

AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

Friday, October 4, 2024
New York, New York, USA
Yankee Stadium

Kansas City Royals Bobby Witt Jr.

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Earlier this week you talked about the environment at Camden Yards and how fun it was. What do you think it'll be like here at Yankee Stadium, and how do you plan to handle that sort of atmosphere?

BOBBY WITT JR: Definitely going to take it all in because everyone talks about playoff baseball in New York. So it's going to be pretty special just being out here and just hearing the crowd and just how much history is behind here and everything. Just going to take it all in and enjoy it.

Q. Speaking of history, the Royals and the Yankees had a really intense playoff rivalry in the late 1970s. Did you ever watch highlights of those type of games that they played, and also, what does it mean to write your own chapter starting tomorrow?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, just from hearing it from George Brett and just how that kind of little rivalry went around.

But yeah, anytime just trying to create your own legacy with the team we have here and how special it is.

Q. What does Salvy Perez mean to this team, and what's the biggest advice he ever gave you regarding the postseason?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, he's the captain of our team, so him just saying it's the same game we've played since we were little. So just know to just go out there and enjoy it, enjoy every step of this, this process and everything, and really just take it all in because you never know whenever you get this opportunity. Guys go through their career and they never really make it to the playoffs, never really get to experience this. So really just take it all in, enjoy every moment.

Q. The Yankees, now with the Orioles and the Astros



out, are considered the huge favorite in the American League. Do you guys look at yourselves as underdogs coming into this series, and how do you approach it?

BOBBY WITT JR: We approach it as any other series. We come in here, playing our game. Worry about one day at a time, focus one step at a time and not really focus on any outside noise. And I know, yeah, we could be the underdogs, whatever, but we have confidence in ourselves that we can just go out there and do our thing.

Q. All during the year being on sort of an unheralded team and a lot of attention is on the Judges and Ohtanis and the Dodgers and the Yankees, does that give you a bit of an edge feeling, overlooked?

BOBBY WITT JR: Not really. We know who we are. We're the Kansas City Royals. We do our thing. We can't control any of that stuff. We just really control what we can and go about our own business.

Q. Since you got to Kansas City, what have you learned about the city and the area that you didn't know before you lived there?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, just how much they love sports, how much they love their teams and how much they love their guys. It's a special city, it's a special town, so I just love being there.

Q. Your name has sort of been linked all year to Aaron Judge's with the MVP race. What do you think of him as a player and how special is it to compete against him on this stage?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, it's awesome being able to kind of compete with him, like you said, on this stage. And just seeing how this year he's had, it's been unbelievable, just both how he is on and off the field. I believe he plays the game the right way. He plays it hard. It's really cool to see a guy like that in a city like this do what he did this year and in years past.

Q. What has impressed you the most about Michael Wacha and what he's been able to do on the mound all



season?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, I think it's just the consistency he's had throughout this entire year and from our whole pitching staff. It's been great to see what they've been doing. They're putting us in each and every game. They're giving us an opportunity to go out there and win. When they do their thing, we've got to go out there and put some runs up on the board knowing they're going to do their thing.

Q. I know it's a small sample size, but you have faced Gerrit Cole in your career. How would you describe the challenge of going up against a pitcher that has the weapons he has?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, this is the fun part of the game, being able to go up against a guy like him and being able to compete. This is what you kind of dream of growing up. You want to face that guy. You want to face the ace. It's going to be a lot of fun.

Q. I know you have a great relationship with Patrick Mahomes. Wondering the last few years seeing him go through these postseason runs if you've been jonesing for something like that, if you're excited to add to your legacy like he has, and if he's given you any advice heading into the postseason?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, 100 percent. He's been great. I've always said we want to do what they did over across the street at Kauffman Stadium, bring the red. They're doing to blue. He always tells me the work you put in before the game, the preparation, that's the biggest thing. Just know the work you do is good enough, you've just got to go out there and be yourselves and not try to do too much, not try to do too little. Just go out there, enjoy the game, just know and make sure you control what you can and make sure you're fully prepared.

Q. You mentioned earlier about playing in New York during the postseason. Is there a game you watched on TV that happened here or some great playoff moments that have really resonated with you that happened in the Bronx over the years?

BOBBY WITT JR: Really a lot of times watching playoff baseball, a lot of games are in New York, so just watching those games growing up. I was a Red Sox fan, my dad was from Massachusetts. But Jeter was my guy, so always watching what he did out here. So it's just really special to see all the postseason moments that he had.

When you think of postseason baseball, you kind of think it's going to be in New York somehow, some shape, some

fashion. So really being able to come out here and kind of bringing the Royals out here and doing this is going to be a lot of fun.

Q. Going back to Judge, what has stood out the most to you about his season?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, I think, like I said, it's about our pitching staff, the consistency of how he's been doing it throughout the whole entire year, staying consistent through it all. And how he is both on and off the field, just a great person and just being able to kind of do that for his team.

Q. With Anthony Volpe, you guys played together when you were younger. What's your relationship like with him and how excited are you to compete with him on this stage?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, we talk a little bit here and there and it was cool growing up and going through all that, like all the high school showcases. And then with Team USA stuff, we were able to play up the middle together and win a gold medal. So it's special just to share those moments with him. And just seeing what he's been doing has been pretty cool.

Q. What did you learn about this Yankees team when you guys were here just a couple weeks ago?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, they're a great team, and we've just got to play our game. Yeah, that's really all there is to it.

Q. How much do you think your speed can play against this club and be a factor in this series?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, I think that's just kind of how we play as a team, the whole Kansas City Royals team. We have a lot of guys with speed, so we're just going to try to play aggressive, play our game, and leave it all out on the field.

Q. Along those lines, talking about the offense, you got the timely hitting in Baltimore, but what's going to be the key to getting the offense back kind of in a groove like you guys were earlier this season?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, like I've been saying, it's just preparing. Making sure we're fully prepared. Get better each and every day starting with today, try to do the little things right. Once we do those things, just put together great at-bats, keep the line moving, and then I think our offense will get going for sure.



Q. You had mentioned with the playoffs, you identified the Yankees as a playoff team you always thought of, but for you as a kid what was your very first memory of the postseason?

BOBBY WITT JR: Man, I can't really remember the first. I was always watching baseball. But I remember in '14 and '15 when the Royals were doing that, how special that was. I was a 14-year-old kid and just being able to remember that is really cool. Just to see what that team did and kind of like the underdog story in ways.

And then just seeing from my dad's experiences in 2001, he was in the playoffs with the Diamondbacks when they beat the Yankees. So hearing that and seeing his World Series ring was really cool, so it's just motivation for me to do what he did.

Q. What have you learned from watching Mahomes on the biggest stage?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, just whenever those big games come up, he takes the next step up. It's just not trying to do too much, too little, but that's how he is. He's a competitor. He wants to win. That's kind of how I try to approach things. I just want to win. Just try to do everything I can, but also really control what I can, not try to do too much.

Q. For you with the breakout season you've had, was there anything specific that kind of stood out to you about how you prepared for this season or why you think you've burst onto the scene like you have this year?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, I think now that it's the third year in the league, I feel like each and every year I'm going to get better and better just with the experience I have in the league. I think it just comes with experience, really, and just being able to be prepared, get into a good routine, know my body, and just being able to control what I can each and every night.

Q. Why do you think a Salvador Perez is a Hall of Famer? What makes him so great?

BOBBY WITT JR: You can look at the stats, you can look at all the stuff he does on the field for the team to win. And then he's going out there each and every day he's playing, he's helping the team defensively, offensively each and every night. He just does it the right way, too, and he's been doing it for so long, and he's just so consistent with it. I just think it's a given.

Q. What's the No. 1 thing that has impressed you

about him that we don't know about?

BOBBY WITT JR: It's just he's the same guy each and every day. He doesn't change who he is no matter who. He could go 0 for 4, 4 for 4, four home runs. He's the same Salvador Perez each and every day and it's so special he does that day in and day. He was the same guy through a 106-loss season and he's the same guy making it to the playoff season. Just seeing that consistency he has each and every day and showing up to the field, first one to the field, last one to leave. It's just one of one.

Q. You guys have been away from home for quite a bit now. How significant is it to have your family members and everyone come on this journey with you? I know they were with you guys in Baltimore when you guys clinched?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, it's special just to be able to have fiance here, parents here and just all the support back home in Texas, back home in Kansas City. So it's really special to enjoy this with a lot more people than just myself.

Q. You mentioned Jeter being your guy. Have you thought at all what it's going to be take to take the same field he won a World Series on for a playoff game?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, that's pretty cool. That's probably the first time hearing that. That's pretty special. Was kind of watching his postseason highlights recently actually, and just being able to take the field that he did is really special. Just kind of gives me chills thinking about it.

Q. What made him your guy?

BOBBY WITT JR: Just the way he played the game, both on and off the field, just how he was. He was my guy and then Pedroia was my guy. Jeter and Pedroia were my two guys. That's why I wore 17 in high school and everything. Got those two jerseys hanging on my wall still back in my room at my parents' house. How they just played the game hard and how they always would rise up to the occasion when needed.

Q. You said you were watching Jeter's postseason highlights recently. How recently, just on YouTube?

BOBBY WITT JR: Yeah, just kind of seeing -- it was actually last night, just looking at it on the train ride and stuff, just being able to see it, just because of how the stadium is, how the fans are. Just wanted to kind of just take it all in perspective and really going out there today in a workout and then tomorrow just taking it all in.



