

AL Wild Card Series: Tigers vs Guardians

Thursday, October 2, 2025

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Progressive Field

Detroit Tigers

Kerry Carpenter

Pregame Press Conference



Q. Kerry, before a game like this, just kind of what do you do to calm the nerves?

KERRY CARPENTER: Well, I kind of like to think of it as another game, but there's definitely some nerves. I think it's a good thing to feel that way before a game like this. For me, it's normal. Hanging out with the teammates, preparing for the game, getting my routine done, spending time reading scripture and praying. The normal stuff I do before every game. It's a fun one today.

Q. How much were you guys following yesterday, just the other series to figure out when you were playing and also what's the difference, particularly in terms of the shadows here between 1:00 and the 3:00 start?

KERRY CARPENTER: It will be different for sure. Like towards the end of the game, my last at-bat, in the ninth, was in the shadows. It was a little tougher to see. It will play a role, but, I mean, both teams have to hit in it. So it will be a little interesting. But in a game like this where you're locked in and just trying to see the ball well in general, I think we'll be all good.

Q. Kerry, to follow up on his question, what time did you go to bed last night? What was it like trying to navigate: Are we playing at 1:00? Are we playing at 3:00? How is this going to go down? What was it like?

KERRY CARPENTER: It was weird. I like watching baseball anyway so I was watching the Yankees game. It was interesting going to bed. I had two alarms set, whether I had to wake up for a 1:00 game or a 3:00 game. We figured it out in the middle of the night, realizing we were playing at 3:00. It was weird going to bed last night, not knowing when we were playing. But it was not too big of a difference.

Q. You were basically in the same situation last year, a round further. What do you draw from that? Is there anything you can take from that to push it towards you guys this time?

KERRY CARPENTER: The experience of being in a winner-take-all last year was something that's helping us right now, I think. Other than that, I don't know if there's anything because it's different teams, different guys we're facing and stuff.

It's just kind of a fun experience that we had, that we can learn from last year and realize that this is everything. There's no saving your body. There's nothing like for 162 anymore. It's go time today.

Q. When you have a game like yesterday, with 1 for 15 or whatever it was with runners in scoring position, you always want to flush and move forward. How do you not take the pressure, the intensity of that game when you get the opportunities today? How do you kind of just clean slate yourself for a new game?

KERRY CARPENTER: I think we can take the positives from the fact that we had so many opportunities with runners in scoring position. I think we can simplify our approach or maybe lock in a little more with those opportunities.

But the fact that we're getting those opportunities is a big deal. And so I know, like, we're confident going into today, hopefully getting a lot more opportunities to do that. I'm sure they're confident and they should be. It will be a fun battle today. None of that matters anymore so we just have to go and execute today.

Q. With you moving up to the 2-hole today, what is that going to be like for you? What's it been like all season long, even in the last year, seeing opposing teams manage against you? What has that been like and what's it like moving up to the 2-hole?

KERRY CARPENTER: It's not really much different. I'm still hitting behind Gleyber and Parker is hitting in the 9-hole, so it's not almost the same lineup once you get



around to him. It's cool, like, to be thought of that highly of opposing managers. I have to lock it in more if I get those at-bats. I'll plan on getting the at-bats, but we trust A.J. with whatever he wants to do.

It will be a fun day. Nothing really changes for me.

Q. Half tongue in cheek here, but did you kind of smile or snicker a little bit just the big uproar about Riley getting pinch-hit for when it's kind of happened to you a hundred times throughout the course?

KERRY CARPENTER: No. It was a little weird seeing him getting pinch-hit for, but he handled it like a pro, like always. Yeah, it's something that I've gotten a little used to, unfortunately. Like I said, we trust A.J. with what he does. I think everybody and their brother trusts Jahmai in that situation. He had a great at-bat, kind of got hosed on one and had to swing at the next one. Yeah, that was a little interesting.

Q. I think there was a graphic going into the series, these two teams have the most home-grown players of any teams in the postseason. You guys also have affiliates in the same league from High A on up. Is there a familiarity with these guys from early stages of your pro careers that contributes to this rivalry?

KERRY CARPENTER: Yeah, I think so. It's a lot of mutual respect. I've been playing against Bo Naylor forever. And all these guys, it feels like I've said hey to them 50 times the last couple years.

It's pretty cool, and I think it is a testament to how close we are as a team and how close they are as a team. So it's pretty cool, the fact that we're both doing it with a lot of home-grown guys. We face them a lot, but we've also played with each other coming up through the minor leagues.

Q. When we spoke in New York, you said you like to swing for the fences. In the postseason, I know it's three singles. Is it more a conscious effort to make sure you get on because base runners are so hard to manufacture?

KERRY CARPENTER: Maybe a little bit. The way I think about my approach at the plate, to get my best swing off, I have to really try to swing. Not swing for the fences necessarily but get my best swing off. I feel like I can get my best swing off and still make contact. There's a little more of trying to see the ball a little deeper and make better decisions.

The wind was howling in the last couple days so there's no

cheap ones. So getting on base, trying to get Tork up, trying to get Riley up, something I was a little conscious of for sure.

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