

# NL Wild Card Series: Braves vs Padres

Tuesday, October 1, 2024  
San Diego, California, USA  
Petco Park

## Atlanta Braves

### Matt Olson

#### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. Yesterday you were saying how the adrenaline is going to be flowing and everything. Does it even feel like you made a cross-country flight after playing in a doubleheader?**

MATT OLSON: No, it's good. There's enough adrenaline, caffeine to make up for that. But for real, these are the games you work for all year, so -- to be able to get to this point no matter the kind of the schedule we had yesterday we're ready to go.

**Q. How strange was it playing in those two games, having a celebration, like a normal celebration and realizing now we've got to play in less than 24 hours?**

MATT OLSON: I wouldn't say it was the full clinching celebration because we were conscious of what we had to do today and get on the plane pretty quickly. So it was a crazy day for sure, but anytime you get a chance to pop some bottles, take a moment to celebrate what you accomplished throughout the year, getting into the playoffs, never gets old.

**Q. Obviously you've seen Smith-Shawver a fair amount since he came up. What are the traits that make him built for this moment and just kind of level him for success here?**

MATT OLSON: I think he's a pretty level-headed guy, calm demeanor. You turn on the TV, you see his stuff. It stands out. He hasn't had a ton of opportunity with us this year, but that's another guy that we feel confident getting on the mound, and we're ready to roll behind them.

**Q. Yesterday Mike Shildt mentioned that this is a very different team since last time you played. How different do you see the Padres team since mid-July?**

MATT OLSON: You know I think they added a couple of



arms, some guys that we've seen around before. But I think the main components are there, the team we faced in July, the series here.

It's a really good team. There's no doubt what they did this year is no fluke by any means. They've got a very solid roster, and we're looking forward to the competition.

**Q. You mentioned AJ, just 21, making his second start of the year. Do you say, just do your thing, take a deep breath, (indiscernible) the offense, we've got you. Do your thing?**

MATT OLSON: That's the best advice you can give a young guy. He's had plenty of starts. He knows what he needs to do, stay within himself. Talked about the stuff. It's not like he needs to go out there and throw harder or try to make the breaking ball nastier or anything. It's already there.

For him it's just dialing it back, making sure that get some breaths in and go out there and attack like you normally would.

**Q. Whatever happens tonight, could you share the team's confidence level in having Max going tomorrow and just what you thought of how he's looked these last couple of outings?**

MATT OLSON: Max is as consistent as it gets. I always talk about his ability to adjust based off hitters. There's a lot of guys in the league who have their pitches and that's what they're rolling out that day -- three, four pitches.

I feel like Max is able to tinker with things. He's got a four-seam that stays true and he's got a four-seam that cuts. He's got a cutter, a sinker, a change-up, curve ball sweeper. He's got all these different components.

And he's really good about figuring out how he wants to approach guys. So you could see him one time and he'll be a completely different pitcher the next time, try to attack you a different way.

I think that's a testament to his preparation, obviously



knowing what he wants to do, having a game plan in between the catchers and Sal and Kranny, they put together a good game plan.

**Q. You guys overcame a lot all year. Do you embrace the underdog role right now?**

MATT OLSON: Yeah. I think when people don't think you can do something, that drives you. We don't listen, we don't go seek out the chatter. Sometimes you hear some stuff. That can absolutely drive you.

**Q. Logistics, what time did you get into San Diego? What time did you get to your hotel? And how did you feel when you finally laid down?**

MATT OLSON: Well, the answer to the last one was tired. We got in about midnight. Just trying to get on schedule as quickly as possible, three-hour difference. Almost kind of helped us a little bit to be traveling late so you stay up and try to get on that schedule. It is what it is. It's time to go.

**Q. Obviously it hurts to not have Chris Sale, but just because of everything you've been through and what you talked about all year, do you feel like this team's pretty uniquely prepared for any situation like that?**

MATT OLSON: Yeah, we've had a few scenarios where you just gotta roll with the punches. Incredible year that Sale had during the regular season. Stinks that he's not going to be able to be on this roster.

But it's been that next-man-up for a while this year. We've got Smith-Shawver going tonight and Max going tonight. And sure we'd love to have Chris Sale on the mound but we're just confident with those guys.

**Q. I was going to ask you about Chris Sale, but instead I'll ask, what do you think this team learned the last couple of years going to Philly to start out -- or after you played at home? What did you learn from those experiences; it's going to be a caldron here just like there. Do you think you'll benefit from having played those games in Philly and being a little shorthanded last year as well?**

MATT OLSON: Yeah, I mean, there's no doubt that Philly is a great environment, especially in the postseason. I would put this place up there with it. That's what you want. You want those environments. You want the rowdiness. You want the postseason vibes. It's part of the fun of it.

I think it's nothing but embracing it. You might hear some names thrown your way, but it's all in good fun for me.

**Q. I was in Arizona yesterday and some of the D-backs said, as they were watching the second game, that they were a little daunted by the fact that they didn't think the Mets were putting on their best effort; it was kind of an odd situation there where they clinched you had to win. You're on the field, how did you feel about what the effort was?**

MATT OLSON: Of the Mets?

**Q. Yeah.**

MATT OLSON: I think they were trying to win the baseball game. I mean, that's an in-division rival. I don't think they're pulling anything back. If we win that first game, obviously Lindor didn't play, resting up, couple other guys -- no, this is the big leagues; you're just trying to win every game.

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