

NL Wild Card Series: Mets vs Brewers

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

American Family Field

New York Mets

Carlos Mendoza

Pregame Press Conference

Q. I just saw Diaz. He says he feels good. You confident you have him today?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yes.

Q. In getting to know Pete Alonso as a person this year, what have you learned about him that maybe you didn't know from afar?

CARLOS MENDOZA: How much he wants to win, how much he wants it for this organization, for this franchise. He wants to be in the lineup. It was a big deal for him to play the 162, and that goes to show you. His leadership, the way he goes about his business, going through struggles, and the way he handled the whole situation.

He's been doing it his whole career, in New York especially, and he did it again this year. And here he is.

Q. What has been your favorite off the field moment or interaction with him?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I had a lot of them, but probably the first time I met him. We were in Tampa, and he was hitting by his house. I went and just tried to get to know him. That probably was the best interaction, and we had a lot of good ones. But I think the very first one that I had with him kind of stuck with me.

Q. Jose Iglesias has hit in 23 straight games. We've talked about the bat-to-ball skills that he has, but is there anything else that you see behind this? What have you seen about his approach on the plate that's maybe led to this hitting streak?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, he's a good hitter. I think he's a different hitter in this type of era, where it's the homers and it's the walks. This is a guy that puts the ball in play, and when you put the ball in play, a lot of times



good things happen. When you're facing good pitching, you need that, and he's done that.

We faced some really good arms the past two, three weeks, definitely now, and what they have there, you're going to need that type of guy. So he's one of them.

I think he's a really good player, a lot of experience, a really good hitter, and he's having success right now.

Q. I'm just wondering that first third of the season when you all were 22-33, what gave you the confidence that you could turn this around and get to where you are now?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I always knew we had really good players and at some point we were going to turn it around. We never panicked. We stayed consistent. It was always the mentality, how can we get better today?

We were missing some guys, and we got healthier. We made some adjustments on the roster, and we got better. But we knew we had not only really good players, really good people, and it was just a matter of time. Here we are.

Q. You talked about this post-game a little bit yesterday, but how valuable is having a lineup of diverse skill sets, contact guys, power guys, speed guys, to make it tough on an opposing pitcher?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, that's what makes us a good team and a good offensive team. We can beat you in a lot of different ways. We can get on base. We can hit the ball out of the ballpark. We got guys that can put the ball in play. We use the whole field when we need to. We got guys that can run. We have the opportunity where we'll create runs. That's what makes this team a good team.

It's a deep lineup. We have guys with some type of versatility there. You can hit him at the top. You can hit him at the bottom. When they're rolling, it's not easy to get through those nine guys.

Q. Carlos, the other day when you guys beat the Braves to get in the playoffs, David Stearns actually



admitted how important it was for the franchise because he grew up a Mets fan and he knew what it meant to beat the Braves down there.

Did you ever see with getting to know him this first year, that there has been a little bit of a personal element to it just because he came home to New York and has worked with a team that he was a fan of growing up?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Obviously I knew he grew up as a Mets fan, but I'm going to be honest, I think I felt it more the past week and then definitely when we knew we needed to get it done in Atlanta. Then once we did it, just watching him celebrate, the smile on his face. He was so -- I was just very proud. I was excited because this was important not only for him, for me, for all of us in the organization.

But we haven't done anything. Obviously there's the ultimate goal, but we have to enjoy it. It was a huge game. I think that game right there, 161, is going to be a game that people will be talking about forever.

I think I'll have time at some point to sit back and realize because right now -- you know. But going back to David, special. What a privilege it is for me to be able to work with him. As an organization, we're lucky to have him.

Q. He's not on the field obviously where we can see people's competitive aspects. Do you see a competitive streak in him working with him? Does that come out in your dealings with him?

CARLOS MENDOZA: 100 percent. This goes back to the first day I got the job. Our standards, the way we're going to do business, who we are. We've done a lot of that. Understanding that there's a lot of work to be done because this is not just one year, this is what we want here is a sustainable franchise and the product on the field, on and off the field. He's a competitor, and we've seen it.

Q. Francisco Alvarez has obviously demonstrated a lot of leadership qualities at a young age. In your experience, how rare is it to get someone that young who's both willing and capable of doing it, and is it maybe easier now than it was 10, 20 years ago in this game?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I don't think it's ever easy, and it's rare, especially for the position he plays. There's a lot that goes on with his preparation. He's got a lot on his plate.

For him to not only absorb the information, put together a game plan from the pitching and catching standpoint, but offensively, he's got to go out and hit now. Then for him to be a leader, he's only 22, and you see the emotions. You

see how much he cares, how much he wants it, the energy. You don't see that too often.

It doesn't matter how he's playing, all he cares is the team. All he cares is about winning. He could be 0-4, and if we throw a shutout, he's pumped. If we're shaking hands at the end of the night, he's happy. You don't see that too often.

Q. Have they told you if the roof is open or closed tonight?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I haven't heard.

Q. Do you know?

THE MODERATOR: I'm not aware of that information. It was open when I came in.

Q. When a team is hot and it has momentum, it's not necessarily they're guaranteed to win every game, but something seems like it's different. How would you define momentum? What's it like when the team is sort of surging like this compared to other times during the year?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I think it's hard to find momentum. We've got to go out and do it. I think the one thing we've done all year is we've bounced back, and that gives me momentum.

We believe we're good, and it doesn't matter if we get down, we know we're going to get back up. It could be one inning. It could be losing a game, a tough game. We always continue to find ways.

We could call it vibes. We could call it momentum. You've got to go out there and play baseball, especially now where we're at, playoffs, you're facing the best of the best. And this team that we're facing here is a really good team.

Yesterday's in the past. We've got to find a way today.

Q. I know that Francisco Lindor's game in Atlanta is probably a good testament of how he's feeling, but how often are you checking in with him as far as his back and percentage of how he's feeling?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Not as much the past couple of days, but yeah, I'll have conversations with him throughout the day as soon as he gets to the ballpark, after BP, in the middle of the game. Yeah, there's always a conversation, but he's -- after that DH day, he told me I felt like I had an off day.

We've just got to keep it this way. The trainers are doing a helluva job. He's doing a helluva job, investing time there and making sure he needs to do whatever it takes to be available for us, and he's doing it.

Q. Do you remember when you saw the Brewers lineup on Opening Day, what you thought about a 20-year-old being at the top of it, and now without giving anything away, of course, scouting him and seeing what he's done this season, your impressions of what Milwaukee might have in that young player?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Jackson Chourio, right?

Q. Yes.

CARLOS MENDOZA: I saw him a couple years ago in winter ball. I knew we were in trouble. This was before they gave him a contract. Right away I saw him, and I was like, who is this kid? And then sure enough, he gets the contract. I wasn't surprised that he was in the Opening Day lineup and the season that he had. This is a special kid. This is a special player. They have a good one there.

THE MODERATOR: The roof is closed with the panels open, as it is right now on the field.

Carlos, thank you for your time.

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