

# AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

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

## New York Yankees

### Aaron Boone

Workout Day Press Conference

**Q. What is it about Oswaldo Cabrera? Is there anything he does behind the scenes or anything in particular that really allowed you to earn his trust?**

AARON BOONE: I think he's been earning that over the last few years. If you start with his love and passion of the game, that shines through. I think to our fan base, it certainly does with us, to watch him work behind the scenes, always making sure he's prepared at different positions. So if I throw him in different situations, like he's done that and ready for it, eager.

I remember when he first came up, and I remember somebody asking what's your favorite positions. Whatever one I'm playing that day. He lives that, and he works incredibly hard. He loves his team. He's a great teammate. Whatever role he's in, he brings a joy to the ballpark with him every day, and ready for any and all roles. That's who he's been and who he's shown us to be for a few years now.

**Q. How difficult is it just to stay ready like he does for every position?**

AARON BOONE: I mean, I'm sure it's different for every guy, but that's what the good utility players do. The really good ones like Oswaldo are able to do that. You can sit over there for a week and not get any action, and you've got to be ready. That's what being a utility player sometimes is in the Big Leagues or stepping in at one position for an extended period like he did to start the year a lot at third base for us. He's just a really good pro.

**Q. Aaron, we know why Stanton kind of limits himself on the base paths because of the lower body injuries that he's suffered, but yesterday it kind of cost you guys with the grounder to third and Cabrera's double. Is that just the only gear he has at this point, or is there a time when he can give you a little bit more, and**



**is it realistic to do what you guys want to do with him being kind of half speed out there?**

AARON BOONE: He's more than half. But it is, it's a controlled gate that I know he's got to get into, and he's burned himself when he tries to throttle back or up or down. That's when he knows he's been cost. It's something you've kind of got to live with, and whether you've seen it over the years with a particular player that is incredibly slow that's an impactful player, it's just something we've got to live with.

**Q. Even in the postseason it's not worth an extra bit of -- an attempt at more speed on certain plays?**

AARON BOONE: He's got to do what he's got to do. I think he's trying to get to what is his top speed in a fluid way as best he can.

**Q. I'm just wondering in retrospect now that you've had time to digest it, do you think that Cole's struggle -- obviously he wasn't the same last night as he was against the Orioles in the previous start. Do you think having nine days off may have affected him?**

AARON BOONE: Always possible. But that's what you've got to deal with sometimes this time of year in these playoff series. You're going to have sometimes unusual breaks. It doesn't mean you can't go out and dominate, too.

It's kind of -- it's not always the answer. It could certainly be part of it. Just like we talk -- a lot of talk going into this series, what's the layoff going to be. Ultimately is that what affects you, is that what made you win or struggle or whatever it may be. That's not necessarily the answer.

But there's certainly something to pitching on your normal five, six days. Now, I will say he threw a live inning on his fifth day in between starts to try and keep that rhythm and sharpness.

It's certainly possible it could have been a factor, but it doesn't mean if we get into another point at this playoffs where he has seven or eight days or whatever it may be, just because of circumstances, it doesn't mean he can't go



out and dominate like he does oftentimes.

It's just part of what we've got to deal with at this time of the year.

**Q. Last night the crowd, even by Yankee Stadium standards, it's really loud and energetic. There was sort of a different feel even in decibel level. How much of an asset do you think that is or was, and do you think it's possible that kind of energy can unnerve a visiting team?**

AARON BOONE: Oh, yeah, for sure. I think there's always that possibility in the playoffs. Not always so much a team, but sometimes it can affect an individual coming in.

You always hope that that can play some kind of home-field advantage for you. I thought the crowd was awesome last night. There's almost like a white-outfield to it because there was so much white in the stands. I definitely think our guys fed off it a little bit, and I think I would like to think had a factor in us winning the ballgame.

**Q. There was a report that Nestor was supposed to throw today. Did that happen, and if so, how did it go?**

AARON BOONE: Yeah, I think he's walking out to play catch right now.

**Q. Do you think if that goes well, he could still be a realistic option later on in the postseason?**

AARON BOONE: I don't know. I mean, I'd be totally speculating. He's not throwing to not potentially be an option, so we'll see.

**Q. What was he scheduled to do today?**

AARON BOONE: Play catch today. It was his first day of playing catch again.

**Q. Just 20, 30 throws?**

AARON BOONE: I don't know the volume.

**Q. With Gleyber from getting benched multiple times to getting demoted out of the lead-off spot to begin the season, do you feel like he's someone who handles tough coaching well? I know in the past he's mentioned how much he appreciated when mendi was here when he would get on him. Do you feel like that's something that kind of gets him in the right frame of mind when he is being coached hard?**

AARON BOONE: Yeah, you like to think so. You like to

think every player takes hard coaching well and grows from it.

I think where we're at now with Gleyber, I just feel like he's had a lot of experiences now as a big league player, and you're seeing the result of an experienced player, and that's what it looks like right now.

He's certainly been through a lot this year. Some of the struggles certainly in the first half to the season, to be able to persevere from that, I always think those are valuable things to go through and add to your kind of experience bag and hopefully continue to push you to be a well-rounded player.

All I can say is I feel like he's in a really good head space and obviously playing at a really high level for us. But I'd like to think he takes to it.

**Q. When Oswaldo was in here he said that Rizzo the last few days has been like a Mr. Miyagi for him and Berti and Rice. What specifically have you seen from Rizzo? I know you said he was impactful even if he want going to play, but what has that meant for those guys learning first base and getting comfortable?**

AARON BOONE: I think so many guys look up to him in that room, and obviously the level of first base play that he's played now throughout his life and throughout his career as a Gold Glover, as a World Series champion, just the amount of experience he has and then the kind of teammate he is, to kind of want to just share whatever he can, help wherever he can I think means a lot to those guys, and I'd like to think is another piece in some of the value that he brings.

**Q. With Carlos Rodon, was there a point this season where you realized it was going to be a better year, that he was going to be a better player than he was last season?**

AARON BOONE: I don't recall a specific moment in time. I know just going through the winter, and I know his level of commitment and accessibility and communication with strength and conditioning, training staff, pitching group, like he was -- you could tell, locked in, really motivated. We saw that unfold in spring. I felt like he had a great routine and process and workmanlike way about him that you saw right away in Spring Training.

Obviously getting off to a good start I think certainly helped.

But I think the work he did and the process he created and -- I've said a lot with you guys, chopping wood, I also think set him up to navigate a tough stretch of the season, too,

where he went -- whether like a month there where he had some rough starts.

But because he had a really good foundation laid, he was able to kind of power through that and have the ability to come through that, and I feel like finish the season really strong to where I know he's going to walk out there tomorrow night whatever happens with a lot of confidence.

**Q. You had said that the situation would be fluid, but fair to say Verdugo will be back in there tomorrow?**

AARON BOONE: Yes.

**Q. Rodon doesn't have a ton of playoff experience. How do you think he's going to react to that kind of atmosphere tomorrow?**

AARON BOONE: Yeah, I think there's always an intensity that Carlos, any game he's competing in, I would expect that to be there. Part of that is also harnessing that and channeling that in all the right kind of ways, so hopefully he can do that tomorrow night.

**Q. Watching Soto this year, this is the second time in the last three years you've had a guy go into free agency, a star player have a sensational year. Is that just a great player having a great season. Is it more to that, being able to channel what's going to happen? What do you think of the way he's handled this, and is it similar to what you saw from Judge?**

AARON BOONE: I think it's different in that I think obviously both guys handled it incredibly well. What Aaron did in his free agent year, a little different just because Aaron was entrenched in the organization and came up through the system and obviously established himself as a great player here and the face of our franchise long before that free agent year, whereas Juan came in and had to assimilate to a new situation, new team, new teammates, but in both cases they've gone out and had maybe their best seasons to date.

But I think it's just a tribute to how great a players both guys are, but also the makeup that both guys have. I think it starts first and foremost with a love the game. You can tell both those guys, Aaron and Juan, love baseball. They love all that goes with it. They love the grind of it. They love the toughness of it.

Even for those guys, it's never easy. Hitting is not easy. You're still, even when you're the best of the best, you're failing a lot. But I think it's a testament to how good they are and their makeup of being able to really stay present with what they're doing and not getting ahead of yourself of

what's to be.

I think there's a peace within them that that will handle itself in its due time when that time comes. My job is to focus on the here and now. I think both guys do a good job of that.

**Q. When you're focusing on the here and now, during the downtime, how often do you go through in your mind and go, wow, his price has gone higher, what's he going to do? I know you're focused on the team but you have a long time in a hotel or home, and does it go through your mind what's going to happen here?**

AARON BOONE: I mean, probably a little bit at different times. Like I wonder what happens or what it's going to end up being in the end. But you also know being in this game long enough that, who knows. Every winter is different. Sometimes it takes the right people being in the mix to what the final number is going to be and whatever it is he's going to be in a pretty good spot.

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