

AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

Saturday, October 5, 2024
New York, New York, USA
Yankee Stadium

New York Yankees

Jake Cousins

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. What told you were good to go?

JAKE COUSINS: I threw lives a couple days ago and felt pretty solid. Stuff felt like it was there. Then responded pretty well yesterday. After that, I felt like I was good to go.

Q. You obviously played in those lives and faced some hitters, but it hasn't been a game situation for you in quite some time. Any concern on your part about what it's going to be like getting back out there and whether or not you're going to be sharp?

JAKE COUSINS: I feel like for me, it's just all about competition, and I faced hitters and that's like -- I can get going. As soon as a guy steps in the box, I'm kind of ready to go. So I feel like I got some cobwebs off. Luckily I wasn't down for all that long. Only took five, six days off of throwing. I feel like the ramp-up doesn't have to be too long in that case.

Q. That Seattle game, you had mentioned about guarding against throwing your hards. Did you feel like the velo was back up to where you needed it to be during the live on Thursday?

JAKE COUSINS: Yeah, I was probably one or two tick down from where I am in game. And that was kind of my biggest hurdle I wanted to get to was making sure I had the velo there because I didn't want to put myself or the team in any position where I'm not throwing my best. Because we've got a lot of guys that can get guys out in there, so I want to make sure if I'm going to be ready that I'm ready to go.

Q. At any point this year have you reflected on the alternative universe where you didn't get traded at the end of March from the White Sox to the Yankees and what that would have entailed?



JAKE COUSINS: Yeah, I mean, my wife and I were actually talking about it. Yeah, it was just a totally different scenario. Like if I would have looked back and saw the year and someone would have said this is how it plays out, I would have signed up right away.

To be in New York playing for the Yankees in October is a dream for probably almost everyone in baseball, so I'm really excited to feed off the energy tonight and experience it.

Q. Looking back to the postseason game three years ago, did you feel like you had to treat it like any other game or boost the adrenaline or focus or was it just another game?

JAKE COUSINS: It's a little bit of a mix. I think you get a little bit more nervous before you go in, but once you go in there and you toe the rubber and see the guy in the box, it ends up it's the same game. And that's kind of how you treat it, that it's the same game, not any bigger. It's a lot of fun. You just got to control your emotions out there, take your breaths and just attack.

Q. This year pitching here, was there more adrenaline when you came in on nights that the ballpark was full and the crowd was loud?

JAKE COUSINS: Yeah, this place gets going pretty loud. It's a lot of fun pitching here. Like I said earlier, competition for me, all I need is the guy in the box. And then when there's people here, it just makes it a little more fun. I'm definitely going to be feeling adrenaline tonight. It'll be fun. Just got to control the emotions and try and treat it like it's just another outing and just attack.

Q. What do you think it is that allowed you to build the trust to carve out such an important role in this bullpen over the course of the season?

JAKE COUSINS: I think it's just feedback from coaching staff, being on a team that you're comfortable. The guys in the clubhouse are great. We've all got each other's backs.

I think the combination of those two things and just kind of



building confidence from having some good outings and stacking on top of each other has just kind of built a comfort level to kind of allow yourself to go for it.

Q. As far as your availability for this series, do you feel like you can pitch back-to-back days and just business as usual?

JAKE COUSINS: Yeah, I think that was a big reason we wanted to throw live. And luckily I didn't take that much time off, so I can just be full go. Luckily with the scheduling in this first series, we're playing three games in six days. We won't really have to go back to back until the back half of the series. And at that point I'll be built up even more to where I'll be pretty normal.

Q. You said you talked to your wife about the alternate reality of being on the White Sox. I'm wondering if you and Tim Hill have laughed about it at all. Can you appreciate the reality that two of the most important guys in a playoff bullpen were on a 121-loss team in Spring Training?

JAKE COUSINS: Yeah, I mean, it's one of those things. It's a blessing to be in the Big Leagues regardless of where you are. I didn't make the team, he did, so he had a little bit more of in the trenches there. But yeah, the fact that both of us are in this bullpen and we play important roles, yeah, it's a very cool scenario to get in a good situation and kind of just get to run.

Q. Just overall what are the strengths of this bullpen going into the postseason?

JAKE COUSINS: I think we're just a strong unit. We've known each other, we all have each other's backs. If one guy goes in there and doesn't get the job done, the next guy will. We all believe that. We've got a lot of swing-and-miss stuff. We've got soft contact. We can match up well with left and right. I think we've been trusting each other all year, and I think that's just what we're going to continue doing.

Q. What adjustments do you have to make, if any, when you're pitching on a second or third day in a row or four out of five?

JAKE COUSINS: Like in game there's no difference. A lot of times when you get out there and the adrenaline hits, you don't feel any different. If anything it's in your pregame work, maybe you'll not throw as many balls in warm-ups or you'll get a little bit more work in the training room or monitor your workload. But in terms of once you're in the game, it's all go, 100 percent.

Q. Do you notice any difference in your pitches when that happens?

JAKE COUSINS: Not really. Maybe over the course of a few months of heavy workload it kind of labors on you, but in a short spurt, I think you can kind of manage it.

Q. We've already seen in a couple of the series where managers have quicker hooks on starting pitchers in playoff games than usual. Does that change anything in the bullpen, guys on guard earlier in games than maybe in the regular season?

JAKE COUSINS: Yeah, I mean, it's a little different brand of baseball. I think guys might just be a little more -- obviously it's the playoffs so people are going to be more locked in from pitch one. But we've got a really good starting staff, so we're going to trust and lean on those guys. You have to lean on starting pitching if you're going to go a long way in the postseason, which is our goal. You can't really just shoot from the hip the whole time.

But yeah, whenever Booney puts us in, we're ready to go.

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