't good enough and we didn't come out and perform as a unit. I think there was certainly individuals who really stood out, but as a team we just unfortunately didn't all rock up today.

Q. Obviously your last game in charge of South Africa. Where do you feel that you left the white ball team particularly in both formats? How do you feel about what you've done over the last three years in white ball cricket?

MARK BOUCHER: I think in T20 stuff, I'm pretty happy with where the guys are. There's always going to be questions of one or two positions. But yeah, I think as a squad we've got a lot of depth. We've got guys coming in. We've got some good young players that will be probably moving into our system soon, as well. I think as a white ball team we're in a good space.

As I said before, it's been quite tough to have some sort of continuity in the One Day team, but I certainly think that the players are there and we've got the players to create different combinations. We just need to play them together for a longer period of time.

This T20 side has been quite together for quite some time, and that's when you start to win games as we have in the buildup to this and also at the start of the competition. People start looking at you and start saying, well, hold on, South Africa could actually win this.

I think it's in a good position. We'll just -- we have to try and keep all the players interested in playing for South Africa. I think that's a big question that needs to be answered. Then hopefully they can put some good combinations together and create some good coaching staff around these guys.

Q. Obviously you wanted to get through to the knockout stages; how disappointed are you that you haven't got there?

MARK BOUCHER: Yeah, gutted, to be honest. As I said, I think this squad deserved to give themselves a better chance, and yeah, unfortunately it didn't happen

for us, which is very disappointing for me and certainly every single guy who's in our dressing room at the moment.

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