

# AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

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

## New York Yankees

### Gerrit Cole

#### Workout Day Press Conference

**Q. Gerrit, what has this wait been like for you?**

GERRIT COLE: Well, I mean, I'd rather be playing, I guess, in some regards, but obviously we earned the days off. I've taken the kids to school a few days and put them to bed a few days, so that's been nice.

It's always just like anticipation just builds day by day until you finally get to play.

**Q. When you look at that Royals' lineup, what do you see as the biggest challenge for you?**

GERRIT COLE: Just a lot of quality hitters, good team speed, good power, led by obviously a world champion MVP type Hall of Famer in Salvador, along with one of the most dynamic talents in the game, Bobby Witt. And they have some veteran guys with playoff experience and good savvy towards the bottom of their lineup and on their bench.

**Q. What does the opportunity mean to you to get the ball in Game 1?**

GERRIT COLE: It's always a special feeling getting the ball anytime you take it in Game 1. And it's even more special here with this uniform. It feels good knowing where we started the season and what we've had to do to get to this point, so I'm just very thankful.

**Q. What do you think of this team's chances to make a run here?**

GERRIT COLE: I love them.

**Q. Why?**

GERRIT COLE: There's a lot of good players, good togetherness. We've shown that we can play really good



baseball, and I think we've been waiting for the series, looking forward to getting into the postseason.

**Q. How would you describe this season for you and how meaningful is it for you to be taking the ball in this moment after everything you've been through?**

GERRIT COLE: Yeah, I mean, it's a season of ups and downs, a season of perseverance. You know, I'm thankful that I was able to come through the injury all right and be in a good position, as good a position as I can be at this point and feeling really good going into the most important games of the year.

I mean, I just feel really blessed in that regard, and I'm happy I'm in a position now to be able to contribute. It's taken a while.

**Q. What's it been like to watch Juan Soto for a full 162 here?**

GERRIT COLE: It's been just as much fun. I haven't had to pay for tickets. I get a front row seat, nobody obstructs my view. He just competes on every pitch like the great players that have come before us and like the great players that are in every game. It's fun to watch.

**Q. Going back to the injury in Spring Training, Aaron Boone recently said that there was some uncertainty when you went down. What was your level of concern at the time, and what was your level of certainty you'd get back to this point?**

GERRIT COLE: It would be hard to -- depends on what particular day. You were talking about the uncertainty there for a while. It would be hard to put like a rating on it. It was the first time going through something. So like anybody else, the first time you go through something, you've got to figure out how you're going to navigate it.

Like I said, I just feel really thankful for the whole process. I got a second bite at the apple and I'm in a really good position right now. I'm just overall thankful for it.

**Q. Aaron Boone hit a pretty big playoff home run for**



**this franchise. Does he ever talk about it in any context?**

GERRIT COLE: I don't know. I can't recall him unsolicitedly bringing it up. If it's on replay -- sometimes on rain delays, he'll stick his head around the corner, did you guys see that? It was like, yeah, we saw it, Aaron.

**Q. Why do you think Pham has been a particularly tough out for you over the years?**

GERRIT COLE: He's a great fastball hitter.

**Q. What did you learn from just past matchups with him?**

GERRIT COLE: He's a great fastball hitter. He really is. He's just a tough hitter, covers all parts of the strike zone, doesn't really take a pitch off. He was on the White Sox for a while and they weren't very competitive, yet there's Tommy Pham not taking a pitch off, losing 8, 9-0 in the sixth inning. He just plays every pitch super hard. He's just talented.

**Q. Aaron was in here calling Bobby Witt a complete player, but from a pitcher's standpoint, technically what makes him such a challenge?**

GERRIT COLE: I mean, he just has all the attributes. He's a creative player. He has power, speed, defense, throwing arm. He covers all parts of the strike zone. Hits for average. Doesn't chase a whole lot. What's there not to like?

**Q. When you signed with the Yankees, you famously said "pressure is a privilege," but from a team perspective, knowing that this is the one season you guys are guaranteed to have Soto, how much pressure is there on the Yankees to win it all?**

GERRIT COLE: I don't know. I haven't really thought about it that way. I've kind of just been enjoying it, especially while we have him. And he can't go anywhere right now. We're just living in the moment in that regard.

**Q. Could you talk about how your arsenal has diversified this year? Your other pitches besides a fastball are as important to you and as effective as your fastball. Can you talk about the evolution of that?**

GERRIT COLE: Yeah. I mean, I'm just constantly in the pursuit of efficiency and trying to figure out what's the best way to get the out, whether it's changing speeds or trying different breaks. Certain hitters have specific weaknesses, and depending on what I'm doing that day, if it makes

sense to try to throw something that goes at that weakness, then that's certainly an option to try to collect an efficient out.

But it's a lot of just constantly adjusting more so than it's any concerted effort. It's just trying to take in the information that the game gives you, and like I said, stay curious and be as efficient as you can.

**Q. Watching Michael Wacha over the years, I'm sure you faced him in the Central a few times --**

GERRIT COLE: Almost threw a no-hitter against us in the Division Series.

**Q. What makes him so challenging?**

GERRIT COLE: Steep fastball downhill, attacks the strike zone, had great changeup for the last 12 years. Obviously he's comfortable in big situations. He's got a couple other wrinkles in there, good two-seam, good cutter, good curveball. He's been really good for a long time.

**Q. You've been fortunate enough to pitch in the playoffs a lot in your career, but what's different about that time of year? How much do you enjoy and embrace that challenge?**

GERRIT COLE: Yeah, it's obviously different, but your objective is to hone into your routine and your process during the regular season and then go out and execute it regardless of how different the situation is. Hopefully if you've put yourself in that position plenty of times before -- obviously I have experience, so that helps.

But it's just like any baseball tournament that you get excited for as a 12-year-old. It's like, okay, we get to go try to win something that's really important. It's obviously just higher stakes, higher leverage. At 3-0 you can't assume anybody is taking. In the middle of May, you might assume somebody is taking a 3-0 pitch. You don't necessarily assume that in these situations regardless of the score. Momentum can change on any pitch. It's super exciting.

**Q. What would winning the World Series mean to you?**

GERRIT COLE: I've been trying to do that for a long time. That would be great. That would be amazing. Yeah, we've got a long way to go, though, so don't bring me there. We've got to take care of Saturday first.

**Q. Along those lines of the postseason difference, what's the difference from the crowd here at Yankee Stadium and the fans when you're out there throwing that first pitch for Game 1?**



GERRIT COLE: Yankee Stadium, I feel like the passion comes through in the noise, and the pageantry of the stadium. It's hard not to think about all the great moments of the franchise. And then it's just 50,000 people, so it's a different sound. Sometimes you go to different venues -- like the Dome is closed and it's like a high-pitched like screech. But it's 40,000, 36,000, 38,000. It's open air, it's cold, and it's just -- the sound like fills you from the feet up. It's just a different sound. It's wonderful.

**Q. Does your knowledge of the umpire tendencies factor in at all to pitch selection and placement?**

GERRIT COLE: That's a great question. You know, no. I can't recall studying an umpire's strengths before a game and then going out there and trying to exploit or take advantage of the tendencies.

With any game, you get a certain pitch and you're like, might as well throw one again right there. We've been doing that since 1908. That's pretty standard.

So no, not really. Not really.

**Q. I'm thinking more like you know you have this extra inch on the inside corner or outside corner on that day with that guy.**

GERRIT COLE: Not as preemptively as that. I've taken a look at some of them sometimes to kind of -- added some objectivity to my perspective of them. Like before we didn't have those charts. So it was like, okay, if I can remember this game on this guy, he was sometimes large in this area. Now we have data.

I don't want to go out there and know that the guy is tight and expect him to be wide because that's just kind of managing my expectations. But I wouldn't say that I've never really had a tactical, like, type of situation where it was like, okay, we're going to attack the umpire's strike zone more so than the hitter.

But it's like sometimes when you get a call on the outside corner way off, it's like, well, maybe we try that again. But again, that's novel stuff. That's playing baseball A.

**Q. Do you consider the mound, that area, like your laboratory, like your classroom? Are you most comfortable when you're just getting ready to pitch?**

GERRIT COLE: Yeah. I mean, I like the mound. I like the mound here. Danny does a great job.

I think sometimes we refer to it as an office a bit. Maybe

that's a bit grown up. But laboratory, I guess laboratory works. You get comfortable out there. That's where we play all the time, so I'd imagine like any player kind of steps into their zone and they have a level of comfort or they have a level of familiarity. Like you feel at home. You've gotten in the zone in this particular spot on the field so many times.

Back in college we used to talk about you step into the circle, you step out of the circle kind of a thing.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

