

91st MLB All-Star Game

Monday, July 12, 2021

Denver, Colorado, USA

Coors Field

Trey Mancini

Coach Chuck Ristano

Home Run Derby Press Conference



Q. Could you put into words how special this night was for you?

TREY MANCINI: It was incredible. Obviously everybody knows the story by now, but the last year and a half was something you have nightmares about. And to be here a year later and make it to the finals was incredible. I'll have to ask the final -- I knew they changed the rules to the finals and I didn't know what it was because I didn't pay too much attention to it early on in the day. I was focused on the early rounds and everything. We had a good time and it was fun to be back with Coach Ristano, so we had a great time out there.

Q. You mentioned the frustrations of having your prime taken away and coming back. Is this another example you're back on the biggest stage?

TREY MANCINI: Yeah, the Home Run Derby is different than the games, but I've never been on a stage like this before. And it was just an incredible day, incredible evening, and I was just so honored to be a part of it. And to be asked and to make it to the finals is something that I think we're going to look back on and really cherish and appreciate.

Q. When I talked to you earlier in the day, you were worried about Matt Olsen. Did you gain confidence as you moved throughout this thing and thought by the end that you could win?

TREY MANCINI: Yeah, I always think I can win, but I also knew who I was going up against in the finals. So I watched him in 2019 and I watched today. You know, he makes it look really easy. He's hitting balls well over 500 feet and didn't seem like he got too tired, and I got pretty gassed in that last bonus round.

But yeah, again, I forgot that it was a minute less than the last round. Put up a good showing and unfortunately it wasn't enough, but there's not much more to say about

Pete. He's a beast out there.

Q. I'm sure you heard from a lot of people in your year away from the game, but what was the totality of today? Was there any moment that stood out to you, a connection you might have made or rekindled?

TREY MANCINI: When I went out there and saw Coach Ristano out there, it was surreal. He was the pitching coach at Notre Dame what I was there and we did a Big East Home Run Derby together and won that. And at the time I promised him if I was ever in the Major League Home Run Derby, he would throw to me. It was surreal to see that become a reality from my vantage point.

That and then seeing my family afterwards on the field, they were all just so happy and. Yeah, they were all crying, they were so happy and -- except one of my nephews was crying because he was upset that I lost, which I probably would have done at eight years old. It was a special day.

Q. Was it tough managing your emotions?

TREY MANCINI: I felt pretty locked in. Didn't really have too much emotion. Had adrenaline going and was focused the whole time, but I also made sure to enjoy it. I think I was pretty locked in the whole time.

Q. You were showing a lot of opposite-field power. That was pretty noticeable and a pretty big part of what you were doing.

TREY MANCINI: With the format, if there were any pitches on the outer half, I know I can take it out that way. And in BP I work on opposite field a lot and trying to drive it that way. That saved me in the last round, getting the last opposite field one. That was part of the game plan, we were working middle-in, but it's hard to be perfect every time. If there ever was one a bit away from middle, I would try to take it that way, so that was a big part of the plan.

Q. Was being here tonight after what you've been through a win enough or were you really trying to win



this thing?

TREY MANCINI: No, I was trying to win. If I'm in the competition, I'm in it to win it. So yeah, I'm disappointed. I would have rather won, but at the same time, how can you be upset? You know, it was just the most incredible experience, nothing that I expected to happen at all and especially having Coach Ristano here with me. The last year for both of us, one of my teammates from Notre Dame that we were both really close with passed away in October, and you know, it was a really tough time.

So to be here nine months later and to have this experience -- that was the last time I saw Coach Ristano was at the service. It was special to be here and do it for Ricky and Mo who was our fan in Baltimore, and just kind of everybody that's fighting a battle right now that you can get through it and come out the other side and live a normal life.

Q. For Coach Ristano, what were the emotions, getting the call from Trey and stepping on the mound for the first time and how long did it take to you settle in?

CHUCK RISTANO: Probably a little more emotional than Trey. The phone call was unbelievable. Trey and I keep pretty -- our relationship's pretty tight. We keep in contact quite a bit, but during our season, during his season, it's more text than it is phone call.

So when I saw a phone call from Trey Mancini, of course I answered it. And the first thing he said, and I don't even know if he knows it, was, "Hey, Coach, this isn't public yet." And for as long as it took him to say that, it was like a jolt through me because you don't quite know if it's going to be good or bad news. Considering the last 16, 18, 20 months, that can rock you a little bit.

Then when he finished his statement, it couldn't have been a more opposite feeling. So I was in the Atlanta airport on my way back from a recruiting trip and it took me quite honestly the flight from Atlanta to South Bend to compose myself.

Being here, trying to take it in in the locker room and enjoy it, and of course, get back to work and get on the same page. I probably haven't thrown a pitch to Trey since he took batting practice in 2013, and we tried to reconnect there.

Once it was show time, we fell right into it. But I think we really enjoyed it, as well. The conversations we had between rounds and even getting to shake hands with some of the other Big Leaguers is an unbelievable thrill for

me that ranks up there with some of the greatest nights of my life.

Q. I know you spent so much time together back in the college baseball seasons back in the day, but from a mentor standpoint what has it been like to watch him go through this journey?

CHUCK RISTANO: Incredibly emotional. He's one of those people that you may not connect with every single day but having spent three years with him at Notre Dame, I mean, he came to my wedding, we communicated when my kids were born. It's just something that -- those relationships in the game, whether you're a college baseball coach, a high school coach, a Big Leaguer, there are some that just are more special than others. And you want them all to be that way, but this one for me is one that is just off the charts special and I'm just so thankful to have Trey in my life. And obviously incredibly proud of not only the baseball player he's become but the young man that he is today. It's been unbelievable.

Q. What kind of message do you think you might have sent to cancer survivors tonight with the performance you put together on this stage?

TREY MANCINI: Yeah, just that there's life after it, and I was diagnosed over a year ago, but you know, when that's the case and you go through chemotherapy, it's something that's still on your mind and you still have to worry about.

But I think it can set an example that you have to go back to your normal life, even though you might have this thing hanging over you sometimes. That's the message that I really wanted to get across is I'm still going through a battle and there's so many people going through battles still.

Like I said, by all accounts, you can go back to how you were before. I feel great about my health and where I am and what the future holds but you definitely don't want to take every day for granted, and I've learned that.

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