



‘Fearless Australia out to win’

AFP, Dubai

Coach Justin Langer on Friday said Australia will come out with a “mindset” of winning the Twenty20 World Cup final against New Zealand regardless of the all-important toss factor.

The flip of the coin has weighed heavily in the tournament staged in the United Arab Emirates with Dubai -- venue of Sunday’s final -- witnessing 11 wins out of 12 matches for the team batting second.

Australia became the latest to win after opting to bowl first against Pakistan on Thursday when they chased down 177 with one over and five wickets to spare in the second semifinal.

“Finchy actually thought about batting last night because it was a big final but people talked him out of it,” Langer told reporters.

“Can’t deny the statistics. In the final, you know how close it got last night, it could have gone either way. Very important we have the mindset whether we bat first or bowl first that we can win from any situation.”

Australia were in trouble at 96-5 in their chase when Marcus Stoinis (40) and Matthew Wade (41) put on an unbeaten stand of 81 to halt Pakistan’s juggernaut of five wins in the Super

12 stage.

The left-handed Wade, a wicketkeeper-batsman, smacked pace ace Shaheen Shah Afridi for three straight sixes to close the game in the 19th over.

Stoinis also admitted the toss has played a big part in deciding matches but hoped the pitch in the final “takes that element of the game out of it, little bit more.”

Langer hailed the team’s “fearless” approach as he talked of Stoinis hitting a six off Shadab Khan one ball after the leg-spinner took down Glenn Maxwell.

“When Marcus Stoinis -- the ball after the wicket -- hit the six off the leggie, that’s what you call fearless cricket,” said Langer.

“And if you are going to win this tournament we have got to continue on with the way we played Bangladesh (in a group game when they chased won 74 in 6.2 overs), bat first or second, that fearless or aggressive batting is going to be crucial.”

The trans-tasmanic contest will bring back memories of the 2015 50-over final in Melbourne when Australia beat New Zealand to lift their fifth ODI World Cup.

“We have been born up watching the All Blacks. The way New Zealand have gone about their business for the last few years has been

outstanding,” said Langer.

“They are really good bunch of blokes. They get on with the job and get it done. We have to be at our best like we have been throughout this tournament to beat New Zealand.

“Great respect and friendship between both teams. We are looking forward to this contest. Lot of history.”

Both the team are searching for their first T20 World Cup title after six attempts.

The coach praised the team’s balance starting with what he called as “one of the best opening partnerships in the world and in our history of white-ball cricket” between skipper Aaron Finch and Warner.

“Aaron Finch, Dave Warner is a no brainer,” said Langer. “Mitch Marsh grabbed his opportunity in the West Indies. I have never seen him play as well he has been playing. So he is the final piece of the puzzle for us.

“Maxi fits in. Steve Smith is the Mr. Fixit. Talk about finishers and so pleasing to see Marcus Stoinis and Matthew Wade grabbing that opportunity.”

The former opener took over in the aftermath of the notorious “Sandpaper-gate” ball-tampering tour of South Africa in 2018 and was widely praised for rebuilding the culture of Australian cricket.

Tigers’ chance to learn from Pak’s T20 quest

MAZHAR UDDIN from Dubai

From lying on the ICU bed for two days after suffering a severe chest infection to smashing a blistering fifty against Australia in the semifinal of the ICC T20 World Cup, Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan’s heroics have been praised all around the globe although his side ended up losing the game.

Rizwan’s dedication and determination towards the game was only revealed after Pakistan’s team doctor Najeebullah Soomro talked about it in the post-match press conference after Australia beat Pakistan by five wickets in Dubai on Thursday.

Rizwan’s bravery could be a great lesson for the Bangladeshi players, especially skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, who got carried away after qualifying for the Super 12 stage and went on to point out the hard work and sacrifice players make for the country.

Being a Test playing nation, it was expected that Bangladesh would reach the Super 12 stage with some authority by winning against the associate nations in the qualifying stage. However, Bangladesh lost their tournament opener against Scotland and that, expectedly, drew a barrage of criticism.

Bangladesh’s job was only half done after qualifying for the Super 12 stage

Mushfiquur Rahim asking the naysayers ‘take a look in the mirror’, swaying the attention from on the field to off it.

Meanwhile, Pakistan, who had to endure two last-minute home series cancellations, remained focused on their goal and worked accordingly instead of throwing tantrums during press conferences.

Even though Babar Azam’s side failed to reach the final despite playing some brilliant cricket throughout the tournament, it was their attitude and approach towards achieving the target that Bangladesh can adopt to transform into a better unit.

Bangladesh had missed the opportunity to prepare themselves accordingly ahead of the World Cup. They played Australia and New Zealand at home on slow and low Mirpur surfaces rather than facing the challenge in sporting tracks against tougher opponents.

Interestingly, both New Zealand and Australia will be facing each other in the final of the mega event tomorrow.

However, the Tigers will get yet another opportunity to rectify their mistakes both on and off the field as Pakistan will directly arrive in Dhaka from Dubai today to take part in a three-match T20I series. They will also play two Tests after that.

Skipper Babar and Shoaib Malik,



and the way Mahmudullah went on to express his anger and emotions after the game against Papua New Guinea was probably uncalled for.

The Tigers needed to hold on to their emotions, just like Pakistan did after New Zealand and England cancelled their scheduled tour to the country prior to the World Cup citing security reasons.

Instead, the players opted to engage in the war of words with players like

however, will join the team in Bangladesh on November 16 ahead of the first T20I on November 19 in Mirpur.

It will be important for the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), team management and the players to realise the importance of addressing the actual problem and find ways to improve instead of looking for an escape as they often do after every debacle.



Seifert to step up after Conway injury debacle

REUTERS

New Zealand will bring Tim Seifert in to replace Devon Conway in Sunday’s T20 World Cup final against Australia after the wicketkeeper-batsman broke his right hand with a frustrated punch of his bat following his dismissal against England.

Conway, who hit a 38-ball 46 in Wednesday’s semifinal win, was sore and sorry after being ruled out of both the World Cup decider and the following tour of India.

“While it’s not the smartest thing he’s done there’s certainly an element of bad luck in the injury,” New Zealand coach Gary Stead said. “He’s certainly remorseful around it, it’s an honest mistake he’s made.

“He knows it’s having an impact on our team as well but that will provide an opportunity for someone else to come into the side and step up on the biggest stage now.

“Sometimes strange things happen and we find heroes in other places as well.”

Conway’s injury is a needless headache for Stead and captain Kane Williamson as New Zealand prepare for their first World T20 final against an Australian team with their tails up after beating Pakistan in Thursday’s semifinal.

Seifert has not played a match since the Black Caps were well beaten by Pakistan in their tournament opener over two weeks ago. Conway batted at number four against England but Seifert, who was seventh in the order against Pakistan, would be unlikely to replace his team mate in the higher slot.

New Zealand have known only heartbreak in World Cup finals, beaten by England on boundary-count in the 50-over tournament in 2019 and crushed by Australia in the 2015 edition.

“They’ve got a bunch of guys who are real match-winners as well,” Stead said of Australia, who are also bidding for their first T20 title.

Pakistan to arrive today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Pakistan cricket team will arrive in Dhaka this morning for a three-match T20I series and two World Test Championship (WTC) fixtures against Bangladesh.

Pakistan are expected to touch down at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at around 8:10am from Dubai, where they lost the semifinal of the ongoing T20 World Cup against Australia by five wickets.

The Pakistan team will directly enter a bio-secure bubble at a hotel in the capital after landing. According to government mandated protocols, the players can start practising from the next day given they return negative Covid tests after arrival.

Pakistan will play the three T20Is against Bangladesh on November 19, 20 and 22 -- all at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, with a 2:00pm starting time.

The teams will play the first Test from November 26 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram before playing the second Test in Mirpur from December 4.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh will tour New Zealand for two WTC fixtures in Mount Maunganui and Christchurch in January next year, New Zealand Cricket confirmed yesterday.

The party falls flat

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan cricket fans reacted largely with good grace and humour Friday to their team’s exit from the Twenty20 World Cup, after an unbeaten run to the semi-finals had given the nation hope they could win the title for a second time.

The team bowed out on Thursday night, losing by five wickets to Australia in a see-saw match in Dubai settled with an over to spare.

The national mood was summed up by Prime Minister Imran Khan -- a former captain and one of cricket’s all-time greats -- who said the side should be proud.

“I know exactly how all of you are feeling right now because I have faced similar disappointments on the cricket field,” he tweeted. “But you should all be proud of the quality of cricket you played & the humility you showed in

your wins.”

He also congratulated Australia, who face neighbours New Zealand in Sunday’s final.

Tens of thousands of fans gathered on Thursday night in parks, clubs and shopping malls to watch the semi-final, which was broadcast on giant screens erected for the occasion.

It was very much a party atmosphere, particularly as the Pakistani opening pair played the Australian attack, before a wobble saw the team finish on 176-4 after 20 overs.

Some were prematurely celebrating victory as the first Australian wicket fell for just one run. But the bubble burst and the Aussies bashed their way to victory -- Matthew Wade finishing with a spectacular three sixes in a row.

Fans on social media heaped blame for the loss on Hasan Ali, vilified after dropping a catch at a key point of the match.

But many more leapt to his defence, pointing out how many times he had

won games for Pakistan.

“We were struck dumb and all clutched our heads,” said Areeba Shakeel, a technology student who watched with friends at a shopping mall in Karachi.

“Everybody was blaming Hasan for the defeat,” she told AFP.

Amna Baig, a police officer with a huge social media presence in the country, had urged her followers not to fire weapons in the air in the event of a Pakistan victory -- a common occurrence often with fatal consequences.

“At least we are safe from aerial firing tonight,” she tweeted after the match.

“Thank Hasan Ali,” came one reply. Shaniara Akram, the Australian wife of Pakistan cricket great Wasim Akram, told her followers where her loyalties lay after the match.

“No matter where my feet are, my heart seems to always be in Pakistan!” she tweeted.



Cricket fans in Karachi watch a live telecast of the T20 World Cup semifinal between Australia and Pakistan on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP