

NL Wild Card Series:

Braves vs Padres

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

San Diego, California, USA

Petco Park

San Diego Padres

Manager Mike Shildt

Pregame Press Conference

Q. What's your comfort and confidence level with tomorrow handing the ball to Joe with the season on the line for one of these two teams? And just how is he uniquely wired mentally and preparation-wise for playoff baseball?

MIKE SHILDT: Confidence is very high. Game 2 is a swing game either way. So you've got a guy in Joe that we trust completely. We trust all our guys. But Joe's been there, done that.

To your point, has the makeup, has the quality that allows him to elevate his game. His game's already really good. Doesn't make it bigger than it is but clearly brings his A game in big moments.

Q. Would you talk a little bit from your perspective managing from the postseason versus the regular season?

MIKE SHILDT: Candidly, the last -- I manage about every game similar to a postseason game relative to the bullpen availability.

So we obviously have bullpen availability. There's always that marriage between evaluating your starter, which we feel good about Michael today. And then once the opportunity presents itself, we'll go for it.

Similar with the position side of it. We manage the game according to what the variables tell us, and we play to win every day. So for me every day is a postseason game.

Q. You've got a guy starting today making his second big league start. The other one was back in May. How do you go about preparing for someone you don't know a whole lot about?

MIKE SHILDT: We found out earlier today we found out an



idea who the small number of candidates could be. We started doing our research last night. Weren't overly surprised about who they named. But don't have a lot of information on him, clearly.

We've done our work on figuring out what he does. But ultimately it's what we do. We're aware our guys have been facing pitching since they were six, seven, eight, 10 years old, the ball's got to come across the plate. We've got to figure out how it comes out, where it comes out, where it's going and have good at-bats for it. I'm confident our guys will be ready.

Q. I know you mentioned the bullpen. I'm just wondering, if you go back to the trade deadline, the three guys you added to the mix, how impactful it is for these types of games, specifically?

MIKE SHILDT: Super impactful. Listen, the quality of your bullpen is very important for this time of year. It's important to get you here. It's one of the big reasons we are here. We have guys in the back end that we trust completely. We have a number of them in Adam and Scott and Hoeing have been a big part of adding to that mix.

The thing that's good about those three and the other guys we also have, there's not a ton of "handy"-ness there. They were able to get righties and lefties out. It's a very strong, deep, big part of our club.

Q. Understanding you have a lot of really good starting pitching options, Dylan Cease in game three is kind of an eye-opener, could you talk your thoughts on going game three instead of earlier?

MIKE SHILDT: I think, as we mentioned a little bit yesterday, Michael's done a great job for us all year. We wanted to make sure we kept him close to where he was.

We pushed him back from that last start in Arizona, already into the question from Bryce about our comfort level and confidence level being high in Joe in a game two scenario. And you've got Dylan Cease, if a game three materializes. And you've got him in game one if it goes the way we'd love for it to go, obviously.



Q. I think a lot of times in these preseason press conferences, there's questions asked about why the lineup is the way it is, but your lineup has been how it is for a while now. The fact that you have such a stable group of guys there, like, what does that do for you as a manager?

MIKE SHILDT: Yeah, there's a lot of confidence in the lineup. There are a little bit interchangeable parts we're consistent with the lineup we're rolling out today. Clearly feel confident in it. It's a deep lineup. It's a lot of professional at-bats. There's not a breather in it. The top is clearly good, middle is strong, and the bottom is exceptional as well. It's a very good, solid lineup that has a lot of balance.

Q. Whatever happens in the playoffs, are you going to remember this regular season in your career, in your life, Mike?

MIKE SHILDT: Yeah, that's a good question. Sometimes we don't rightfully we're getting ready for today and excited about the opportunity that presents itself in the postseason. That's pretty special. Sometimes you forget to stop and appreciate what you've done over the body of work to get here.

For me, it's hard to really capture completely because I haven't done it a lot, but I have taken a pause to appreciate -- I've taken a pause during the course of the season to enjoy and celebrate with this group and staff that has really done a tremendous job of coming together and a lot of admiration for the staff and the club and just how it cares about each other and how it competes and how it plays the game and how it's dedicated every day to greatness and winning.

So those are all clichés that sound wonderful, but when you actually are able to do it and be a part of it, it's pretty darned special. It was a really tremendous regular season, but now we spring forward.

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