

93rd MLB All-Star Game

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Seattle, Washington, USA

T-Mobile Park

American League

Dusty Baker

Press Conference



National League - 3, American League - 2

THE MODERATOR: Who has the first question for Dusty?

Q. What was your thought, like you had the storybook moment there with Julio coming to the plate and what were you thinking there?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, I was just thinking, hey, man, he would bring the house down and the whole baseball world and the town down. This was a moment that very rarely is going to happen in your life. I always wanted to play in an All-Star Game and in my hometown, and it never happened. But I mean that was quite a -- it was all set up. It was all set up.

Then after he walked Julio, one of the most dangerous guys in the game is Ramírez. One of the true clutch guys of the game. So I thought, I just knew it was going to happen, but it didn't.

Q. Did that at-bat from Julio impress you? Like you said he's probably wanting to hit it half a mile out of this ballpark and to take a walk there.

DUSTY BAKER: I mean, yeah, that was big. That's when you are not thinking about yourself, that's when you're thinking about the team. Because everybody wants to be the hero but that was a situation, he took a close pitch, well, from my angle, but, boy, I just knew it was going to happen and it didn't.

Q. The Díaz home run, what did you see from that?

DUSTY BAKER: Okay, well, yeah, big fella out there, I mean, he hadn't giving up anything when we saw him. He threw a split, I don't think -- and Atley said that he hadn't given up a home run on a split all year. So I guess that was just his moment that he was supposed to do it.

But it kind of reminded me of my pitching coach said, hey man, it's set up just the way you want it and with the big

fella and Bautista, and then after that we had Kenley for the ninth. It reminded me of the first All-Star Game we lost when we had it set up with I think we had Billy Wagner followed by Gagne, who hadn't given up a lead in 50-some games, and then we had Smoltz. And I was talking to Smoltz, and I never got to Smoltz.

So this is, this is kind of deja vu all over again. I didn't really expect that. But that leadoff walk or the walk in the 8th. A lot of times that 8th is just tougher than the 9th.

Q. You certainly have seen some crazy crowds here last October and that Game 3 comes to mind. What were your thoughts specifically when the crowd was kind of lobbying for Shohei to come here in the offseason, what was your thought here on the crowd with that?

DUSTY BAKER: I think a lot of people are lobbying for Shohei, to tell you the truth. And that was a sign of affection and that they wanted him. I was really more impressed that they were rooting for us to win the game because they didn't boo Tucker in the 9th inning. And I heard some people saying, "Come on, Tucker" and I was like, man, that's news to my ears.

So it was a well-played game. We come up a run short. So now it's time to go back, take a couple days off and then go back to our championship season.

Q. I think the Braves' batters went combined only one hit. Could you just talk about your staff's performance against them?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, hey, man, these are the best of the best. Those Braves, you know, I don't want to face 'em every day. We faced 'em and swept 'em when they were a little cold over there in Atlanta.

They have a mighty offensive team. They have a great team. In their defense, it was really tough to see at that time that they were hitting, all those guys. Because everything's a blur at that time. The sun's not helping, the lights don't help, so that was a tough time to see.

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Q. You talked the other day about how the nature of the All-Star Game has changed since you played and the Mayses and Morgans and Roses played nine innings, and yet when you're out there and the team's trying to window the competitive juices and the want to win somewhat take over? Is there a little --

DUSTY BAKER: No, it took over a lot. You can tell, our guys, you know, we wanted to win. They wanted to win. There was a lot of pride out there and a lot of competitiveness out there. You could tell by the energy on both sides and the energy in the ballpark. That was probably one of the better All-Star Games that I've been a part of.

Q. I know it's hard to get every pitcher into the game but was there any reason you left Castillo out in his home ballpark? Luis Castillo?

DUSTY BAKER: Well, I had his manager sitting right next to me (laughter). You know what I mean? So he was kind of in an emergency situation. That's the only reason. He pitched not long ago against us in our ballpark.

So you've got to take care of the other guy's players. I was kind of shocked but pleased the fact that Gerrit Cole wanted to pitch one inning, because he just pitched on Saturday.

So no, it was about preservation of another team's player.

THE MODERATOR: Dusty, thanks so much. Great seeing you.

DUSTY BAKER: Okay.

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