

AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

Tuesday, October 8, 2024
Kansas City, Missouri, USA
Kauffman Stadium

Kansas City Royals Seth Lugo

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Anything you take away from the game a month ago against the Yankees in the Bronx where I believe you had seven innings, ten strikeouts?

SETH LUGO: Well, a month ago, that's a long time. Felt like I was pretty focused that game and executing pitches, and that's what I'm going to try to do tomorrow.

Q. This is your first year in Kansas City, but wondering your impressions of the fan base so far and how they've embraced you and what you're looking forward to pitching in front of them tomorrow.

SETH LUGO: It's been great. They bring a lot of energy. I'm excited to see a full house tomorrow. I'm excited to see how loud it's going to get. They've been behind us all year, and we couldn't be where we're at without them.

Q. Do you remember watching those 2014 and 2015 teams, what it was like here back then?

SETH LUGO: Yeah, I remember watching some of those games. It was pretty crazy. I know they're a good fan base. They understand the game. They're going to bring it tomorrow. It's going to be really exciting.

Q. How does it feel to be back in Kansas City after such a long road trip, and what are your takeaways from that road trip?

SETH LUGO: It feels great. It feels like we've been gone for a month. I'm excited to get back.

I think with how busy the past couple weeks have been, getting home tonight and having a nice home-cooked meal, it's going to treat me good.

Q. Do you remember the feeling when you left? You guys had lost that home stand and now you come



back here in the playoffs.

SETH LUGO: Yeah, that was a tough last home stand. But playing in October, that was the ultimate goal, and here we are, so embrace it.

Q. What stands out to you about the bullpen in the playoffs so far?

SETH LUGO: You know, they're out there working. They're making good pitches. They're getting big outs for us. I know it hasn't been the easiest year for a lot of those guys, but our whole staff, we trust them. When we hand them the ball, we know they're going to go out there and do their job. That's what they've been doing.

Q. You guys have had a lot of turnover from the first time you saw the Yankees, and just a month ago there's been turnover with different people in different roles in the bullpen. How has that been as a starter, to kind of watch that process find its way through to where it is right now?

SETH LUGO: I mean, it's really cool. With Erceg closing out games for us, his stuff is electric. I feel like any of those guys can come in whatever part of the game and they're going to execute pitches, and they've got really good stuff.

As a starter, handing the ball off to those guys, it's an easy thing to do, and you feel great when they take the route behind you. For me, it's a matter of being aggressive and trusting if anything happens those guys are going to come in and bail me out.

Q. There are a couple of big names on each side who are struggling so far. As a pitcher, can you sense that and use that against the hitter?

SETH LUGO: Well, I don't think in their mind they're struggling. I think pitchers are executing pitches against them, and that's key to pitching. That's my goal for tomorrow.

Q. Seems like you have a patient lineup and take a lot



of pitches, work the count a lot. What's the key to attacking that?

SETH LUGO: Well, executing pitches. You stay in the strike zone. If you leave it over the middle of the plate, they're going to put a good swing on it, but if it's borderline they're probably going to take it. If you can get some calls, then you put the pressure on them. That's pitching.

Q. Just to piggyback off of that, you talked a lot about first-pitch strikes throughout the season. How important will that be, particularly against Judge and Soto, and trying to neutralize them?

SETH LUGO: I think it's very important. They're some of the best mistake hitters in the league. And when you get ahead 0-1, you put the pressure on them, then it's easier to execute pitches when you're ahead in the count as opposed behind in the count. Behind in the count is when you make mistakes, when you leave stuff over the middle of the plate for them to hit. So getting ahead, that's really important with this lineup.

Q. Everyone watches TV and they see the strike box up there, strike or not strike. Do you do pre-scouting on who the home plate umpire is going to be, any of that stuff?

SETH LUGO: Going into a start we may mention who it is and if he's got a little biased on one side of the plate or another or up or down. At the end of the day you're not going to try to throw those pitches out of zone and hope you get a call. You're still going to try to make pitches on the corners, on the edges. And if you can do that early in the count, then you don't have to throw over the middle of the plate. Yeah, we're a little conscious of who's umpiring.

Q. What have you learned about yourself going through this season? It's a transformation back into a starter which is what you used to be. What have you learned about yourself as you've gone and have your results gotten better at the end of the season than maybe in the middle a little bit?

SETH LUGO: I mean, I don't know. I don't know how much I've learned right now. I'm not really focused on that. I know it's a long season. I know no matter what happens, you've got to show up the next day and prepare and perform. Like you like to say, it's all about today, not yesterday or tomorrow.

Q. How organically did you and Salvy's relationship blossom over the course of the season that you guys can have that chemistry to go into a game of this magnitude tomorrow and thrive?

SETH LUGO: Well, I think we're both professionals. We go about scouting and our pitch sequencing a little different, but I think we respect each other enough to have that blend together instead of it being a fight. It's more of an effort to kind of find a middle ground, and I think that helps us out a lot. It's kind of hard to explain, but it's pretty cool when it comes together.

Q. On that front, you've pitched to Fermin a lot this year too just because they've gotten Salvy all that rest. How do you factor that in when you're pitching to different catchers and maybe those discussions about which sequences and all that?

SETH LUGO: Well, it's a little easier with Freddy because when he's not catching, we sit there on the bench and talk about what I would do here, what he would do here. When Salvy is not catching, he's playing. We don't get to have those conversations in between games because he's playing every day.

Like I said, the professionalism and the respect we have for each other, it kind of comes together. We don't really have to think about it.

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