

NL Wild Card Series:

Braves vs Padres

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

San Diego, California, USA

Petco Park

Atlanta Braves

Manager Brian Snitker

Pregame Press Conference

Q. We saw AJ last week in the hallway waiting for the players to come out. Do you think anytime last week -- he was talking to Schwellenbach and Bobby Witt and those guys -- do you think at any time he knew he was going to start?

BRIAN SNITKER: I don't think he knew until this morning when I called him. I know he didn't. It might have been a shock when we put him on the plane with us.

Q. How did he take that news?

BRIAN SNITKER: AJ? We had two calls because we were meeting after the first time because he and Bryce -- I called them both originally just to let them know they were on. And then I called AJ back because I told him I didn't know what we were going to do -- if we were going to have an opener, if he was going to start it, what route we were going to go.

I called him back and he was excited. He said, "I'm ready". He's pitched in playoff games before. I hope he has fun with it.

Q. Him and Bryce are so different with the repertoire. How did you choose between the two of them?

BRIAN SNITKER: AJ has been throwing pretty well. Just his stuff. He's got stuff. Not that Bryce doesn't, but it was just, I don't know, we just all, kind of a consensus, that we wanted to give it to him.

Q. Did you talk to Chris, and what's his mood? Is it hopeful?

BRIAN SNITKER: He actually felt really good this morning when he woke up. He's not feeling real good. His mood is not good because he wanted to be here. He wanted to be pitching right now. And unfortunately he can't.



It hurt him. He's a guy. I mean, it's tough for him. But he was realistic with us in how he felt.

And the good news is that if we advance, he felt the best he's felt in a while today as he gets treatment and everything. But then again he hasn't got on anything yet as far as throwing a side or whatever for a while.

Q. Does Elder give you a safety net?

BRIAN SNITKER: Just innings, being stretched out. I mean there's no doubt that these bullpen guys have been rode hard for the last week. It's just another guy with some length if we need to.

Q. Because it's been such a whirlwind, 72 hours the weekend and the rain and the doubleheader, does it feel like the playoffs? Does it feel like it extended the season?

BRIAN SNITKER: I think everybody's excited about being here and what we went through to get here. I think you come and I think everybody woke up and went to breakfast, and it's like they felt good about the fact that we're in the playoffs and have a chance to do something.

Q. Whatever happens tonight, just how reassuring does it to have Max going tomorrow especially after how he looked after that last time out?

BRIAN SNITKER: No, it's big knowing we have Max in either an elimination game or a game where we can clinch. Coming off a great start in a big game obviously. It's good to have a guy with Max's experience in the postseason to lean on tomorrow.

Q. Ian Anderson has the experience. How did that portion of the discussion go?

BRIAN SNITKER: Just the fact that Ian hadn't been in the big leagues in a year and a half pretty much. He's continuing to throw in Gwinnett and can still be an option down the road. But I think it's just more that he's in his rehab year was the biggest thing.



Q. For those of us who haven't followed you all year long, what kind of year has it been? It's been an anomaly for the Braves?

BRIAN SNITKER: It's been a tough year. We've experienced a lot of things that we didn't think we would seven months ago when we got to Florida. It's been challenging, as every year is.

It's challenging everybody that's in the postseason right now has went through something and a lot of things over the course of the year to get here. Nobody's immune to it and you just have to deal with it.

I'm proud of our guys how they dealt with all the different situations that we've had and proud of the guys that we brought in that have helped us get here to this point.

Q. Is it, in your mind's eye, strange that you guys won the World Series only a few years ago?

BRIAN SNITKER: I mean, I think that's what we feel like can happen right now. I tell them every year, the number one goal is to win the division to get in the playoffs. If you can't win the division, then get in somehow because you never know what might happen until you get in.

I mean, it could be a play, a hit, anything like that that maybe turns the series around. So we're excited to get this thing rolling.

Q. I know there may not be anything to this but does it give you guys any confidence knowing that the last two teams to represent the National League in the World Series came out of the wild card round?

BRIAN SNITKER: No, yeah, I think we're all aware of that. Like I say, we're just excited about getting in because until you get in, you don't have a chance to do something big. You've got to get in here and give yourself an opportunity.

That's, I think, what we're all looking at. We're coming off a big win yesterday to get here. So I think guys are excited about getting started.

Q. It felt like you guys had the target on the back the last couple of years because of how the regular season went. How different of a dynamic is it to maybe be the underdog?

BRIAN SNITKER: We're definitely the underdog, I think. I read something -- but like I say, you still got to play the games. That's why we play the games. That's why when you start end of March or early April, everybody's all

manned and gunned. That's why we play all these games. Like I say, again, anything can happen once we get going.

Q. I feel like you mentioned a couple minutes ago about momentum, it's such a fickle thing. Yesterday you came off the big wins where you had the lows of the roller coaster loss, and then the wins and the celebration. How do you balance that going into a playoff game?

BRIAN SNITKER: You don't. You put it aside. Today is a new day and we're getting ready to start a playoff series. That seems now like light years away. It's all about today. Again, like we've been doing for the last 10 days, we just want to go 1-0 today.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports