

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

Wednesday, 9 November 2022

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Adelaide Oval

England

Jos Buttler

Semi-Final Pre Match Media Conference

Q. Can I just ask what the mood is like in the camp? Such a huge game; is this the one that really gets the juices flowing and you're really looking forward to it?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, obviously. We're all really excited about the match. In my opinion one of the best stadiums in the world against a brilliant Indian team, which I'm sure will be well supported tomorrow. It's going to be a great occasion, and these are the times that you want to be involved as a player.

Q. Can I just ask about Dawid and Mark, how are they, fitness wise and are you expecting them to be available tomorrow?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, we'll see how they pull up. We'll try and give them as long as possible, and obviously Dawid left the field the other day with a small niggle, and Woody has had a little bit of stiffness, but we trust the medical team. We trust those two guys, as well, and we'll give them as long as possible.

Q. Is there reluctance to break up the XI but equally tempered by the noise if they go into a game less than 100 per cent it could impact the game if something happens during the game?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, obviously you need guys to be fit to participate in the game. I think in all sport, players don't always play to 100 per cent, but of course you have to be able to fulfill your role in the team.

So yeah, we'll give that as long as we can with those guys, and as always, we have 15 guys preparing to play. There's been some really tough selections throughout the whole tournament. We've got some fantastic players who have not yet played in the tournament, and they're all desperate to make their mark if given a chance.

Q. I think here was one of the turning points of English cricket. You were here in 2015, pretty rough day. I think since then, there have been five or so global limited overs events; England has reached the semifinals at least in all of them. Are you able to reflect on how much England have come since then and some of the things you're doing differently?



JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, we were actually just talking about that in the dressing room, a few of us were -- anytime you go back to certain grounds there's some moments or memories that were -- and not always good ones, unfortunately. But yeah, absolutely. I think it's been clear to see the change in sort of mindset in English cricket towards the white ball game since that game went that way and especially the way we've played. As you've mentioned, the way we've played has given us better results, so that gives us a lot of trust in that process that it works.

I think even going back to the Pakistan tour, some younger guys coming into the group, there seems an engrained way of playing now in English cricket. It's been a fantastic journey to be involved in. Going back to that point, as you said, it was a real line in the sand, I would say, that moment in English white ball cricket, and to be now into a semifinal and going to tournaments with a level of expectation that we should perform well is a great place to be as a team.

Q. Moeen had said something along the lines of to be remembered as a really great team -- to be remembered as well as the team should, you need to actually win a few more trophies. You've won one, come close --

JOS BUTTLER: Who said that?

Q. Moeen. Is that how you see it, too?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, I think we all want to win things, and we all want to -- certainly don't want to be a team that just says we played a great style of cricket. You want to have tangible things that you have achieved throughout that, as well.

Getting to semifinals and finals, the big prize is obviously standing there with the trophy at the end of the game, and that's what we all want to achieve.

But we know that the way we play is going to give us the best chance of doing that. We very much stick to that and have full faith and belief that if we play to the best of our abilities with the way we want to play our cricket, that's how we're going to get to the point of lifting more trophies.

Q. Just wanted to ask you about Bhuvneshwar Kumar. You've struggled against him in the past.

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How do you go about preparing to face a bowler who you've struggled against and any comfort you can turn that around?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, I'm always confident in my own game. I think there's always certain bowlers that you potentially find harder than others or at certain times in your career you have good times against them or bad times against them. I certainly don't fear anyone. I always prepare well, and I look to play the ball in front of me and not the bowler.

Q. Your first game here in this tournament; obviously different dimensions to most of the grounds you've played at, all of them. How is that going to affect the game?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, obviously tactically it may be a bit different. The dimensions and the surface we play on obviously have a big impact on the way you bat and bowl on those surfaces, so we've done some good things. We have guys who have played at Adelaide before, and we go into the game with some good ideas, and we're react well on our feet when we have to.

Q. Are you surprised it's a used pitch for such a big occasion?

JOS BUTTLER: I think having talked to the groundsman, his team is really confident that he's had a lot of time to get some really good work into the wicket. He seems very comfortable that it's going to be a really good surface and a consistent surface.

At the moment I have no worries about the pitch.

Q. So you don't think it's a big toss, for instance?

JOS BUTTLER: I don't, no, at the minute, no. I think from all the information I've got at the minute, it looks like the wicket should be consistent for 40 overs.

Q. Phil Salt is obviously a player you've played with at length. How frustrating do you think it's been for him having not been a part of the World Cup thus far, and if he were to play, how confident are you that he has both the character as well as the skills to do a decent job?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, I have full faith in every member of our squad, guys whether they've played so far or not. It's always a frustrating time when you're not playing, and I wouldn't expect them to be happy that they're not playing. I think everyone should have the belief that they deserve to be in the XI and have full confidence if they get their chance that they'll perform.

Like I said before, there's been some really tough selections and there's been -- unfortunately you can only

play XI every time, so guys have missed out, so whoever has to come in, if they're needed, I have full confidence in them.

Q. What about Phil's skill set? What do you like about what he offers?

JOS BUTTLER: I think he has a fantastic mindset, especially for the T20 format. He certainly doesn't fear anyone. He certainly is someone who wants to get on the front foot and take the game on. He embodies quite a lot of what we speak about as a team and how we ask guys to play.

So certainly I wouldn't expect to see anything else from him if he gets the chance to play and certainly someone who's not going to shy away from an occasion. I feel like he's someone who will definitely take it on.

Q. A few years back in an India-England World Cup knockout game, India would have started as a hard favorite. No longer the case. Do you think India doesn't have that intimidating aura in knockout games over the last few the way they have performed?

JOS BUTTLER: No, not at all. I think India is a very, very strong team. I think Indian teams have been consistently strong for a long period of time, and naturally so with the amount of depth and talent that is in the Indian game. There's some fantastic players in their lineup. You get to a semifinal of any competition, you expect to be playing against a really tough team, and India will certainly be that.

Q. Adelaide looks more like a subcontinental track; have you had a look at it?

JOS BUTTLER: No, it looks quite like the Adelaide Oval to me.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about what sort of a role spinners will play at the Oval, and are you surprised that your teammate from the IPL, Yuzvendra Chahal, hasn't even got a game in this World Cup so far as far as playing for India is concerned?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, I think the spinners play a huge role in all T20 cricket. I think there certainly can be wicket takers throughout those middle overs or they can bowl well with the new ball, as well. I'm sure the dimensions the spinners may bowl some different lengths, for example, but I think the biggest thing for all the spinners is to try and spin the ball as hard as they can, try and create chances. We know in T20 cricket if you can take wickets, you can stem the flow of runs and there's some really good spinners on both teams, so I'm sure they'll be trying to do it.

Q. And Yuzi?

JOS BUTTLER: Look, Yuzi is a great bowler. I really enjoyed playing with him at the IPL. He's a very brave bowler, as well, so he's a guy that's always looking to take wickets with his variation, so I'm sure if he's called upon to play, he's a very good bowler.

Q. I just want to ask, we associate fearless cricket as far as England is concerned. Can you talk to us about what happened in this World Cup specifically because we saw one innings from Alex Hales but apart from that England is not playing that kind of cricket which we associate with them. Is it because of the conditions here? Is it because of the cold weather, anything to do with the conditions, the way England has changed their approach? Or you guys have changed your plan according to the conditions or the situations? Is there a difference?

JOS BUTTLER: No, I think we'll always be trying to take the game on as much as we can. In all cricket you have to adapt to the surfaces in front of you. In Australia you play on some grounds with much larger boundaries than others, so I'd assume the boundary count across the tournament is probably lower than it may be in other countries. So I think that's probably been a part of the games.

But no, we certainly always try and push the level if we can. That doesn't mean we always aim for 200. On certain surfaces pushing the boundaries might be 150 instead of settling for 125 or 130. We'll always be trying to do that and trying to fall on the more positive side.

Q. When you guys faced India back home for the six white ball games, one of the reasons India was successful was because of the new ball attack. They took wickets with the new ball. Here in these conditions the new ball has made an impact in this tournament. How important do you think it's been as a batter being respectful with the new ball since you also face the new ball?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, obviously when the ball is brand new there's an opportunity for swing or seam movement, and yeah, you're always look to -- anytime you can get the ball to move laterally, there's an advantage to try and take wickets. Both teams will be trying to do that as much as they can. I think as a batsman it's important to respect that but find ways to put pressure back on the opposition.

Q. 2019 World Cup win, 2021 semifinal. This is the first time that Eoin Morgan will not be there. You being the captain of the team, have you spoken to Eoin Morgan ahead of this big clash, how to go about it when it comes to captaincy?

JOS BUTTLER: I speak to Eoin quite a lot. He's one of my great mates, so I'm always in touch with him and I know he's someone if I want to ask some questions of, I can speak to him. But it's very much about doing it my way, as well. Eoin is not the captain of England anymore; I have to take that on myself and be myself in the tournament, lead the team as myself. We're very much in a new time of England cricket and white ball cricket without him now as the leader. I'm very much looking forward and have immense trust in the guys in the changing room and the coaches who work with us, but I know he's a great mate and someone if I want to run anything past, he's a great font of knowledge for that.

Q. You've seen a bit of Suryakumar Yadav. What are your thoughts on the way he's taken things on this tournament, and have you seen enough of him to find a way past him?

JOS BUTTLER: Yeah, look, he's been great to watch, hasn't he. I think he's someone who has probably been the batter of the tournament so far in terms of the way you want to watch someone go about it. I think his biggest strength looks to be the amount of freedom he plays with. I think he's obviously got all the shots, but he allows himself to play all the shots, as well. He's got a very free mindset from what I can see.

But as with any batsman in the world, it takes one chance to create a wicket. We desperately need to find a way to do that, and it would be remiss just to think about him. I think they have some other excellent players, as well.

Q. Obviously you want to play in the final and win the trophy, as well. But it seems most of the people want India-Pakistan final. Perhaps the atmosphere, as well, for generating more revenue, more viewership. How confident are you to spoil the party?

JOS BUTTLER: Well, we certainly don't want to see an India-Pakistan final, so we'll be trying all we can do to make sure that doesn't happen.

Q. There's a lot of talk around knockout games when India and England are involved. Do you subscribe to the theory of this being big matches, or is this just another match which is won by which side plays better on the day? As a player and approaching it and playing it, do you play it any differently?

JOS BUTTLER: I think externally of course it is a different game. We have to -- there's probably more people in the room here for a semifinal than there would be for a different game, so of course a few things feel a bit different in that sense. The game remains the same. We must find a way to accept the noise around the match, but again, come back to exactly your job on the

day and playing what's required from you.

It's still a game of cricket. There's a lot of things you can't control in the game. There will probably still be a misfield, someone will bowl a wide, someone might drop a catch. All these things happen in the game, just because it's a semifinal or not. But we must maintain trying to play with the same level of freedom in T20 cricket. Whether it's one or two guys, whether it's a full-team performance coming down to it on the day, we must have huge belief that we can get the job done.

Q. Can you please mention one factor that worries you against India?

JOS BUTTLER: One factor that worries me? They're a good team. (Smiling).

Q. With a lot of the surprises in this event, a lot of upsets, as well, and then rain also destroying some of the plans of the teams, has momentum been difficult to achieve in the group stage as a team?

JOS BUTTLER: A little bit maybe. Like you said, there's been some upsets. Like you said, there's been some rain around which has curtailed a few games, so maybe it hasn't flowed like it may do in other tournaments so far, but no, we've got to the point where we want to be at the moment, so we're coming into this game really excited for it.

We've played in two must-win games just before this, as well, so we're used to that feeling of being in knockout cricket already. So we feel that we've gained some good confidence from those matches. The team feels in a really good space, and everyone is really excited for what's going to be a great night.

Q. My question is do you see since it's an evening match, would there be a difference in the kind of par score and what kind of par score on this track you're expecting since you said that the curator has walked on the track? What's a chasable target on this kind of a track?

JOS BUTTLER: Well, we'll wait and see, won't we. If we set first, we want to post a score that can't be chased, and obviously we'll be confident to chase anything down batting second. Historically I think if you look at the stats, it shows about 165 is around the par score here, but I'm not really interested in a par score, I'm interested in a winning score tomorrow.

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