

AL Wild Card Series: Royals vs Orioles

Tuesday, October 1, 2024
Baltimore, Maryland, USA
Camden Yards

Kansas City Royals

Matt Quatraro

Pregame Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming in, appreciate it. Vinnie set a very high bar in here, I'll have you know.

Q. Speaking of Vinnie, just what does it mean to have him back in the lineup, and when did you think that it might be possible to get him back for this series?

MATT QUATRARO: Well what it means, you know, we're really excited about it, first of all. The amount of work he's put in and the dedication is really remarkable and how quickly he's healed up. We know there's still healing that needs to happen but it's really incredible what he's done and the whole training staff, with Blumer and KT and those guys to get him back. Really, really special.

When did I first think? I think I probably started thinking it was a possibility last week in D.C. when I went to watch him hit in the cage, and I had seen a couple videos, but when I watched his face and didn't see him grimacing and those kind of things, that's when I thought it might be real.

Q. Going with 15 position players, what led to that split there for you guys?

MATT QUATRARO: Well, a lot of things. We considered every avenue. We use our roster. We pinch run. We pinch-hit. We think that's the best way for us to match up throughout this series with these guys. We need to be able to pinch run, you know, and do the things that we've done all season.

At the same time on the pitching side, our strength has been our pitching, and you know, if the guys perform, we feel like that's -- we're going to be fine with that amount of depth. We also have length in the bullpen with Brady and with Lynch, and at this time of year, you know, workloads and all that kind of thing are kind of out the window.

Q. With Vinnie, he said that he was supposed to check



in this morning around nine but sent a text, he said, at 6:55. Was that text to you?

MATT QUATRARO: No.

Q. I guess at what point did you hear from whoever that text was to that he was up that early, and also, raring to go and gave the green light?

MATT QUATRARO: He was up a few hours later than me because I was ready to go a lot earlier than that.

But I'm assuming he sent it to KT. We knew at 9:00, was kind of the magic number that we wanted to find out, with the rosters having to be set at 10:00. Once we got that notification from KT around 9:00, we were good to go.

Q. What kind of communication was this from you back to him, saying, okay, you're officially on it, you're a go and you're in the lineup?

MATT QUATRARO: We told him yesterday when we left if everything was fine this morning that, would be the case. I did not call him or text him anything today.

But as long as he woke up -- or once he finished hitting yesterday and things were the same, once we got through the treatments and all that kind of stuff yesterday afternoon, but as long as he checked in this morning okay, we were going to be good.

Q. You preached a message today, all season, and really since you first came to the Royals, is there any significance to this day knowing that this is your first playoff game you're going to manage and what were your emotions like just leading up to this moment?

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, I would say so. You know, I think you have to be a little bit crazy to not understand where you are and appreciate it, really. I think that's part of the benefit of the live today motto or whatever you want to call it is because if you do stay in the moment, you can appreciate the things you're going through.

It's not a matter of, well, I'm just going to wait for the next



best thing or the next biggest opportunity. It's appreciate where you are and understand that you're not here because of yourself. You're here because of everybody that's ever had an influence on you.

And far as the team, this isn't a one-man team, right. That's the thing these guys have embraced. As far as me personally, yeah, I've taken every opportunity I can to appreciate the fact that for the first time, my family will be here with me in a postseason. My kids are old enough now to somewhat understand what's going on. You know, and just the fact that it is my first time as a manager, is certainly not something I'm taking for granted at all.

Q. What has it been like for the past month creating your lineup with Vinnie and all the RBIs he brings to the team, and what's it like to lock him back into that third spot now?

MATT QUATRARO: It's been interesting. As soon as he was injured, J.J. went out and got Grossman and Pham and Gurriel, all right about that same time. You know, we started trying to piece things together. We knew, and the guys actually came to me the next day and said, look, we understand. It doesn't have to be a message here of nobody has to be Vinnie, those kind of things.

And you know, Vinnie has a lot of RBIs because a lot of guys were on base for him to drive in. So we have that type of thing to do things to set each other up but there's no question. The guy that hits third for you all season in between Bobby and Salvy is a huge part of what you do.

So to get him back is big. A lot of people had to do some things out of their comfort zone to get us here this last month, and I think that's only going to pay us dividends going forward.

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