

AL Wild Card Series: Tigers vs Guardians

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Progressive Field

Detroit Tigers

Tarik Skubal

Postgame Press Conference

Detroit 2, Cleveland 1

Q. Tarik, what were your emotions like coming off in the seventh inning? Did you think you were done? What did it mean to go back out there for the 8th?

TARIK SKUBAL: I thought my outing was coming to a close. I was ready to go back out there. Never going to take myself out of a game. I don't ever really want the handshake. Made the assumption. It was fine.

Q. Your stuff was up across the board. When did you have a feeling you were going to have everything working today?

TARIK SKUBAL: I don't really know if I thought that at all, honestly. I was just kind of worried about executing each pitch and trying to do my best to live pitch by pitch and just do what makes me a good pitcher, and that's getting ahead and getting guys into leverage.

Q. Tarik in light of -- in spite of everything you went through in recent weeks, you had the ball in a game 1, rested, ready. What did it mean to have that opportunity, rewrite the narrative to your team?

TARIK SKUBAL: It means a lot. It means a lot to take the ball game 1. To have the trust of our whole organization, teammates, coaches, you know, coaching staff, it means a lot.

And it doesn't really matter how we got here. We got in. Everybody's in the same boat. And we're up 1-0 in a best of three. So it doesn't really matter how you get here, as long as you get in.

Q. Tarik, you mentioned going pitch by pitch. The slider usage in particular seemed to be pretty heavy. What did you see from that pitch today? Why were



you able to lean on it so much?

TARIK SKUBAL: Is Dingler coming in here?

Oh, okay. I'd ask him. I don't know. I don't know.

Q. He was calling it?

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah, he calls it and I throw it. That's kind of it. That's kind of how it goes. There are two shakes a game. The rest are him calling it and I try to throw it.

Q. When they scored that run there on the bouncer, what were your emotions as that happened and how were you able to collect yourself?

TARIK SKUBAL: It's not surprising, right? I mean, we've seen it. I don't think the ball hit the dirt again, the infield dirt, and they score a run. That's just who they are. They're really competitive. They take every 90 feet. They run the bases really hard. They put a ton of pressure on you and that's how they scratched one across there.

It's what they do. They're really, really good at it. That's the credit to kind of how those guys are over there.

Q. You mentioned talking to Dingler about the sliders. You talked previously about the pitch execution being all that matters to you. How do you feel you executed in this one today?

TARIK SKUBAL: I haven't really watched it back to know. I just know that I was bought in on every single throw I made today. That's what, I mean, really matters is me trying to execute every pitch. I'm not perfect. I'm not going to be perfect. I think the game's best don't really execute the pitch but, what, like 20 percent of the time. It's just about being bought in. That's what I mean by that. It's not about executing pitches. I think I did a good job of that.

Q. Everybody knows how game 5 ended last year. You have game 1. You get a win here. What is the stats factory feeling of that, doing that today?

TARIK SKUBAL: It's a playoff game. It's good to have a



series lead in any series. Obviously, game 5 doesn't go the way we would like it to. But, also, that inning was kind of chaotic too. It's one pitch that makes the difference. It didn't change anything that -- didn't change my routine or my effort level or anything like that today. I just needed to focus on myself and what makes me a good pitcher.

If you start letting all those things creep into your head, I don't think you're in a good spot mentally. So I don't really think about that stuff too much. Let the fans kind of chirp it if they want to.

Q. I don't know if you've ever had an injury delay for a camera before. But between that and the replay, was it hard to stay in rhythm at all in that inning?

TARIK SKUBAL: No, I wanted them to do it again and break it. If they broke the glass, do it again and no camera there. I told him, dude, try to do it again. We'll see what happens. It doesn't really matter. I'm hot when I'm out there. I'm ready to go. That stuff that can disrupt timing and stuff, if you let it get to you mentally, it will. None of that stuff matters. It's out of your control. Just play baseball.

Q. So you talked about kind of resetting after kind of everything that happened. Is there something you do when you're not playing that you use to kind of reset and kind of just decompress?

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah, I think your breath is kind of probably the most important thing you can do. Just breathe out there. I think a lot of moments that happen that are out of your control or in your control, you know, just breathe.

I do some breath work stuff, and I think it applies to the game. Just keeps your brain in a good spot.

Q. What was it like watching Will secure those last three outs, especially with how the inning starts.

TARIK SKUBAL: Never a doubt. Went out there, no outs. Great job. Outstanding job. He comes in for me in the 8th when I run out of gas and gets exactly what he's supposed to do, get us out of the inning.

And then, I mean, the first ball was such a chaotic play, right? And they're at 3rd base with nobody out and said just settle in. Strike a guy out. Make them make a mistake. And then the game's over. So it was huge. It's obviously big that we're up 1-0. He's a big reason why.

Q. You tied a Tigers' postseason record from the '70s with 14 strikeouts. Obviously, not a priority going into

today. The win is more important. Is that something that matters to you, hearing that statistic?

TARIK SKUBAL: I don't want to sound like I -- I understand, but it doesn't, no. It doesn't really matter. Winning is what matters to me. It's mattered to me all year. I think winning is the most important thing in sports. It's why you play is to win.

And however I can make an impact on the win, maybe that's a different answer. But I just care about winning more than anything.

Q. Tarik, the breath work you mentioned, when did you start doing that? Where did you learn that?

TARIK SKUBAL: Kind of started doing that once I got into the big leagues once you started playing in stadiums that are a little bigger than you're used to. I'm from a smaller school, maybe pitched in front of 500 people in college. Once you get in the big leagues and there's 30, 40,000. You have to calm down, make sure you're focused on each and every pitch. That's one of them for me.

Q. What was your view when Zach laid down that bunt? Did you find another gear when you were pitching with the lead again?

TARIK SKUBAL: No, I'm not going to change my approach a ton. Obviously, you want to pitch with a lead. A one-run lead is not much. It's still close. One swing of the bat, the game is tied. It feels good to pitch with a lead, but it doesn't dictate what I throw or how I go about my business. It was a big-time play. Perfectly executed. Almost gets a knock out of it. Make them field the ball, throw it to first. To put us up 2-1, that's all we needed.

Q. With Casey starting tomorrow, you've been with him pretty much forever. What's it like to see him get the opportunity tomorrow, and what's your level of confidence in him?

TARIK SKUBAL: I'm very excited to see him go. I've got the pleasure of being teammates with him since 2018. We came up together through the minor leagues, rehabbed together when we got hurt in the big leagues. I've seen the work he's put in. I couldn't be more excited to see him pitch and compete.

This is a guy that was left off our roster last year in the postseason. So to just kind of see all the work he's put in this off-season and how he's come back and how he's looked lately. His last I don't know how many starts, they've looked really, really good. His outing in Boston, that's as good as I've ever seen him in my life. So it's



awesome for him. I'm very excited for him. He's our guy tomorrow.

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