

NL Wild Card Series: Braves vs Padres

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

San Diego Padres

Michael King

Postgame Press Conference

Padres - 4, Braves - 0

Q. Just how did you feel tonight? You had a bunch of strikeouts. You were on today. And just what was the feeling going when you hit the mound?

MICHAEL KING: Felt good. The sweeper felt good in the bullpen. I wanted to use that a little bit more than I normally do. Fastball command was good, glove-side. I think it opened up for more chase over there.

Higgy had a great game calling pitches. And obviously the home run was huge. Just a good game to build off to start this postseason.

Q. Is there a point where you guys know, oh, I'm on tonight? Or how does that go for you guys?

MICHAEL KING: I'd say the adrenaline kicks in as I'm walking in from the bullpen. And then you've got to see how that first pitch is. So it took a little bit of time. I know I had three strikeouts in the first, so Higgy said we have to save some strikeouts.

But then it was just staying on the attack and going after their aggressiveness.

Q. Going back to the Yankees, how much of your relationship with Higgy over there started and then carried over here?

MICHAEL KING: All of it. We played together in the minor leagues. And he's one of my favorite teammates I've had. He's awesome to work with as a pitcher/catcher relationship.

And to see him hit bombs like that, I've been seeing it since 2018. So he's a special character that is needed in every locker room. And he's been a huge part for us this year.



Q. Do you watch what the Yankees are doing? I'm sure you have plenty of friends still over there and they're having a great year this year as opposed to last year. You're kind of like bifurcated on both coasts there?

MICHAEL KING: I still have a bunch of buddies over there. I definitely pay attention to my buddies. I'll usually watch all my guys' outings and then we check in with each other. And they're having a great year. I wish them all the best.

Q. Was there a point where you kind of normalized the game? Like, you settle in the groove and it became just like any other game this season?

MICHAEL KING: Probably not, actually. I talked to Ruben before the game, that I felt like I had success as a reliever because I wanted that big moment. I wanted to come in in big situations.

So I think feeling that pressure from the start of the game was something that I wanted to use to my advantage and build off of. So, feeling the crowd noise, knowing how big postseason games are, it all played into my mentality throughout the whole game.

Q. How did the volume go up when Tatis hit the home run?

MICHAEL KING: I was saying -- when I was sitting in the dugout with Higgy, I couldn't see Tati, and I heard it. And because the crack of the bat was louder than the fans you knew it was hit really hard. And then I looked up and I thought it was going out of the stadium. The thing was mashed.

Huge for me and my attack plan to have a two-run lead right after the first inning. And also huge to get Tati going because he's going to be a huge piece for us this postseason.

Q. Did you notice the "Let's go King" chant or were you made aware of it as you finished the seventh inning?



MICHAEL KING: I did not. Ruben told me about it after the seventh inning. So it was cool.

Q. You spoke how excited you were to go ahead and pitch in a regular postseason game here at Petco Park in front of these fans. What was it like tonight from start to finish? Did it exceed your expectations, is it what you expected?

MICHAEL KING: Totally exceeded it. The towels were really fun. I think the intros were something that I didn't realize was going to be so loud and so cool. Hearing them for literally everybody on our roster, including staff go nuts every time they were announced, it was really special.

And pitching in front of them is something that I absolutely love doing. I'm really happy we had home field for the wild card because I think it's a tough place to play as an opponent.

Q. How much did that Tatis (indiscernible) take some pressure off your shoulders?

MICHAEL KING: I forget what Higgy and I talked about. We were facing Laureano first in the top of the second. And instead of the pitch that we wanted to go to, I said let's just go back to our sinker and stay on the attack. I didn't want to get too cute and throw off-speed pitches.

So the fact that we were able to get the two-run lead that quickly it made it so I could really attack on my fastball and stay ahead in the counts and really put the pressure on.

Q. From the fourth through the seventh innings you allowed just one base runner. Was that about the time you really settled into your game plan?

MICHAEL KING: I felt there were a couple of soft contacts early. It's not like I was getting hit around in the first couple. So I felt like I was able to continue to keep the confidence.

But the pitches that I was missing over the plate were hits in those first couple innings. And I felt like I was really limiting the misses, whether it's pulls across the plate or just leaving them middle.

It allowed Higgy to really go to the game plan because I was able to execute it.

Q. During the broadcast, they showed the quote you had in the New York Post back when the trade happened, that the Padres won. Is this proof of that?

MICHAEL KING: I guess we'll see come Halloween.

Q. You got past 180 innings today. Anyone point that out to you, and how did you feel physically?

MICHAEL KING: I felt great. I was joking, I think I hit a 97 and that's one of the hardest pitches I've thrown all year. Obviously the adrenaline kicks in for that.

But my ultimate goal was getting 200 at the end of the postseason. I think there's still a chance for that.

Q. You became the first pitcher with 12 strikeouts in your first postseason career, no runs, no walks. When you knew that you were going to be opening this game, do you dream it like this?

MICHAEL KING: It definitely was pretty close. I think I dreamed of a perfect game instead of a few hits that I gave up. But I mean to get up 1-0 in a three-game series is huge that was the goal and we accomplished that. So we got our horse Joe tomorrow and I've got a lot of confidence in us tomorrow.

Q. What did it mean to have a performance like this in front of your parents; your parents kept on being shown on the broadcast, what did it mean to have that in front of them?

MICHAEL KING: When I was watching in between innings on the iPad, it would cut from the stands into the pitch I was going to watch -- and Higgy knows my parents well. He goes, "Oh, there's Jim."

It was funny to see my parents' faces, but I'm also trying to lock in. So I'll enjoy it with them now. I hope that it doesn't distract me in the future.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports