

AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

Sunday, October 6, 2024
New York, New York, USA
Yankee Stadium

Kansas City Royals

MJ Melendez

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Just wondering what you guys can take from yesterday. The offense in general, I know it's not the way you wanted that game to go, but as you try to get the offense going, the swings you guys were able to take off of Cole.

MJ MELENDEZ: Yeah, obviously it's good for us, especially coming off a series where we didn't score very many runs and we kind of had the pitchers win that series for us. Obviously Gerrit Cole being one of the best arms in the Big Leagues, for us to have some good swings off of him, especially in that first inning -- nothing to show for it -- but in the first inning, we had some really good swings and that set the tone. I feel like we put together some good at-bats yesterday.

Q. Did you need that kind of momentum? I know you guys have been working to get the offense going. Did you need to see some of that, even though the end result wasn't what you wanted?

MJ MELENDEZ: Yeah, I think that definitely builds confidence for us moving forward. Obviously that's their No. 1, and I feel like we had some really good at-bats. Even just taking advantage of the mistakes, pitches that he didn't want to make.

I just feel like also, every time that they put an inning together, we were able to bounce back and put an inning together ourselves. It just showed the fight that we continue to have.

Q. Is being aggressive a part of you guys' game plan of attack moving forward, like early in counts against a great Yankees pitching staff that they have?

MJ MELENDEZ: Yeah, of course. I think anytime you're facing elite pitchers, the last thing you want to do is get down in the hole early. If that means either jumping on the



first pitch that you see in the zone or even -- having long at-bats is not a bad thing either, getting their pitch count up. Obviously just trying to be in control of the at-bat and control the at-bat, and whenever they make mistakes, just try and take advantage of those.

Q. Can you describe the feeling of rounding the bases in Yankee Stadium in a big playoff series to give your team the lead after a big home run?

MJ MELENDEZ: Yeah, it was definitely pretty cool, very surreal moment. It was pretty neat to hear the crowds' kind of silence as you're rounding the bases. I think that's awesome, and it's something that we look forward to doing again on Monday.

We were able to do it in Baltimore, and it was pretty cool. That place was super loud. Both stadiums very loud. Just to kind of hear it go silent, it means you're doing something right.

Q. From your vantage point, did you have any view of the tag play at second base?

MJ MELENDEZ: Yeah, it was tough to see in real time, obviously. I'm far away. We all see the replay on the scoreboard and hope that it goes our way. Obviously we saw it differently than what ended up being called. Obviously a little unfortunate, but something that -- we hope to put ourselves in a better position next game moving forward to where hopefully it's a little bit better than a one-run game and in our favor and we can make up for it.

Q. Is it hard to believe with the dozens of cameras everywhere there wasn't really one clear shot of both the foot and the glove at the same time?

MJ MELENDEZ: Yeah. I mean, it's tough. Not sure where every single camera is pointed to or aimed to, but obviously we wish it would have gone our way. Thought he was out, but they viewed it otherwise. Hopefully we can have a couple things go our way in these next couple games and stuff that can kind of swing the momentum towards our side.



Q. Going back to even last year when Q was first hired, he was pretty open about using his bench and the platoons and different matchups. Now you've been with him for two years. I wonder is that easier to embrace now given that he's been so consistent with the way that he uses his bench and the entire roster?

MJ MELENDEZ: Yeah, I feel like we kind of have an idea of what's going to happen in certain situations. Obviously every situation, every game is different, dictates different things. Sometimes if it's early in the game, may not be pinch-hit for just because you never know who can come in the bullpen later in the game.

We do have a feel for it. I think at the end of the day everybody is just -- wants us to get the win, wants the job to get done.

I think we're definitely a little bit more used to it and kind of understand in certain situations, one of those is going to be made.

Q. Did it take a while to get used to it? Thinking back to last year, he was pretty consistent with it. But it is different from what you guys are used to or just baseball in general?

MJ MELENDEZ: Yeah, yeah, it's definitely a little different. You see across the league, it's happening a lot. A lot of managers are starting to do it.

But I think it just depends on certain situations, kind of flow of the game. Obviously we've seen that guys having a good day at the plate, doesn't matter who he's facing, right or left. I think that's just kind of the way the -- that's going to dictate what happens.

Obviously certain pitchers are going to be tougher than others, right on right, left on left or whatnot. Or even guys are right on left tough, or left on right that are a little bit tougher. Guys with diverse splits.

I think just kind of the way situations are going to kind of dictate everything.

Q. A lot is made of the schedule and how different it is in the postseason compared to the regular season. How do you guys look at having this random off-day between Game 1 and Game 2? Is it a good thing? Is it strange? How do you view it?

MJ MELENDEZ: It's definitely different. Obviously used to playing pretty much every single day with the rare off-day every one and a half weeks or so. It's definitely different,

but we're just going to use it to our advantage, take a day to relax, kind of reset and attack tomorrow head on.

It's definitely different, but I think it can be really good for us.

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