

A REPORT ON

THE WEST INDIES' MEN'S TEAM'S PERFORMANCE AT

THE 2022 ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

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Prepared by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. To paraphrase Malcolm Gladwell¹, industrial disasters are often the result of a series of apparently unrelated events over time. The untimely exit of the West Indies Men's Team ("the WI Team") from the ICC Men's T20 World Cup ("the World Cup") bears certain similarities to a disaster, albeit one without fatal consequences.
2. The squad had little experience of topflight cricket in Australia. They were underprepared in view of the short time between the end of the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) and the start of the World Cup. CPL conditions bore little meaningful similarity to the conditions in Australia. The World Cup matches were played in wet and cold Hobart, Tasmania, which had more in common with the north of England than West Indian conditions. In the absence of a camp in Australia, the CPL had little meaningful impact on the Team's preparation. The batting unit failed to perform to expectations and the absence of Shimron Hetmyer was a significant loss to the batting unit. The initial loss to Scotland meant that the remaining matches against Zimbabwe and Ireland were must-win matches. Once the batting failed to make enough runs against Ireland there was little scope to restrict the Irish batters once they had raced to 64/0 after the Powerplay overs.
3. Namibia beat Sri Lanka and Ireland beat the eventual champions England at the World Cup. This serves to underscore the volatile nature of T20 cricket. A T20 cricket match has a lot in common with a 400-meter race - there is very little room to recover from mistakes.
4. Disasters are also teachable moments. The National Transportation and Safety Board in the United States devotes countless man hours to studying the reasons for every aviation disaster. This requires an analysis of the 'black box' but also a history of the plane, its performance, its crew and the management of the airline. This Group has undertaken a similar analysis of the WI team and the reasons for its early exit at the World Cup.
5. The WI team was ranked number 10 after their loss to Australia at the 2021 T20 World Cup. This ranking meant that since October 2021, the WI Team knew that it would have to qualify for the next phase of the 2022 T20 World Cup. The West Indies T20 Team played 23 T20 matches between the end of the 2021 World Cup and the start of the 2022 World Cup. They won 7 and lost 16 of those matches. On any analysis, while the WI Team should have done better than they did, a Semi-Final berth would have exceeded most reasonable expectations.
6. WI Cricket does not lack for talent but our small size in comparison with other cricketing nations means that we cannot afford to lose any talented players. Cricket West Indies (CWI) must develop and create clear pathways for the identification, development and

¹ See Outliers at Chapter [7]

management of talent. Otherwise, WI cricket runs the risk of being strip mined by other professional leagues that can afford to harvest and develop our players for their benefit.

7. All the same, supporters of the WI Team have to temper their expectations. There is no quick or easy fix to the challenges that we face. David Rudder's prescient words that 'Soon we must take a side or be lost in the rubble in a divided world that don't need islands no more' resonate even more vividly today than when they were first penned. WI cricket is a unique entity. It is the only supranational cricket team in world cricket. The fact that the WI Team managed to dominate or remain competitive in world cricket for large periods of its 95-year existence in spite of these challenges is a significant credit to its people. Continued reforms to the structure of West Indies cricket are inevitable if we are to remain a viable commercial and professional entity.
8. The current world cricket calendar is driven by commercial realities. The proliferation of professional leagues means that playing for the West Indies is not commercially viable for our best players. The average sporting career is short in relative terms when compared to the average human lifespan. The desire of our players to maximize their earnings is entirely understandable. On the other hand, our talent pool is shallow in comparison with other sporting nations and as such the current WI Team cannot afford to have its best players playing in global professional leagues to the detriment of West Indies Cricket.
9. It is not in the best interests of West Indies Cricket that our best players play in every global league and play for the WI Team on an optional basis. It is imperative that the Board and the players have a frank and honest discussion with each other in order to arrive at a solution to this impasse. In this Group's view, there is significant distrust between the players and administration and this distrust is inimical to ensuring that the best 11 players turn out for the WI Team in every match. No Objection Certificates cannot be weaponized against the players, but it is essential that some middle ground is arrived at. Otherwise, West Indies Cricket may cease to exist as an entity. This Group does not indulge in doomsday predictions but no entity, sporting or otherwise, has a viable future if its talent is not harnessed and effectively managed.
10. The 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup ("2024 World Cup") will be hosted by the West Indies and United States in June 2024. The 2024 World Cup presents CWI with a golden opportunity to hit the reset button and implement a strategic plan aimed at reviving the fortunes of the WI T20 cricket Team.
11. It is for this reason that this Group has proffered the following short, medium and long-term recommendations:

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Short-Term Recommendations (60-90 days)

- (i) The Director of Cricket and Selectors should urgently identify a core squad of 30-35 players that are likely to form the nucleus of the 15 players that will eventually form the 2024 World Cup Squad. It is extremely unlikely that some hitherto unknown player will burst onto the scene between now and June 2024 and warrant selection. Therefore, barring injuries, both CWI and the players are well aware as to the likely composition of the 2024 World Cup squad.
- (ii) CWI should convene a 3-day in-person meeting/retreat with the afore-mentioned core squad for the purpose of determining their willingness and availability to participate in the 2024 World Cup. That meeting should be akin to a strategic retreat where players and administration can speak frankly and address any and all grouses (real or imagined) in a constructive manner. Mediator(s) should be secured for this meeting in order to assist and facilitate the discussions contemplated above. The Head Coach, CEO, Director of Cricket, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary, WIPA representative, the President and two directors (nominated by the other directors) should be in attendance together with the players. A performance consultant² who can assist the players and management to define West Indies cricket culture, identity and values is essential to this process. It is important that this meeting is convened in a round table format as opposed to management on a raised platform and players on a lower level. We are advised that CWI's MOU with WIPA expires in June 2023. That MOU should also be canvassed and discussed at that retreat although settling its terms should be a matter for the incoming President of CWI in April 2023.
- (iii) The 2023 cricket calendar is settled. Barring any unforeseen pandemic or global emergency, the 2024 cricket calendar is also largely settled since the major cricketing tournaments (IPL/Hundred/Big Bash) are held at or around the same time every year. Therefore, except for injury, players ought to be well aware of their potential availability for the next 18 months. CWI and the players have to arrive at a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on player availability that recognizes the need to build a unified squad for the 2024 World Cup. Neither side will get exactly what they want but it is hoped that they can arrive at an agreement that is mutually beneficial to all stakeholders.

² Performance consultants from a cricketing background with a proven track record of success who can be trusted and respected by both players and management would be ideal. As an aside, Faf Du Plessis's autobiography (Faf: Through Fire) contains a host of valuable lessons on team culture, leadership and developing the hard and soft skills essential to success in modern international cricket and should be mandatory reading for anyone with an interest in modern cricket. The modern South African cricketing experience presents a valuable learning opportunity.

- (iv) Building outwards from this meeting, there should be a clear agreement on strength and conditioning standards, player availability and needs and CWI expectations in the lead in to the 2024 World Cup. In this Group's view, there can be no real strategic plan for the 2024 World Cup without significant player input and consultations of the kind above.
- (v) As a part of this retreat, CWI is to have targeted discussions with the players about playing as much red ball cricket for WI as possible between now and the 2024 World Cup. The WI Team is scheduled to play 6 test matches in 2023 (2 against Zimbabwe, 2 against South Africa and 2 against India in July 2023 and then 2 Tests in Australia in early 2024 followed by 2 Tests in Pakistan. A concerted effort must be made to have some of our white ball players play those Test Matches against Australia and Pakistan. As a part of this retreat, a constructive discussion must be had with, but not exclusively limited to, players such as Nicholas Pooran, Evin Lewis, Akeal Hosein, Odean Smith, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope, Brandon King and Rovman Powell to name a few. Following this Group's consultations, we hold the strong view that red ball, and in particular Test cricket, against the Test Teams ranked above us provides vital opportunities for primarily white ball players to develop their overall cricketing skills.
- (vi) As a necessary corollary of the strategic retreat, all parties must clearly determine what is meant by availability for selection. In this Group's considered view, the selectors should be encouraged, if not mandated to always select the best 11-13 players for the WI Team in all formats. Once selected, the onus would then be on the players to determine whether they will make themselves available within an agreed upon timeframe.

Medium-Term Recommendations (90-180 days)

- (vii) A clear memorandum of understanding between CWI and the Territorial Boards on the need for center wicket practice for the WI Team. This Group was struck by the fact that touring teams enjoy more center wicket practice than the WI Team when they tour the West Indies. As part of its review, this Group was also struck by the fact that this was one matter on which the coaching unit and the players were agreed upon. In our view, the rationale is clear, center wicket practice is the nearest thing to simulating in-game conditions. Net practice is for the purpose of fine tuning and tweaking skills. With the concurrence of CWI Regional Curator and the Territorial Boards, a clear protocol for ensuring that center wicket practice facilities are consistent across all Territorial Boards is mandatory. This may require additional center wicket pitches at some grounds.
- (viii) The players (contracted and non-contracted) should be asked to identify and indicate what strength and conditioning facilities they would like to see in their respective territories. In our view, as a result of their travels, the players are

exposed to gold standard strength and conditioning facilities. They are well placed to know what they need. Moreover, it is important that the players are encouraged to buy in to what is required to enhance their performance. Additionally, strength and conditioning is a matter of personal responsibility. If players are provided with what they need, they will have the best chance to attain the requisite strength and conditioning standards.

- (ix) As a result, the Territorial Boards will firstly conduct an audit of their strength and conditioning facilities and then liaise with regional governments to determine which if any of the players' needs can be met. The Territorial Boards will then indicate to CWI what the players have articulated. The CWI Sports Science & Medicine Manager, who has purview over strength and conditioning, can then indicate what additional tools and/or equipment is required in order to ensure that there is a consistent standard on strength and conditioning facilities across all Territorial Boards at the international grounds. It is accepted that the implementation of this aspect will take some time, but it is imperative that the standardization (as far as possible) of strength and conditioning facilities across Territorial Boards be put in place as a matter of urgency. CWI can then review and determine what additional steps are required in order to bring these facilities up to par at all Territorial Boards. A weighted scoring system to assess each Territorial Board's strength and conditioning facilities is crucial.
- (x) As a part of the emphasis on strength and conditioning, CWI should urgently determine the best mechanism for ensuring that contracted players are complying with their respective strength and conditioning programmes. CWI should urgently invest in wearable technology (Whoop or Oura for example) that reports back to a central database at CWI headquarters on activity levels for all contracted players. There must be monitoring and supervision of players in order to ensure that they are held accountable. The current Athlete Management System (AMS) that requires players to log their activities needs to be urgently overhauled or removed.
- (xi) CWI should embark on a wholesale review of its contracts with its players. In this Group's view, the current ICC Future Tours Programme clearly sets out the number of international matches likely to be played by the players between 2023 and 2027. CWI should assess whether its contracts with the players ought to reflect the realities of the Future Tours Programme as opposed to annual contracts. A review of their contracts must, of necessity, involve the input of the players and WIPA but an emphasis on flexibility is critical to ensuring value for money. The contractual review should also assess the scope for individual and team incentives for performance and penalties for failing to meet, attain and surpass agreed upon strength and conditioning and performance standards.

- (xii) The Director of Cricket in conjunction with the Coaching and Player Development Managers and players (their input is necessary) are to develop and implement enhanced individual player plans ("IPPs") for all contracted players in the first instance. Personal development, diet, nutrition, leadership, coaching and financial management, wellness, to name a few, are to be incorporated into these IPPs. Clear benchmarks and targets are essential to this process.
- (xiii) The last workshop for regional curators was held in 2017. The upcoming 2024 World Cup presents an opportunity for all head curators at international grounds in the West Indies to meet in Antigua for a week-long workshop focused on current best practices for the preparation of pitches. An MOU between CWI and Territorial Boards confirming these best practices to ensure consistent standards and effective monitoring is critical.
- (xiv) CWI should urgently tender for psychologists and/or psychiatrists in each of the Territories that the WI Team is scheduled to play matches in. Mental health support for both the players and the support staff is critical in view of the demands of the current international cricket calendar. Once CWI has indicated a short list of approved mental health professionals in each Territory players and/or management can consult with those professionals as and when necessary. It is not intended that a psychologist should travel with the team but if the players develop a rapport with a particular person then CWI should consider whether it is viable to have that person accompany the team for global tournaments as and when the players indicate a need for same. Mandatory training seminars to sensitize all contracted players and representative teams (under-15 upwards) on the benefits of mental health support is a critical aspect of exposing players to this aspect of their development.
- (xv) CWI should mandate that the Chief Executive Officers of the Territorial Boards are to meet on a monthly or quarterly basis with the CEO of CWI and the Director of Cricket. These meetings should facilitate and encourage greater co-operation between Territorial Boards and serve to reduce the insularity that has been the bane of West Indies cricket since its inception.
- (xvi) The batting unit's weaknesses against spin bowling is well documented. It is imperative that CWI convene a batting camp with the core of the batting unit in advance of the India home series in order to address this issue. Drills and center wicket practice sessions reinforced by visual and data analysis is likely to bear fruit in the short and long terms. Quarterly in the first instance and then semiannual skill development camps in consultation with the players and coaches and Director of Cricket in order to develop and enhance the hard skills needed to play international cricket should become an established practice.

- (xvii) A regional T20 tournament is fundamental to identify and developing players. Timing and funding are massive challenges but an annual two-week tournament hosted on a rotational basis by each Territorial Board may provide a model for success.

Long-Term Recommendations (180-270-360 days)

- (xviii) CWI should institute a system of identifying talent scouts across all Territorial Boards. Talent scouts will be vetted by CWI in conjunction with the Territorial Boards. Scouts will have to report to CWI on any talent identified and any plans for development of that talent. CWI cannot rely on the Territorial Boards to create such a scouting programme and must create such a programme in conjunction with the Director of Cricket. The NFL has a Scouting Academy and that may be a good starting point for CWI on how to develop this. It is unrealistic to expect players to emerge without any serious investment in talent spotting.
- (xix) CWI should decide what qualities a selector should possess and invite applicants across the West Indies to apply at the end of the current selectors' term of office. In our view, a person should volunteer for the inevitable criticism that comes with being a West Indies selector and an open application process should encourage more applicants. For the avoidance of doubt, this proposal is not meant to disparage the current selection panel and is meant to create a structure for the decision to choose selectors in the future. Player input on the criteria to be selected is essential and should be sought and obtained when updating the Selection Policy.
- (xx) CWI should create a mentorship plan for the development of its contracted players. There are currently 19 contracted players. Each of those players should be paired with a former player or players in their territory who can mentor, advise and help to develop these players. CWI maintains a database of all former players. Former test and/or first-class players who are interested in participating in a mentorship programme should be asked to indicate their interest. CWI will then seek to match current players to former players based on their availability and compatibility. Former players represent a valuable and untapped resource. They can, under the right circumstances, make a tangible contribution to player development. Mentorship is an important facet of global professional development. West Indies cricket is no exception.
- (xxi) In conjunction with the Sports Science and Medicine Manager, CWI should urgently craft a protocol to implement biomechanics and flexibility as part of CWI's coaching programmes. Any and all future coaching programmes at all levels should fully integrate and emphasize the importance of strength and conditioning programmes with an emphasis on biomechanics and flexibility. Training sessions with regional coaches at all levels to manage the roll out of this aspect are critical.

- (xxii) Strength and conditioning is not punitive and the presence of strength and conditioning coaches at all Territorial Boards will continue to assist and enhance this aspect of West Indies Cricket. Player input on strength and conditioning standards with agreed benchmarks and testing mechanisms and standards to ensure accountability is imperative. The players will thus be held to a standard that they have agreed as opposed to a standard being forced upon them by CWI.
- (xxiii) None of these reforms will amount to anything if there is no clear plan for the management and development of cricket pitches and grounds in West Indies. Everyone consulted agreed that better pitches is essential to the development of better cricketers. Therefore, CWI should conduct an audit of the resources at each international ground in the West Indies with a view to determining what additional resources are required. There should be serious consideration given to greater regional cooperation to allow the transfer of equipment between Territorial Boards (this is viable in the Leeward & Windward Islands and even between Trinidad/Barbados/Guyana) since maintenance equipment is not cheap and expecting cash strapped regional governments to equip all grounds is unrealistic.
- (xxiv) Governance reform is not part of this Group's mandate but it would be absurd not to recognize that some of these recommendations only work if there is some (perhaps not wholesale) governance reform of the kind indicated in previous reports commissioned by CWI. This Group does not presume to exceed its mandate but it is clear that a more symbiotic relationship between the Territorial Boards and CWI is critical if any of these suggestions are to take root.
- (xxv) Funding is central to these reforms. In this Group's view, there can be no real objection to an annual, in the first instance, and then a biannual audit of all of the funds provided by CWI to the Territorial Boards. In this Group's respectful view, the monies disbursed to the Territorial Boards should be disbursed on a quarterly basis as opposed to the current arrangement. CWI is a multi-million-dollar enterprise and should be seen as such by all stakeholders.
- (xxvi) Finally, CWI is required to formulate cricket development performance standards for Territorial Boards. These standards ought to be reduced to a MOU between CWI and each Territorial Board. For example, each Territorial Board should be mandated to organize, on an annual basis, an under 15, an under 19, a 20 over, 40 over and 3-day (90 overs per day) tournament as a minimum standard. Benchmarks and incentives for Territorial Boards is critical to this process.
- (xxvii) Territorial Boards will then have to account to CWI on why in any year these standards have not been attained and CWI must be empowered to withhold or reduce funding to Territorial Boards that do not comply. It is accepted that

Territorial Boards have a national mandate but Territorial Boards have to ensure that their national mandate serves the interests of CWI and is for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders.

- (xxviii) Each Territorial Board should be mandated to present an annual report at CWI's annual general meeting. Audited financial statements should be included in these annual reports in order to ensure transparency and accountability. It is hoped that this process will encourage Territorial Boards to cross pollinate each other and develop regional as opposed to purely national strategies on continued best practices for the development of the game.
- (xxix) The issue of whether separate coaches should be appointed for red and white ball cricket was also considered by this Group. We have fully considered the competing arguments and are unable to conclusively opine on whether such an arrangement would suit the needs of West Indies cricket in the short-term. These arguments are summarized below for further analysis and consideration.
- (xxx) At present, West Indies do not play enough red ball cricket and are not scheduled to play any significant red ball cricket in the next 5 years to justify a separate red ball coach. All the same, a red ball specific coach, who would also be a selector by virtue of this position and would be able to spend more one-on-one time with players, observe West Indies Championship games and work with the Academy players whilst strategizing with the High-Performance Unit. The current red ball calendar would facilitate this.
- (xxxi) CWI may find it difficult to attract a single coach to take on the responsibility of coaching red ball and white ball teams with our shallow talent pool and lack of any notable and or sustainable success against highly ranked opposition. It is arguable that dividing coaching responsibilities may likely make the prospect of coaching a WI Team less arduous whilst adding some flexibility to the role and expanding the pool of likely applicants.
- (xxxii) On the other hand, the best coaches in world cricket are unlikely to take on the considerable challenge of coaching the WI Team in conjunction with any other coaching responsibilities they may have. It is difficult to imagine a white ball exclusive WI coach who is not also involved in coaching other teams. Separate coaches will require significant collaboration and cooperation of a kind unknown to WI cricket. Finally, the dilemma involved in having two coaches is best articulated by the American football cliché that 'if you have two starting quarterbacks then you don't have one'.
- (xxxiii) In our view, the best and most technical coaches, should be coaching our under 19 and academy sides while the best man managers and motivators should coach our senior side. Furthermore, once we know what our core squad looks like, CWI

can then determine the best coach to manage that unit. Players have expressed the need for a hands-on coach who could recognize the individuality of players and coach them accordingly. Therefore, there could be no objection to seeking the formal input of the players on possible head coaches before the next head coach/coaches are selected. For the avoidance of doubt, the players will not be choosing the coach but their input should be vital to the coach selection process.

- (xxxiv) It may be trite but bears repetition that CWI should commit to organizing at least one A team and/or developmental tour and host one A team tour on an annual basis. Exposing our players to different conditions is a tried-and-true method of developing players.

CONSULTATIONS

- Phil Simmons, Head Coach
- Rawl Lewis, Team Manager
- Roddy Estwick, Bowling Coach
- Monty Desai, Batting Coach
- Denis Byam, Team Physiotherapist
- Avenesh Seetaram, Team Analyst
- Rayon Griffith, Fielding Coach
- Zephyrinus Nicholas, Team Masseuse
- Ronald Rogers, Strength and Conditioning Coach
- Dr. Donovan Bennett, Team Doctor
- Ricky Skerritt, President, CWI
- Dr. Kishore Shallow, Vice President, CWI
- Enoch Lewis, Chairman, Cricket Strategy & Team Outcomes Committee, CWI
- Dr. Akshai Mansingh, Chair, High-Performance & Coaching Development Committee, CWI
- Johnny Grave, Chief Executive Officer, CWI
- Jimmy Adams, Director of Cricket, CWI
- Alanna Medford-Singh, Corporate Secretary/General Counsel, CWI
- Desmond Haynes, WI Men's Team Lead Selector, CWI
- Dr. Oba Gulston, Sports Science and Medicine Manager, CWI
- Chris Brabazon, Coach Education Manager, CWI
- Kent Crafton, Regional Head Curator, CWI
- Ayana Cooper, Player Development Manager, CWI
- Peter Abraham, CEO, Leeward Islands Cricket Board
- Dr. Roland Toppin, CEO, Barbados Cricket Association
- Courtney Francis, CEO, Jamaica Cricket Association
- Dwain Gill, CEO Windward Islands Cricket Board
- Pete Russell, CEO, Caribbean Premier League
- Wavell Hinds, CEO, West Indies Players Association
- Carlos Brathwaite, Former West Indies Player
- Daren Ganga, Former West Indies Player
- Andre Russell, West Indies Player

We consulted with every member of the 15-man squad at the T20 World Cup with the exception of Evin Lewis, Johnson Charles and Shimron Hetmyer.