

# AL Wild Card Series: Royals vs Orioles

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

## Kansas City Royals

### Matt Quatraro

#### Postgame Press Conference

Kansas City Royals 1, Baltimore Orioles 0

**Q. Can you give us an update on Cole, kind of how that all came about today?**

MATT QUATRARO: First of all it was just cramping, I believe in his left calf but before that, he pitched his butt off. That was incredible.

But yeah, he came off the field. Actually, he was walking by me and I just -- and he said something but I couldn't tell what he said. And so I just said, "You're good." Like kind of joking with him. Like he's definitely going back out there and he called me back down in the tunnel and he said, "Last couple hitters, my leg was cramping."

We've been through this before. It doesn't usually just all of a sudden stop happening. So we needed to make a decision -- not a decision. We needed to make a move there, and so we got Sammy ready as quick as we could.

**Q. And that was in the sixth that he said -- after the sixth that he said that?**

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, yeah, as he walked by after the sixth.

**Q. Any concern moving forward for him?**

MATT QUATRARO: None at all. He'll hydrate. Do all the stuff they need to do. It was very mild but he was being honest with us because we've been down that road before and it doesn't usually go well after that.

**Q. Sticking in the sixth inning, were you surprised that Brandon Hyde let Burnes pitch or Burnes decided to pitch to Bobby? Were you expecting them to walk Bobby then?**



MATT QUATRARO: I was not surprised. I mean, that guy was incredible today. I mean, he's got incredible stuff. He locates. You know, that's your best pitcher and our best hitter. That's why you play this game, right.

But I would have been more surprised if he had walked him.

**Q. The aggressiveness of Maikel Garcia what kind of significant role did that play in helping you guys scratch across that run in the sixth?**

MATT QUATRARO: That was the difference. He works a tremendous at-bat for the walk, steals second, scores on the hit. That is the difference in the game, and we know his capabilities. We know how good he is at stealing bases. Everyone does, right? It's no secret.

But to be able to execute there and to be in scoring position for Bobby, we'll take that chance every day of the week.

**Q. The cumulative effort from your pitching staff, shutout on the road, for guys who have never been in this situation before?**

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, what do you say? I mean, the start from Cole sets the tone, right. I mean, the efficiency, clearly, if he doesn't cramp there, he's going to go back out. We get Sammy ready in a hurry. They give him some extra time because we told him he was coming out because of an injury but ten-pitch inning for Sam Long after getting behind 2-0 to the first hitter.

Bubic, he just keeps improving. That's tough -- I haven't seen the pitches, but that's a tough walk to Henderson. Henderson has really good at-bats.

And then Erceg coming in in the biggest spot of his career, keeping his nerves calm. That's a long time to sit after the -- in the top of the ninth for nothing -- we didn't end up scoring and he has to go back out there and face O'Hearn, one of the elite pinch-hitters in the game and so on and so forth down the line there.



But every pitch is just monumental there. Couldn't be more proud of those guys.

**Q. For two guys in their first playoff game and looking at the situations they got through after the scratch double, what did you see from Cole at that point, and then obviously Erceg and the at-bat to Santander, how good was he there?**

MATT QUATRARO: Well, I mean, even Mullins led off the third inning with a double and Cole pitched around that. You know, coming around to the top of the order there, that's incredible. But the first and third, the three-pitch strikeout.

I mean, you could tell he was bearing down right there. And we know how good Henderson is at the plate, and to get the strikeout there, that's enormous for us, and you could see the emotion on Cole's face. You know, it gave the dugout a huge boost.

**Q. Could you see any emotion from Ragans at all going out to the mound to start this thing? Given that this is his first playoff appearance.**

MATT QUATRARO: I don't think so. My interaction with him today, you know, was -- we were dealing with the weather there and so I communicated with him a few times. But he seemed very calm. He seemed -- who knows what he was like on the inside; I'm sure you guys will ask him.

I felt really good when I saw those first two fastballs be 97, 98, and in the zone. So the fact that he was controlling his emotions and able to execute right out of the gate.

And then the other that really made me feel good was the seven-pitch second inning and got him back on track. Because it looked like Burnes, he just threw one strike after another.

So we didn't want that pitch count to get up.

**Q. If you could, describe the atmosphere today and the 1-0 game, how you managed through that at the end, too, just being able to get that Game 1 win.**

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, you definitely want Game 1, right, and we did just enough on the offensive side. The pitching was remarkable.

The atmosphere was great. I mean, you could tell right away, right from the anthem when they scream, "O" it was loud. But it helps when you're not letting them get on the board to keep things in check.

So other than that, you know, these are great fans. We know it's a great baseball city and it's fun to be in this environment.

**Q. How pleased were you with some of the defensive plays out there? Tommy Pham's sliding catch, couple of plays from Bobby as well.**

MATT QUATRARO: Tommy that was great there, an early in-the-count swing to get a quick out. That's a difference-maker there.

The other one, Bobby's play on Santander, that ball was probably spinning like crazy. To be able to take his time, he went down with two hands and made a strong throw. That's a huge spot in the game.

**Q. I'm sure you have answered a million questions about Salvador's leadership; I was struck by him going out to the mound in the middle of the at-bat with Erceg in the ninth inning. What does having a leader like that on the field do for you, particularly in partnership with a really explosive, excitable closer?**

MATT QUATRARO: I'm glad you noticed, that because Salvy does that frequently. He knows the right times. He's been doing this a long time. He understands his role on this team as a leader, and he doesn't just go out there to go out there. He goes out there when he's got something to say, and understands that he can make a difference.

You probably won't see it here but he also does it when he's playing first base. He'll go from first and understand that this is the right time. You know, he's a tremendous person, a tremendous leader, but in those instances, that's the guy we want out there to understand what's happening.

**Q. Just to go back to Cole for a moment. We've seen the numbers he's put up the last year and a half, but what kind of confidence boost did he bring to the clubhouse, just his presence since he got here last year?**

MATT QUATRARO: I think when he got here, I don't know if any of us knew what was ahead. But we were excited to get him. We had heard really good things, and then once August hit last year was remarkable. American League pitcher of the Month.

I think I might have mentioned, I don't know if it was today or yesterday; the fact that Cole approached the off-season and spring training like he was trying to make the team and didn't even entertain the thought that he might be the Opening Day starter tells you something about his humility

and his growth mindset and his continued ability to improve.

That's why as you've seen, baseball season is a long haul, right, he's gone through his ups and downs and had a couple bumps in the road here but this is what makes it all worthwhile, for him to be able to go out there, step up and show what he can do on a national stage.

THE MODERATOR: Matt, congrats on your first postseason win.

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