

# 'No fear' for England in India semi, says Curran

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Mumbai

England have pledged to go into tomorrow's T20 World Cup semi-final against India with no fear, with Sam Curran describing the fixture as "a dream" and "a brilliant opportunity" about which they are feeling "hugely confident".

On the face of it the challenge England face is daunting. Though they won all three games in the Super 8 stage to ease into the semi-finals those matches were played in Sri Lanka, where they now have a 100% record in six outings this year. They have since returned to Mumbai, where they were so nearly beaten by Nepal in their tournament opener and then actually beaten by West Indies, and where they can expect nothing but hostility from a sold-out crowd of 33,000.

Though scoring rates here in this tournament have been relatively modest, across the last three seasons of the Indian Premier League the Wankhede has been the competition's highest-scoring ground, with an average of 9.89 runs scored per over. India's team is packed with players who have extensive experience here including their captain, Suryakumar Yadav, and his Mumbai Indians teammate Jasprit Bumrah. England played India here as recently as last February: the opener Abhishek Sharma scored a ludicrous 135 off 54 and the winning margin was 150, making it the worst T20 defeat in England's history.

But despite all of this, and the fact England are yet to produce a truly authoritative display in this tournament, their coach-and-captain combo of Brendon McCullum and Harry Brook have managed to locate bright sides to look on, such as redefining some of their poor performances as evidence that they can, in Curran's words, "win games from scenarios that we probably shouldn't".

"Baz and Brooky are very positive people and they're just keeping the

group nice and calm," Curran said. "These games are what we dream of. It's such a cool experience. It's kind of, how exciting to play India in the semi-final. Everybody knows how we're going to play them. They know how we're going to attack them."

The game will be played on the same Wankhede pitch - No 7 - that was used when England played West Indies, a game in which spinners thrived and batters largely didn't. But three weeks have passed and having had a first look during yesterday's training session England are expecting it to behave very differently now.

"I'd be very surprised if it's a low-scoring, turning pitch," Curran said. "Sri Lanka suited the spinners a lot more, so I took a back seat a little bit with the ball. I presume I'll be involved a lot more with the ball, and all our seamers will be a bit more involved. I'm excited for that challenge. It's normally a pretty good wicket and it's a small ground so I'd expect a really high-scoring game. India are a quality side but we've played a lot of cricket here and we're not fearing anything."

England silenced a fervent crowd during their victory over Sri Lanka in Pallekele, and their first task tomorrow will again be to gain the upper hand and quieten the throng.

"Flying to Mumbai you think about your dreams as a kid, and it'd probably be taking on India in India," Curran said. "It's such an amazing experience. It will be incredibly loud and you've got to look at that as an exciting opportunity. If the crowd are silent, England are probably going to be doing well."

"It's going to be a very loud and cool occasion. This is what the last four or five weeks have been building for and hopefully we can take one more step. We're hugely confident."

Meanwhile the England Lions squad and staff have returned safely to the UK from Abu Dhabi as conflict in the Middle East continues. A second 50-over match against Pakistan Shaheens in Abu Dhabi was cancelled following official Government advice.



▲ England's Sam Curran says facing India in India is a childhood dream