

94th MLB All-Star Game

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

Arlington, Texas, USA

Globe Life Field

National League

Paul Skenes

Press Conference



American League - 5, National League - 3

Q. Paul, 13 months ago, you were pitching for LSU at the College World Series. How does that experience help -- how did that experience help you out today, and, yeah, could you just sort of reflect on the last 13 months you've had?

PAUL SKENES: Yeah. Obviously done a lot over the last 13 months. I think LSU as a whole does a good job of preparing us for big moments. Pitching at TD Ameritrade, pitching in Globe Life or whatever with a full stadium aren't too much different, I think. Full stadiums are full stadiums. You obviously get to pitch in front of that in the College World Series.

In terms of a big moment, there's not a whole lot else you can do to prepare for moments like this other than to pitch in moments like this. That was big.

Q. Paul, you've allowed a home run to Shohei Ohtani before, but to have him support you in this game, how did that feel, and how does it feel to pitch against a guy like Shohei?

PAUL SKENES: I tried to enjoy the three hours I had on a team with him because that's probably only going to happen once a year.

It was really cool to watch him do that, really cool to watch him go about his business and get to meet him and all that. You know, he's -- I don't know of any hitters I've faced that's better than him in my career.

So to be able to share a dugout with him was surreal.

Q. Paul, what was the duel like with Soto? Turned out to be a lot of pitches, and were you conscious that he was trying to get Judge to the plate?

A. Yeah, I mean, with two outs, you know, you're trying to extend the inning. Just kind of threw him everything.

Missed with a couple of breaking balls. Yeah, just missed on that last pitch.

Q. Paul, plenty of guys leave in the middle of the game. You stuck around all the way to the end. Why did you do that, and what were you able to experience because you stayed all nine innings?

PAUL SKENES: Just being able to talk with the guys was the biggest thing, being able to pick their brains. I was in the dugout for a good portion of it, and then I went under and ate, that kind of thing. I was eating with a couple of other All-Star pitchers. So the only time I'm going to have this opportunity, you know, is today with this team. So I just wanted to, you know, kind of get as much as I could from them.

Q. Anything in particular you learned from someone that you could share?

PAUL SKENES: Not anything that would be interesting, really. Stuff that's probably going to help me over the course of my career. You know, talking with Chris Sale and Glasnow and Logan Webb and Hunter Greene and guys like that. You know, even if I get one tiny, you know, piece of advice or something that can -- one tiny nugget from them, it could help.

Q. From all the moments in the last two days, what are one or two that stick out in your mind that you'll really remember?

PAUL SKENES: I don't know. Probably the first pitch. Just, like, being out there. I don't think I blacked out when I was out there, but I was pretty close. It was cool to be on that mound. But just being able to share this with my family and have them out here and just being able to experience it.

I don't know that there's one moment because, I mean, it was two days, you know, packed with moments.

Q. Paul, I know we've seen some of this in Pittsburgh. On the national stage, how do you enjoy showing it's

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more than velocity, throwing some splinkers, mixing stuff in?

PAUL SKENES: Frankly, I wish I'd had a few more pitches to do that today. Yeah, it was cool to have that match-up, cool to throw with William and talk through the game plan with him, talk about facing those guys, how we were going to get them out and then going out there and executing. Obviously, it's the All-Star Game. It's on national TV, which is cool.

It's cool to bring eyes to the game.

Q. Hey, Paul, what did Brent Strom say to you in the bullpen before the game?

PAUL SKENES: Get the fastball in on the lefty. I was just missing over the plate.

Q. Is that something you heard before, or what kind of stood out to you about that comment?

PAUL SKENES: I was just missing over the plate, trying to get the heater in to the left. I was struggling to get the heater to the left side, my glove side. He basically said get it to your glove side. I was, like, okay.

Q. Paul, since May 11th, you've had quite an experience, things piling up on each other to this date. What do you expect from the second half of the season on top of everything else?

PAUL SKENES: Hopefully, going to win a lot of games. Go out there and keep executing the kind of way I have been and keep learning the league. Just learn every single outing and keep putting us in positions to win.

Q. You haven't pitched in some of the bigger ballparks yet, Dodger Stadium, Yankee Stadium, obviously, even San Francisco. Do you look forward to that? Arizona is coming up.

PAUL SKENES: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. I take it one start at a time. I don't look too far into the future, but definitely looking forward to coming out west and those series.

Q. Paul, going back to Ohtani, you were a two-year player before in college. Did you have a chance to talk to him before the game?

PAUL SKENES: Yeah, a little bit. More so I just kind of wanted to watch him work. A guy like him, everybody is going up to him so I try to stay out of his way. Talked to him about a couple different things and, yeah, watched

him. I was in the weight room when he was in the weight room. Just tried to watch him kind of do his thing and learn from that.

Q. Is there anything that stuck out?

PAUL SKENES: Not really. I mean, it's kind of what I would expect from a guy like Shohei in terms of how he goes about his business. You know, it's Big League.

Q. You talk about all these names, these guys you grew up watching, trying to emulate. Do you feel, after this weekend, like you are one of them?

PAUL SKENES: Yeah. I think that's probably the coolest part about it all. You know, I was sitting next to Tyler Glasnow and Bryan yesterday at the derby and Yelich at the derby, and I'm sitting at the dugout next to Chris Sale.

At our park, I got to watch him throw against our squad. That was cool for me, and now being able to share a dugout with him was really cool. And, you know, I think the coolest part about it is they're so accepting and welcomed me with open arms into the clubhouse, and they're super supportive, watching my start. It was just really cool. Definitely feel like I'm one of them.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Paul. Appreciate it.

PAUL SKENES: Thank you.

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