

# AL Wild Card Series: Royals vs Orioles

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

## Kansas City Royals Cole Ragans

Postgame Press Conference

Kansas City Royals 1, Baltimore Orioles 0

**Q. Cole, can you just describe what you felt in the sixth inning, and then coming in the dugout and telling Q that your calf had cramped up?**

COLE RAGANS: Yeah, I felt it grabbing a little bit. I didn't want to push it too far. I want to be healthy. I plan on having quite a few more starts. So I just didn't want to push it to where it ends up, you know, being something more serious than it needs to be.

**Q. Was it something where you could have gone out but obviously looking toward the future?**

COLE RAGANS: If we wanted to push it potentially but I didn't want to push it. You know, felt -- it was there. Like it was every pitch, I could feel it there for the last batter or two.

**Q. Going through in that fifth inning there, being able to walk around the double and the walk, what was the thought process, game plan facing McCann and then going and facing Henderson?**

COLE RAGANS: Execute. Trust the guys behind me. You know, trust Sal back there behind the dish and try to execute. Those guys behind me are really good. So just, you know, try to execute, get some weak contact, something like that, and keep the game close.

**Q. I know it's a short playoff series, so there's a lot of adrenaline anyway. But do you get amped up to face somebody like Burnes more than if it's just somebody else?**

COLE RAGANS: I don't really get amped up to face an opposing pitcher. It's more so the hitters. Like I said, I can't control what Burnes does. Obviously he's a really



good pitcher. He's been a really good pitcher. Everybody knows that.

So it's more so, you know, I do my homework on the hitters, and I try to execute my pitches.

**Q. We saw, speaking of amped up, a lot of emotion out of you. Talk about the emotion on the mound and the atmosphere in Game 1.**

COLE RAGANS: Yeah, first and third, one out, I don't know if it was 1-0 yet or not. But you know, it's a big spot in the game. Felt like I executed my pitches well. Got out of a jam right there. Let a little bit out, yeah.

**Q. You said that you were feeling it with every pitch, the cramping in your leg, and Matt Quatraro was talking about how he could see emotion on your face. Were you fighting in the sixth inning? What was going on?**

COLE RAGANS: That's a good shut down inning to keep momentum on our side. I was trying to execute pitches, get some weak contact, early contact, and get back in the dugout.

**Q. You mentioned you don't care about who the opposing pitcher is but when you get in the game and it's 0-0, 1-0, does that change a lot for you? How much does the score affect the way you went about things?**

COLE RAGANS: I feel like regardless of the score I still have to execute my pitches and get guys out. Same game plan regardless if it's 0-0 or 6-0. I've still got to execute. I've still got to throw strikes and trust the guys behind me.

**Q. In terms of kind of toggling between controlling your emotions and leveraging your emotions, did you find yourself going back-and-forth between like trying to maintain a slow heartbeat and then tapping into the adrenaline that was out there in a game like this?**

COLE RAGANS: It's the same game we've played all year. It's just a little louder that, kind of stuff. Just try to control my breathing, not try to do too much. What we've done as



a team to get to this point, it's good enough. It's what's got us here. Just trying to not do too much, and go out there and execute.

**Q. What did you see out of your bullpen teammates, Sam Long, Kris Bubic, and Lucas Erceg to hold the lead and protect it for you at the end of the game?**

COLE RAGANS: They are incredible. They have been incredible. They are fun to watch. Just filling up, going at guys, and like I said, they are unbelievable and they are fun to watch.

**Q. When you're playing a series that's this short, essentially, it's a sprint. I know Game 1 is always important, but for you guys to come in here in enemy territory and take Game 1, what does that mean and what is the mood in the clubhouse right now?**

COLE RAGANS: Yeah, I mean, this team is special. It's fun to be around. We know what we're capable of. It's just, everybody is pulling for everybody. Everybody is pushing everybody, and it's just so much fun to show up and play for these guys every single day.

So you know, we know what's on the line, and you know, we want to play baseball for another month. Just show up every day, and we pull for each other and trust each other.

**Q. Pitching has been such a big part of the identity of this team all year, none more so than today. What have you felt the biggest difference is as a staff going from last year to this year as a whole and to make the season what it has been?**

COLE RAGANS: I mean, when you bring in guys that have been here before, they have pitched in the playoffs, they know what it takes throughout the year to get to this point and continue to go further than this.

There's so much knowledge in the clubhouse, Lugo, Whacka, Will Schmidt, Strat, all the guys. They have been around for a while. They are unbelievable humans. It's so easy to talk to them about certain things, about, hey, do you change anything here or what would you do here, that kind of stuff.

I feel like that's so big just having guys that you can lean on and talk to about stuff like that. You know, obviously they are unbelievable baseball players but they are even better human beings.

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