

AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

Monday, October 7, 2024
New York, New York, USA
Yankee Stadium

New York Yankees Manager Aaron Boone Postgame 2 Press Conference

Royals 4, Yankees 2

Q. It really seemed like Rodón was cruising in that fourth inning, hit a wall. What were you seeing from him in the fourth that really --

AARON BOONE: Yeah, his stuff was excellent tonight, and then Salvy leading off the inning was the first guy that felt like he got behind. I felt he was pounding the strike zone with really good stuff all night. He falls behind him, and from there started making some mistakes with his secondary just in the heart of the plate.

Looked like Salvy jumped him. Gurriel two-strike hit. He gets Massey and then gets ahead of Pham, looked like hung a breaking ball to him that he shot to the right center. Gets Renfroe and then can't put away Hampson.

Just a tough inning where his command got away from him, especially in the secondary. Because stuff-wise he was excellent tonight, but then all of a sudden just a little scattered there.

Q. Is it kind of a little perplexing to you how quickly it happens with him sometimes?

AARON BOONE: I don't know. I mean, I don't know if that was in line with a lot of outings he's had this year. He's had a handful of outings where he's struggled, but I don't think it necessarily looked like that, either. Usually when he's got it working, he continues. And obviously in the playoffs you have a shorter leash to not be able to really work through things.

Just really some mistakes, especially with some two strikes there.

Q. How crucial would it be to win Game 3?



AARON BOONE: We've got to win two more, so as crucial as that.

I mean, it's the playoffs. Every day is crucial. Hopefully we regroup tomorrow and go take care of Game 3. That's the next thing in front of us.

Q. What have you seen all year from your team in terms of bouncing back?

AARON BOONE: Great. I think that's been a hallmark of our success, especially after some difficult ones where we've had a win or lost something late or just a tough gut punch. These guys are really confident and understandably so, and we'll be ready to go in Game 3.

Q. There's obviously a lot of pressure that comes with being the Yankees this time of year. Do you ever see that pressure, or is that pressure at risk of affecting the quality of people's at-bats?

AARON BOONE: I mean, that's what everyone deals with in the playoffs. It's not just us. That's playoff baseball. The heat is turned up, and you've got to be able to slow things down a little bit.

Again, I thought tonight we took a lot of tough at-bats again, kind of in line with last night. Ragans is really tough. We knocked him out of there after four just because we're patient and having quality at-bats. We just couldn't punch through tonight again, really break something open or put one in the seats to where we throw a crooked number up there.

But they have a lot to do with that, too, with some of the pitchers they run out at you. But tonight was close but not good enough.

Q. What have you seen out of Judge's at-bats through the first two games? It looked like tonight in particular he missed a couple pitches right down the middle.

AARON BOONE: Which at-bat?

Q. The Zepa at-bat, he had two sinkers right down the



plate.

AARON BOONE: I mean, baseball. It's hitting. Got a base hit and a walk in a game. I get it, but hitting is hard. You're not going to hold him down long.

Q. Do you feel like you've missed a couple opportunities with just the amount of traffic you've had through two?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, that's what we were just talking about. We scored six runs last night, tonight two. Had more opportunities than that to really make it a really big offensive night. Weren't able to do that. Part of that is we're going up against one of the better pitchers in the league tonight.

We made it tough on him, gave ourselves a chance, but couldn't break through with our bullpen. But that's where we've got to punch through.

Especially if they're going to keep the ball in the ballpark against you, you've got to take advantage of opportunities when you get them. The good thing is we're giving ourselves those opportunities. Hopefully the more we can do that, we can break one open at some point.

Q. I was going to ask you about Judge, too. He was on base twice today, once last game. No damage, and they really pitched him well in the regular season, too, one home run. Is this just good pitching? Is it just a small sample size? You said nothing gets in his head. What's your thoughts on how they've pitched him this year?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, I mean, they can pitch. Wacha is a tough matchup, Ragans is another tough matchup. He's been on base three times in the first two games. It's not that easy. It's baseball. Hitting is a game of failure. He's going to get more opportunities, and I'll continue to place my bets on him.

Q. What did you say to Berti when he got back to the dugout after the Melendez double play?

AARON BOONE: Heck of a play. I thought he was great over there tonight and at the plate. He had terrific at-bats all night. The first time he struck out, I felt like he walked on the 2-2 pitch in off the plate, lined out to left, lined out to right, and then a really good at-bat against Erceg there to give us a chance in the ninth.

But he had that first play there, the squibber, sneaky tough play, especially when you're not over there a lot where that ball's spinning on you. Thought he handled himself really

well tonight over there and just all around gave us quality at-bats, too. That was good to see.

Q. The bullpen was excellent today again. That's eight shutout innings in the series, in the two games. How important is it for the starter in Game 2 to go a little bit deeper?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, you always want the starting to get a little bit deeper. Gerrit got into the sixth on a night when he struggled a little bit. Tonight obviously Carlos was rolling but had some hiccups there in the fourth inning. You hope that's the case. You hope Clarke can go out there and...

But even coming out of an off-day, you feel like you get to the middle innings, we run out our guys and feel good about closing out a game. Hopefully Clarke gets us off on the right footing on Wednesday.

Q. On the Hampson hit, it looked like Jazz was out of position there on the relay. Is that what you saw?

AARON BOONE: Yeah.

Q. What do you think the impact was of that on the inning?

AARON BOONE: Well, I mean, it allowed the guy to get to second there. Now, you don't know if we're going to cut it or not because you're listening, is there a play at the plate. But that's a play where he's got to be in the cut position. That's one of the things I worry about with some of our guys that are new to first base or new to third base.

For me playing third base all my life, it's just instinctive that you flow there. Those are the little things that have to become instinctive and that's kind of where the work in progress comes a little bit. But yeah, he's going to be in that cut position.

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