

AL Wild Card Series: Royals vs Orioles

Wednesday, October 2, 2024
Baltimore, Maryland, USA
Camden Yards

Kansas City Royals

Matt Quatraro

Postgame Press Conference

Royals 2, Orioles 1

Q. Matt, overall what is going through your head right now, the emotions, winning your first Wild Card series as a manager for the first time in the postseason?

MATT QUATRARO: Well, there's a million things going through my mind, from my parents, my Little League coaches, every family member and friend that's ever helped me and supported me, but more than anything is that the competitiveness of that group of guys in that room is just overwhelming. It's inspiring to me, and it has been all year.

I cannot say enough good things about them as professionals, as competitors, and that's what's going through my mind as well as everybody in this organization that's put their blood, sweat, and tears into this to help us get to this point.

Q. You've talked a lot about resiliency about your team. What is it about your team that's allowed it not just game to game, but pitch to pitch, out to out, have the memory of a goldfish and be able to make the next hit or the next play?

MATT QUATRARO: Well, they believe it. They have to believe it. You can't just talk about it. You can't just put it on a tee shirt and say let's go, or hang it on the wall in a poster. You have to live it; these guys do.

You have to look at it a lot of different ways. You get knocked down, you have two choices: you can get up or curl up in a ball. And there's nobody in that room that does that. They live that way. When you get a whole group of guys together that live that way, it's really special.

Q. Yesterday the bullpen was stout. Today perhaps even better. Given just the atmosphere -- and it



seemed like they had a lot more momentum after the home run -- but they held it down. What do you have to say about your bullpen?

MATT QUATRARO: Well, you nailed it. First of all, Lugo gets the bases loaded there and gets Santander to pop up, and that was an enormous out in that game. For him things were unraveling a little bit, but for him to compose himself. But yeah, we're bringing Zerpa into the biggest spot of his life and he gets two huge outs to stem the tide there and then we take the lead and he goes back out.

We asked a lot of him and then we asked a lot of Schreiber to go back out, and Sammy coming in there again to get big outs and on down the line.

These guys, it's so impressive that they believe in themselves and they trust their trust and they just come after some of the best hitters in the world.

Q. What was it with Zerpa that made him stand out to you and decide this is the guy that I want to go out for this moment, bases loaded, one out, and he's going to get us out?

MATT QUATRARO: Well, we had planned all along at some point, hopefully not in that exact situation, for him to be in high leverage in this series with all the lefties they have.

Clearly we didn't want it to be like that. But he throws a ton of strikes. He's got a 98 miles an hour sinker, and his breaking ball is so much improved since he was sent down to Triple-A a couple months ago.

So credit to him, credit to the player development. Dane Johnson is the pitching coach in Triple-A that just nailed it with helping him get that breaking ball back, and Dave Lundquist.

It's really remarkable what he's doing. He loves to pitch. He's one of those guys that competes like nobody's business. It's so much fun to be around him.

Q. What did you think about the pitching staff overall



during the series?

MATT QUATRARO: Well, it's incredible. You come here against that team and give up one run in 18 innings, sign me up. Nobody could think that's going to happen, and the way they just -- like I said, they trusted themselves and went right after those guys because if you don't they're going to kill you because you're going to pick around, you're going to get behind. But they challenged them and that's a credit to our pitching department and pounding that message into those guys day in and day out.

Q. What can you say about Bobby Witt at this point? Another big at-bat, another big hit. Is there something about how he handles those particular moments to be able to excel in those moments?

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, he does have a slow heartbeat. He understands that the moment is not too big. He's plenty good. His talent is plenty good. His heart, his belief is plenty good. So he doesn't have to try to do more.

Now, his physical talent is off the charts, and the ability to beat that ball out -- he smoked that ball. That was an incredible play at second base, as well, and to make it that close, you've got to be going hard.

Guys hit a ball that hard, sometimes they don't run it out full speed, but that shows the kind of person and player he is.

Q. Just to touch more on Bobby, talk to us a little bit about his speed and how important that is to his game.

MATT QUATRARO: Well, that's what makes him so unique is because he's got the power. He's got the bat to ball skills, but he's also got the speed that he gets infield hits, he can do a lot of different things. He is literally the total package when it comes to physical ability on the field.

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