

92nd MLB All-Star Game

Monday, July 18, 2022

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

Juan Soto

Home Run Derby Press Conference



MODERATOR: T-Mobile Home Run Derby champion, Juan Soto.

Q. Did you learn anything after doing the Derby last year that helped you win this year? Did you make any adjustments in that sense?

JUAN SOTO: Definitely. At the end of the day I learned a couple things; that I don't have to only pull the ball. I can go either way, in and out, and I can go left, center, right, everywhere, because I figured out I have the power to hit the ball that way. So just try to square up the balls and see how far it lands.

Q. You had a busy day, you answered a lot of questions about your contract, you come out here and you win this thing in three rounds. How would you describe your day start to finish?

JUAN SOTO: (Laughs) I'm a lone survivor. I've been going through all this stuff and I'm still here standing up and with my chin up, all the time. And that shows you I can go through anything.

Q. What did you think of Julio Rodriguez? What stands out to you about him?

JUAN SOTO: He's an amazing, young, talented player and what he does is just amazing, how many homers he hit in the first round. First of all, he helped me out a little bit because he got tired. But definitely, he's just an amazing player. He can do it all.

Q. With Albert getting one more shot in the spotlight and you and Julio on the stage at the end, what did this night mean for baseball overall?

JUAN SOTO: It means a lot. It shows you the generation we have coming up soon, all the players that we have that is coming up. And the future players in the minor leagues that are coming up soon, it shows that they have a lot of talent and they are ready to play baseball.

Q. What will this night mean back in the Dominican with all three of you guys having such a huge night?

JUAN SOTO: In Dominican I know all the people are really proud. They have been paying attention to all these and they have been praying a lot for all these. Since we all three were in the finals, three Dominicans, it just shows you it a win for the DR, so we feel pretty proud about it.

Q. You had the longest home run of the competition, 482 feet. Can you describe what the feeling is like when you connect with the baseball and hit it that far and that hard?

JUAN SOTO: It feels good. It feels bad at the same time. Because you hit it, but you don't have the time to see it, how far it lands. But it feels really amazing at the end of the day. When you see the videos and see how far it lands, it's just amazing. Really impressive what my skills can do.

Q. You hit that last homer and dropped to one knee and flipped your bat up pretty high. What was the emotions going through your mind as you saw the ball go over the fence and you won the thing?

JUAN SOTO: I was looking for power to flip my bat because I had no power at all. But then when I saw the ball lands and goes, it just feel amazing. I saw the scoreboard change and show you the champion. It just feel amazing when I saw that.

Q. Getting back to Albert, what was it like to go head-to-head with him in the semifinals, and can you talk about that moment where all the All-Stars came out on the field and gave him that communal hug?

JUAN SOTO: Oh, that was a really special moment. I was sitting down and even my BP thrower, he was telling me about it. It can be his last Home Run Derby and All-Star Game, so we should be there for him and giving him some power so keeps going. Because we all know his skills are going down a little bit, but when you cheer for him and give him that positive energy, the things can change and he showed up after that.



And winning that round, it was just amazing whenever all the guys came, in giving the good vibes and good energy, and I think it was a special moment for him and even for ourselves to see the legend go like that.

Q. What was it like going head-to-head with him?

JUAN SOTO: For me going head-to-head with him is just an amazing feeling. I wasn't sure if I should beat him or let him beat me, but just the respect; I respect him a lot. Even though I beat him at the end of the day, it's just a competition. He knows how much I'm proud of him and how much -- how much talent he brings to all the generations and advice that he gives to us.

Q. Can you narrow down the top two lessons you've learned just by playing baseball? What has baseball taught you?

JUAN SOTO: I mean, it's not easy at all. It's not easy how it looks in the TV. It's very hard. But you've got to work all the way through to earn what you want.

For me, the lessons is just keep going. It don't matter what's happening going around you or around your life. You've just got to come up and keep going.

Q. How many members of your family are here today?

JUAN SOTO: A lot (laughing).

Q. If you can put it in context, how often have you been able to share a moment like this on this stage with a lot of your family members?

JUAN SOTO: It feels amazing. Like I say, they have been right there since day one. They trusted me in whatever I do and all the decisions I make, and they're really pushing me forward to keep going. So it feels pretty well to have them right there on the back of my head, just telling me how good I am and how much pride they have for me.

Q. You just added Home Run Derby champ to your resumé. What's next?

JUAN SOTO: It feels great. It's another thing that I add, like you say, to my trophy case, and I'm going to have it there for ever, and I will be a Home Run Derby champion forever.

Q. Is there a specific goal you have for yourself that's next, whether it's in a Washington Nationals uniform?

JUAN SOTO: Win another championship. Why not? I

mean, everybody knows and everybody wants to win an MVP one day. But for me, my pride can be win another championship and get that taste again.

Q. Especially with a performance like this tonight, you know that your name is going to be a big one these next couple weeks until the deadline. How are you going to sort of stay focused, and is this an example of how you do do that?

JUAN SOTO: Like I said, I just let my agent do whatever they needs to do. All the conversations that they have, they going to have them with him. I'm just going to be here to play baseball. I'm just going to go to Nationals Park and give my hundred percent every day.

Q. To swing as hard as you do that many times in a short amount of time, can you try to explain to us how physically difficult that is to go through the competition?

JUAN SOTO: It's very tough at the end of the day, but it is a part of my workout, too, because my hitting coach here, he just made me do things like that in the off-season. No Home Run Derby but definitely work on my skills and work on my power, my strength, and just work on my swings.

For me, it just feels like another workout.

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