

# NL Wild Card Series:

## Braves vs Padres

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

San Diego, California, USA

Petco Park

### Atlanta Braves

### Max Fried

#### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. You've entered the postseason as favorites the last two years. What's the different feel this year? Do you embrace being underdogs?**

MAX FRIED: I think I've watched enough postseason baseball and played in enough postseason baseball to know that anything can happen. At the end of the day, you've got to go out there and step between the lines and compete. It doesn't really matter who is on the other side, who is a favorite or underdog, you've got to go out there and win the game.

**Q. Obviously it was a long time ago, but this is the franchise that drafted you and traded you. Does it mean any more when you're pitching here and to pitch against them in a playoff series?**

MAX FRIED: I mean, at this point it kind of feels like a different lifetime. It's been so much time. I've been with the Braves for, you know, 10-plus years. At the end of the day, everyone -- it's a business. You move team to team. But it's just another postseason game. Gotta go out there and leave it all out there and try to win.

**Q. You guys have seen some of your friends and best players get hurt all season. How tough, though, was it to see Sale, who had a comeback year finally stayed healthy and get to the biggest game of the year and not be able to pitch, how tough was it for you guys and for him? If you've had a chance to talk to him, how has he taken it?**

MAX FRIED: As a teammate and friend, your heart breaks because you see how hard he worked throughout the whole year, the preparation that he takes and what he does to make sure that he's ready for his starts. He was as diligent and disciplined as I've seen. It was a pleasure to watch, especially watch him to go out there and compete.



I know that this stage and postseason baseball is what he lives for and it's his time of the year. To know that he's not on the roster and he's going to be missing the series, I know that it's a tough one. But hopefully we can come in and win and he has an opportunity to come join us later on.

**Q. I know you guys have a lot of confidence in Smith-Shawver to get it done today. What was your message to him as somebody who has been in the spot of making a first postseason start?**

MAX FRIED: Go out there, leave it all out there. Have no regrets. I haven't had a chance to talk to him since he got told. It was pretty late. I kind of want to leave him be.

But at the end of the day, it's just do whatever you can, leave it all out there. And he's got good stuff. It's a lively fastball. He throws pretty hard. And he's extremely athletic. Anything can happen.

**Q. Because you guys were celebrating 24 hours ago and flowing into this postseason, when does it click and the heart rate go up because it's so continuous from the regular season where in the last couple of seasons you've had time between the end to start in the postseason?**

MAX FRIED: Don't have much time to think about it, that's for sure. Got in late last night. We knew coming into this what it was going to take and what the schedule was going to look like. It's not like it crept up on us.

We knew we would have to play a team, we'd have to come the next day and play a game. We've been mentally preparing for that. And we're ready to go.

**Q. What did you see from AJ during Spring Training with that change-up? And then go to that start against the Cubs, did you see that progress he had made? Did you think that's what the baseball world will see today?**

MAX FRIED: Seeing just the progress he made from last year when he first got called up, extremely young guy, athletic. Hadn't been pitching for all that long. I think he



started pitching late in high school.

He's got big stuff, big ability. And every time that you talk to him he wants to learn. He wants to engage and just figure out how to get better. And you can just see the maturation from last year to this year, and to be able to come in and make that spot start in Chicago, and he looked unbelievable, and to pitch through the injury that he did, which was pretty insane as well. He's going to be a really good player for a long time, and I'm excited to see what he's able to do on this stage.

**Q. I remember you saying in spring that when you first got called up and debuted you didn't know if it was going to be one start, you didn't know if you were going to stick. I know it's a whirlwind around postseason time but are you able to ever take stock of everything you've accomplished so far and just be grateful to be in this spot again?**

MAX FRIED: I think being able to look out on it, not necessarily. But I think you're always grateful and you don't want to take it for granted that making the playoffs and having the opportunity to play playoff baseball is extremely hard to do. And any chance that you have to do it, you've got to make the most of it and do whatever you can to be out there and go to battle with your guys.

**Q. If you have your choice and you get into the offseason, would you rather stay with Atlanta or what do you want to do?**

MAX FRIED: I haven't even thought about that. I've got a game to pitch tomorrow. As far as the offseason and all that kind of stuff, that's the furthest thing from my mind right now.

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