

# 91st MLB All-Star Game

Monday, July 12, 2021

Denver, Colorado, USA

Coors Field

**Kevin Cash**

**Dave Roberts**

**Shohei Ohtani**

**Max Scherzer**

Press Conference



pitcher as you just heard. This is his fourth start for an All-Star Game and he's a man that puts in the work year after year, the outstanding pitcher for the Washington Nationals, Max Scherzer.

**MAX SCHERZER:** It's an incredible feeling, to be named to this All-Star Game, and now my fourth chance to start it, it's an incredible honor. When you step into a room with a room full of All-Stars, and you get the ball, it's a really special feeling. It's hard to put into words. For Dave to select me again, to give that honor to me with the quality of arms that are in the National League this year, I'm very blessed and very thankful for that opportunity.

**THE MODERATOR:** Dave, why don't you tell us your starting lineup for the National League.

**DAVE ROBERTS:** Starting lineup I'll run through it: Leading off playing shortstop, Fernando Tatos, San Diego Padres.

Hitting second, DH, Los Angeles Dodgers own Max Muncy.

Third base, hitting third, former Rockie, now Cardinal, Nolan Arenado.

Hitting clean-up, playing first base, Atlanta Brave, Freddie Freeman.

Fifth, playing right field, Cincinnati Red All-Star Nate Castellanos.

His teammate, playing left field, Jesse Winker.

Hitting seventh, catching from Philadelphia, J.T. Realmuto.

In the 8th, playing center field, from Pittsburgh, Ryan Reynolds.

And rounding out batting second, lead off, second baseman, Adam Frazier.

**THE MODERATOR:** Thank you, Dave, and let me note as well for Max Scherzer, he's the only pitcher in the All-Star Game to have at least four starts.

**THE MODERATOR:** Welcome to Denver. Great to see all of you. We have a beautiful setting and we are out here and fans will be out here so it's a great day and a great week for Major League Baseball and for the country and internationally, as well. As you see, we have a bit of a surprise for you here as we are introducing the starting pitchers, and we have history being made as we have a history-making player. We haven't had the best slugger in the league start for an All-Star Team, ever. We can say that with certainty. Last time that was happening, it was before there was an All-Star Game. The Bambino just did it for a short time.

But we do have history being made here. We have a returning starter for the All-Star Game as well. We have 40 first-time All-Stars; 35 age 28 and under. Allow me now to introduce our managers for the All-Star Game.

First up from the National League, from the World Series Champion Los Angeles Dodgers, Dave Roberts.

**DAVE ROBERTS:** Thanks, Brian. It's good to be here in Denver. Denver does a great job with the Rockies and this city is fantastic.

Major League Baseball, for us to get this game in, I think that the players and the coaches, the fans, everyone's excited. We're going to do our best to put out a good product out there, and like Brian said, there's a lot of new, young rising superstars. There's a lot of men that have passed the test of time; one no better than Max Scherzer who is going to be the starting pitcher for the National League, and another special one in Shohei. Kevin and I are friends. It's going to be a fun, competitive All-Star Game, so thank you for having us.

**THE MODERATOR:** Let me introduce then the starting



Now for from the American League champion, Tampa Bay race, Kevin Cash.

KEVIN CASH: I just second everything Dave said. Denver, thank you for welcoming us. We miss this. Our players, staff, everybody missed this experience last year for obvious reasons. It's nice to be having this game again and can't think of a better place than Coors Field and the Denver community to welcome us.

THE MODERATOR: And up next, the starting pitcher for the American League, and Kevin will explain how this will happen if you're into the machinations of lineups and DHs, but we welcome in having a truly historic, spectacular season, starting for the American League this year, Shohei Ohtani.

SHOHEI OHTANI: So I'm really excited to play along with all the American League guys that I faced during the season and I'm also excited to face the National League players I don't get a chance to face during the season. It's my first experience, so I'm really excited.

THE MODERATOR: Did you think you would be starting or pitching in this game?

SHOHEI OHTANI: I was actually not expecting to be chosen as a pitcher at all, but to be named the starter, I was really not expecting that at all. But it's a huge honor and I'm going to try my best.

THE MODERATOR: Kevin, how did this happen? For the rules, we didn't think it could happen if we were going by the ordinary rules, so if you could explain that.

KEVIN CASH: It came down to, we all know Shohei was voted in as the DH and he was one of five starting pitchers voted in by the players. Kind of took that to heart. I think we would all respect what he's done and meant to our game this year. This is what the fans want to see. It's personally what I want to see. And to have the opportunity to do something that's a generational talent, pretty special.

I begged Major League Baseball to tweak the rule for today's game, because if they didn't, I know I'd screw it up the rest of the way, pulling pinch-hitters and DHs. For this game, we're going to be allowed to use Shohei as two players. He will be the starting pitcher and the DH, and when he's done pitching, he can remain in the game and then we can transfer in the next DH after his day is over at the plate.

THE MODERATOR: That makes sense. He is two players. That's good. Excellent. Kevin, why don't you give

us your starting lineup for the American League.

KEVIN CASH: Starting with Shohei; DH, Vladimir Guerrero, first baseman for the Blue Jays; Xander Bogaerts, shortstop for the Red Sox; Aaron Judge, right fielder for the New York Yankees; Rafael Devers, third baseman for the Boston Red Sox; Marcus Semien, second baseman for the Toronto Blue Jays; Salvador Perez, catcher for the Kansas City Royals; Teoscar Hernandez, left fielder for the Toronto Blue Jays; and Cedric Mullins, center fielder for the Baltimore Orioles.

THE MODERATOR: Shohei, by the way, is the second Japanese-born pitcher to start the All-Star Game, Hideo Nomo is the first. He is the first player in history to be selected as both an All-Star pitcher and position player after being elected as the starting DH. And he will also become the first participant in the Home Run Derby that has also started a major league game on the mound. He will be a busy man, and Shohei, thank you so much, for taking part in everything. Thank you.

**Q. I've got to ask you for the Rockies fans, did you give German Marquez any consideration to start here in Denver?**

DAVE ROBERTS: That's a great start, great question. I absolutely did. I think that for the fans, the Rockies fans here, it would have been a nice gesture and a nice honor, certainly. I think that for me ultimately deciding on Max, I felt that what he's done this year, as far as performance, what he's done for the game in baseball, his track record, I want to take this opportunity, also, because he's a former World Series champion in 2019 and last year, the Nationals didn't get that opportunity.

So for Davey and his staff not to have this experience I'm so grateful for, I just feel that is added on top of that. For every level for me, it was no-brainer. But German is having a great year and would have been a great choice.

**Q. Can you talk about Bud Black and having him on your staff, you had an opportunity to do that a couple years ago, but what went into that decision?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Well, a few years ago, I had Davey as a coach; Bud, a good friend of mine, and so it's in his home ballpark. I asked him and gave him first right of refusal. He acknowledge and accepted. He just managed his 2,000th game yesterday. They beat the Padres, so that was good for the Dodgers. For me, I was happy for him and means a lot to me personally.

**Q. I wanted to know, what is the biggest challenge in being able to be both an elite pitcher and an elite hitter**



**at the same time, and for Max, you know, how hard it is just to be a great pitcher. Could you imagine doing what he's doing? And what amazes you about Shohei?**

SHOHEI OHTANI: Obviously the difficult part is the preparation, you prepare differently as a pitcher and a hitter, and it's different for me every day. Just getting used to the preparation, that's the biggest challenge.

MAX SCHERZER: It would be awesome for me if I could get a hit. I'm 0-for the first half this year. Just the fact that he can pitch; the demands on your body to be a pitcher are intense to say the least, I can definitely speak to that.

So to be able to shoulder those workloads and also be able to hit as well, that's just absolutely incredible. It takes an unbelievable athlete to be able to accomplish that and that's what he is. He's an incredible athlete and that's why I feel like you're seeing some of these historic things come out of this first half and what he was able to do.

He's must-watch baseball any time he's on the field.

THE MODERATOR: Did you think it was possible for him to be able to do both at the same time the way he's doing it right now?

DAVE ROBERTS: Well, we did -- we wanted him.

KEVIN CASH: So did we. So did we.

DAVE ROBERTS: We did, but until you know, you don't. So to see it kind of play out like it has -- we're all fans of baseball and to see something that really hasn't been done in generations is -- in my opinion, it's the best talent ever, ever in baseball, 1 through 850 whatever, and for him to be this marquee player, it's remarkable.

THE MODERATOR: What do the players say as he gets past 30 home runs and still pitching the way he is?

MAX SCHERZER: We just laugh. We laugh because, you know, it's such an amazing accomplishment, every milestone. He keeps hitting or how he keeps leading the league in certain categories, and you know, really it's my teammates that comeback at me and be like, I still haven't got a hit.

THE MODERATOR: Kevin, did you think it was possible?

KEVIN CASH: Not at this level. I think there have been players that have attempted and have so much respect for the ones that have shown the ability to do it. But at this level, probably not, and I don't -- no, I didn't.

**Q. For Dave, thank you for that stolen base in 2004, all of New England says thank you.**

DAVE ROBERTS: Thank you.

**Q. As the game grew closer and some of the National League players were hit with injuries, what were the challenges you faced with putting your lineup together?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Obviously there were a lot of moving parts, and I think Kevin feels the same way. I think that in one sense, Acuna just got hurt recently. That's something that's very unfortunate. He's a fun, fun bright young superstar.

And for the guys that couldn't make it for whatever reason, I understand it. It's disappointing but I think it just gives fans and individual players another opportunity to showcase and get familiar with other superstars. I kind of look at it that way. They are all great players. It's going to be a great game.

**Q. Max, as a veteran player who has been through a lot of games, can you talk about the evolution of the All-Star Game and what it means to the players these days? How important is this game and this tradition? We didn't always have players showing up, but what are you seeing from the players in terms of the significance of the game at this point?**

MAX SCHERZER: I don't know if I would classify there's been an evolution. It's the All-Star Game. Everybody who comes here has a great time. Obviously it's a little different with all the protocols still in place, but it's a great time to be in the clubhouse with everybody and enjoying everybody's first half, and the accomplishments that everybody's had. It's a special time for everyone.

Everybody works so hard to be able to get to this point, so to be able to share it with everybody across the league, with everybody who has earned it, it's a special day.

**Q. Kevin, the decision to start Shohei, how much was it also partly influenced by logistically how difficult it would have been if he was going to come into the game to relieve and warm up and how long he would be in the lineup? And is this also partly an easier route to get him on the mound tomorrow?**

KEVIN CASH: Joe Maddon, the manager with the Angels, we spoke multiple times. Dave and I both have responsibilities to protect not just our players but all the players that are on both of our rosters. And I think it made

the most sense and the availability of it to do something that he has already done, rather than ask him to hit and then come in and pitch later in the game. This is something that he has done for his team in Anaheim, and felt most comfortable that that's the right way to treat it.

**Q. Max, you talk about durability; to have this many All-Star starts what does it mean to you in?**

MAX SCHERZER: Durability, I pride myself on that. Durable every single year and try to make every single start. This is another kind of testament to that. It's hard to be selected, much less selected consecutively.

That's where I have to give a lot of thanks to our trainers and strength coaches that have worked with me through the years of putting me in the right positions to keep my body feeling as good as it does still today so that I can go out there and compete and pitch at my best. There's a lot of other people that deserve credit for this, as well.

**Q. What can the fans in Japan look forward to watching Shohei?**

KEVIN CASH: Everyone is waking up, and everybody's looking forward to how he's been performing.

SHOHEI OHTANI: It's not just me, there's seven other hitters that's going to be very entertaining. I'm going to sit back and watch them do their thing, and I think everyone in Japan should watch all the participants, and I think they will have a very good morning.

**Q. You've been compared to Babe Ruth all season long. How much do you know about him, and if you look at all the history and stats, what does that mean to you?**

SHOHEI OHTANI: Obviously I've never seen him play live but seen a lot of footage. If you're a baseball player, you've heard his name before. He's a legendary figure. It's a huge honor to be compared to somebody like that. All I can do is try my best and see how my season and career ends up.

**Q. What is it mentally and physically that allows to you do both, and are there times where you thought you couldn't and what convinced you that you could be successful?**

SHOHEI OHTANI: Last couple years I had some surgeries and I wasn't fully healthy and I wasn't able to do what I wanted to do. It was frustrating. This season I've been healthy and able to do my thing and enjoying every day. So far, it's been really great this year.

**Q. Doing the Home Run Derby in addition to everything you're doing in the All-Star Game is a lot physically. What makes you confident that it not going to be too exhausting for you or too much of a drain?**

SHOHEI OHTANI: I'm expecting to be pretty fatigued and exhausted after these two days, but there's a lot of people that want to watch it and I want to make those guys happy. That's why I'm going to do it.

**Q. For Dave, max and Kevin, so much has been made about trying to bring offense back into the game. You're at Coors Field, which is historically the most offensive park in the history of baseball. Will you see, tonight or tomorrow, does the pendulum swing this season to where it gets more fair or what is the goal for you guys for baseball moving forward in the second half in terms of the offense?**

KEVIN CASH: You can understand it, being in the dugouts right now why the offense has been challenged, pitchers like Max, pitchers like Shohei, pitchers that fill out both of our rosters.

I'm excited to see the Home Run Derby. I hear we're going to be breaking records with feet on home runs. But from the inside, you understand why it's offensively challenged, and you want to see a great game and the fans to enjoy what they are coming to see.

DAVE ROBERTS: Well, said, Cashy, well said.

Yeah, just to kind of piggyback on Kevin's comments, I think that as far as the pitching, pitching is ahead of hitting. There's ways to attack hitters. It's better than it's ever been. The hitter has to catch up. It's been better than it ever has been as far as talent. And there's an adjustment, there's approach, there's mechanics.

There's all this stuff that we could talk for hours about, but the bottom line is the talent on the pitching side is really elite and hopefully we're going to see more offense. I don't think these guys want it or he wants it, but we'll see what happens in the second half.

**Q. How much does it mean for you to be the first player to participate in the Home Run Derby, be the starting pitcher and compete in the All-Star Game? How much does that mean to you?**

SHOHEI OHTANI: Obviously it's a huge or. Like I said earlier, I wasn't expected to be chosen as a pitcher, but I was, and Kevin right here and everyone has very high expectations for me and I just want to match those

expectations.

**Q. You mentioned sort of feeling like you knew everyone wanted you to do all of these things, and that's why you're doing it despite the fatigue that you'll probably feel. I'm curious just generally how the hype of the first half of this season compares to everything else you've experienced in your career, like all the people you'll see in the Derby, how does that compare to other things you've done in your career?**

SHOHEI OHTANI: Compared to the past seasons, I hear a lot more cheers when I'm hitting or when I'm on the mound, and being able to face great pitchers like Max right here, it's getting -- helping me raise my level of my game. So I just want to continue to face all these great players and try to keep on getting better.

THE MODERATOR: Well, thank you so much for coming. This has been exciting. It's been exciting to be out almost fully and to be here in this City of Denver and to have the league managers out here, not sequestered and quarantined, but out here in front of us and also some history being made, Max Scherzer getting another All-Star start and Shohei Ohtani, full anticipation in this All-Star Game and making it exciting. Thank you. Congratulations.

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