



'Comparing Afridi with Bumrah is foolish'

Former left-arm quick Mohammad Amir has hailed India pacer Jasprit Bumrah as the best T20 bowler in the world and feels that his comparison with Pakistan quick Shaheen Afridi isn't justified. The Afridi vs Bumrah contest will be one of the key battles to watch out for when India take Pakistan at the T20 World Cup on Sunday in Dubai, but Amir reckons the 21-year-old quick has a long way to go before he can match India's pace spearhead Bumrah. "See, comparing Shaheen with Bumrah at this point would be foolish because Shaheen is young and he is learning. And Bumrah has been doing well for India since so long and currently, I think he is the best T20 bowler, especially in the death over," Amir said on the YouTube channel 'Uncut' ... AGENCIES



Two-time champion West Indies will take on England in the second match of the day as the Super-12 stage of the T20 World Cup get underway today. The mouthwatering clash is a rematch of last edition's final, which West Indies had won in dramatic fashion.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Focused on powerplay, says Finch as Australia face South Africa

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Australia captain Aaron Finch has played down the effects of evening dew in day/night games at the Twenty20 World Cup, insisting that control of the powerplay was fundamental to success in the abbreviated form of cricket.

After a disjointed build-up to the tournament which runs until November 14, the Australians kick off their campaign against South Africa in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

Finch said he expected the wicket to "play pretty good, a touch on the slow side", adding that dew "will play a factor in the tournament, no doubt".

"Four of our five games are day games. The only night game we've got is our third game against England.

"As the conditions cool down slightly in the coming month or so, it will probably become heavier and heavier dew so then the toss does become really important."

Finch said that the powerplay, with only two fielders allowed outside the 30-yard circle for the first six overs of an innings was "so important".

"Regardless of how dewy it does get, if you can control that part of the game, it just goes a huge, huge distance to winning the match."

Without disclosing the team, Finch said Australia, who have never won the T20 World Cup, had plumped for "seven specialist batters, four specialist bowlers plus the all rounders" against South Africa.

"We've got a lot of confidence in the depth of our squad, we've got a lot of confidence in (Glenn) Maxwell, (Marcus) Stoinis and (Mitchell) Marsh to bowl four

overs as well.

"We think that on these wickets in these conditions they can do a really good job and be an attacking option as much as anything."

Finch added that two warm-up games, against New Zealand and India, had been a real boost for Australia, with players at varying levels of match readiness.

"We obviously haven't played a huge amount of cricket... over the last probably 18 months," he said in reference to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It's exciting to have everyone together. The guys have been at different stages of their preparation for the tournament being,

whether it's IPL, some guys are coming off injury, some guys are coming off pre-season back at home.

"It's coming together quite nicely. To have two really good hit-outs against New Zealand and India was crucial for our preparation as well, to be able to hit the ground running once we got here and sort of brush up on our skills and just play together. It's been really nice."

Finch added that those two warm-ups had also been a personal confidence booster, coming after he underwent knee surgery following Australia's tour of the Caribbean.

"The knee's feeling great, it's feeling a bit better than what I thought it would at this stage, to be honest, so to be able to play them first to warm up games... was crucial, to get a few in the middle was nice," he said.

"Everyone's in a pretty good space to be honest, the way that the group's come together, the feeling around the place has been brilliant. We're really excited to kick it off tomorrow."

TODAY'S MATCHES

Australia Vs South Africa
4pm (BST)

England Vs West Indies
8pm (BST)



Sluggish West Indies face red-hot England

AGENCIES

Two-time champion West Indies will hope to raise their game by a few notches when they open their campaign against England in a Super-12 contest of the T20 World Cup here on Saturday.

A team packed with some of the most destructive T20 players, West Indies cut a sorry figure in the two warm-up games -- against Pakistan and Afghanistan -- and will need to quickly shrug off the disappointment ahead of the tournament proper.

Poor batting hurt the team in both the practice matches. Against Pakistan, they scored a modest 130 for 7, and against Afghanistan, Kieron Pollard's men managed 133 for 5. Roston Chase's 54 off 58 balls against Afghanistan was the main highlight of the team's batting, although Pollard did show some spark when he hit a 10-ball 23 with five boundaries against Pakistan.

One of the major concerns for West Indies is the form of Chris Gayle, who scored just 165 runs in nine innings in the Caribbean Premier

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League and featured in just two games for Punjab Kings in the UAE leg of the IPL. Experienced all-rounder Andre Russell has had frequent fitness issues, the latest being a hamstring injury. He played only three games for Kolkata Knight Riders in UAE.

There is not much to write home about West Indies' bowling either; spinner Hayden Walsh (2 for 41) and left-arm pacer Obed McCoy (2 for 43) were their most successful bowlers in the two practice games. With Oshane Thomas in the ranks, pace still seems to be its better suit.

England, on the other hand, are the reigning world champions in ODIs, and will be itching to put the ghosts of the 2016 World T20 to rest. In the final of the 2016 World T20 at Eden Gardens, Carlos Brathwaite smashed four successive sixes off Ben Stokes to lift the cup.

Eoin Morgan's England seem a balanced side despite missing some key players in Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer and Sam Curran. Their batting boasts of Jason Roy, Jos Buttler, and Jonny Bairstow -- all capable of destroying any bowling attack on their day.

While England lost to India in the first warm-up, they quickly recovered to beat New Zealand in the second match.

Bairstow's 49 runs off 36 balls and Moeen Ali's 20-ball 43 late in the order were the highlights of their batting against India, while Buttler slammed 73 off 51 balls against New Zealand to gear up for the showpiece.

Mark Wood and Adil Rashid snapped four and three wickets, respectively, to lead a clinical bowling display against New Zealand and with David Willey, Chris Woakes and Moeen Ali also in the side, England's look like a formidable attack.



FIXTURES (SUPER 12s TO FINAL)

SUPER 12			
DATE	FIXTURE	TIME (BST)	VENUE
23 Oct	Australia vs South Africa	4:00 pm	Abu Dhabi
23 Oct	England vs West Indies	8:00 pm	Dubai
24 Oct	Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh	4:00pm	Sharjah
24 Oct	India vs Pakistan	8:00 pm	Dubai
25 Oct	Afghanistan vs Scotland	8:00 pm	Sharjah
26 Oct	South Africa vs West Indies	4:00 pm	Dubai
26 Oct	Pakistan vs New Zealand	8:00 pm	Sharjah
27 Oct	England vs Bangladesh	4:00 pm	Abu Dhabi
27 Oct	Scotland vs Namibia	8:00 pm	Abu Dhabi
28 Oct	Australia vs Sri Lanka	8:00pm	Dubai
29 Oct	West Indies vs Bangladesh	4:00pm	Sharjah
29 Oct	Afghanistan vs Pakistan	8:00 pm	Dubai
30 Oct	South Africa vs Sri Lanka	4:00pm	Sharjah
30 Oct	England vs Australia	8:00pm	Dubai
31 Oct	Afghanistan vs Namibia	4:00pm	Abu Dhabi
31 Oct	India vs New Zealand	8:00pm	Dubai
1 Nov	England vs Sri Lanka	8:00pm	Sharjah
2 Nov	South Africa vs Bangladesh	4:00pm	Abu Dhabi
2 Nov	Pakistan vs Namibia	8:00pm	Abu Dhabi
3 Nov	New Zealand vs Scotland	4:00pm	Dubai
3 Nov	India vs Afghanistan	8:00pm	Abu Dhabi
4 Nov	Australia vs Bangladesh	4:00pm	Dubai
4 Nov	West Indies vs Sri Lanka	8:00pm	Abu Dhabi
5 Nov	New Zealand vs Namibia	4:00pm	Sharjah
5 Nov	India vs Scotland	8:00pm	Dubai
6 Nov	Australia vs West Indies	4:00pm	Abu Dhabi
6 Nov	England vs South Africa	8:00pm	Sharjah
7 Nov	New Zealand vs Afghanistan	4:00pm	Abu Dhabi
7 Nov	Pakistan vs Scotland	8:00pm	Sharjah
8 Nov	India vs Namibia	8:00pm	Dubai
SEMIFINALS			
10 Nov	Semifinal 1	8:00pm	Abu Dhabi
11 Nov	Semifinal 2	8:00pm	Dubai
FINAL			
14 Nov	Final	8:00pm	Dubai

Tigers 'charged up' to answer critics

MAZHAR UDDIN from Dubai



After completing the qualifying round as the runners-up from Group B, courtesy of a record 84-run win over Papua New Guinea (PNG) on Thursday, Bangladesh, who are now placed in group 1 in the Super 12 stage, reached Dubai yesterday afternoon.

Despite qualifying for the Super 12 stage, there was some sort of unrest among the players in the Tigers' camp. The Bangladesh team faced heavy criticism after their shock six-run defeat against Scotland in their T20 World Cup opener. And skipper Mahmudullah Riyad did not hold himself back at expressing his grudge towards the media on Thursday after the thumping win against PNG

ensured the Tigers' qualification to the Super 12s.

There were even uncertainties whether the Tigers would go on to qualify for the Super 12 after the defeat against Scotland.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan was furious after the defeat and his remarks regarding the commitment of the players along with negative comments on social media and news reports seem to have an adverse impact on the Bangladeshi players.

Mahmudullah had mentioned the fact that it is the players who have the highest commitment towards the Bangladesh team and the unhealthy criticism about the team after the defeat was unexpected from the players' point of view.

"Obviously, everything touches us. After all, we all are human and we also have feelings.

Our parents and kids also sit in front of the TV sets and they also feel bad," said Mahmudullah after the win against PNG.

The current situation perhaps motivated the players even more to do something extraordinary in the flagship event and make a statement after all the criticism towards the Bangladesh team.

"We definitely want to do something extraordinary this time around. Yes, the defeat against Scotland came as a huge shock for us, and as a player representing the country, we felt bad. But the fact of the matter is that we always try to give our best. But at times it doesn't go in our favour," said a member of the Bangladesh team requesting anonymity.

"But I think every single member of the team is now charged up which I think can work as a tonic for all of us going

into the Super 12 stage. I don't know how far we can reach in this World Cup, but we have the urge to do something outstanding and prove everyone wrong," the player added.

Bangladesh are placed in Group 1 alongside Australia, South Africa, England, West Indies and Sri Lanka, who are set to join group 1 as champions from the group A qualifying stage.

The Tigers are expected to face Sri Lanka in their opening Super 12 game in Sharjah on Sunday and will train ahead of the game today.

Although the morale of the Bangladesh team is pretty high after a dominating win, it seems that the entire Tigers' camp is hiding their emotions and looking to answer all the criticisms through their performances in the flagship event.



England's bucket list

AFP, London

England's bowlers have opted for a decidedly low-tech approach to winning the T20 World Cup by training with a humble bucket to counter the crushing humidity of the Gulf.

Seamer David Willey said England players are soaking their hands in buckets of water during training sessions in order to replicate the feeling of using a ball saturated by evening dew, with four of their five Super 12 games taking place at



night. "The biggest thing for the seamers, towards the back end when you're sweating the most, is being confident about bowling yorkers," explained Willey, the son of former England batsman and Test umpire Peter Willey, on Thursday.

"The margin for error when you're doing that is so small... You can become a little bit more nervous about bowling no-balls and flat ones when that ball is wet.

"All you can do is practice. Even if it's just dunking balls in buckets and catching, fielding and bowling with these wet balls."