

AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

Wednesday, October 9, 2024
Kansas City, Missouri, USA
Kauffman Stadium

New York Yankees

Juan Soto

Pregame 3 Press Conference

Q. You've faced Lugo in the past and had some success. What's the biggest key in facing a guy like that?

JUAN SOTO: I would say just be ready for the mistakes. We all know he has like nine pitches. Try to focus on what's on and try to don't miss whenever he's going to make mistakes. Because at the end of the day, he's going to try to be here and there, but he's going to make mistakes, and that's what we've got to do and capitalize with that.

Q. How challenging is it to get ready for someone who has nine pitches?

JUAN SOTO: You know, it's kind of tricky because you never know what's going to be working that day. But I will say I just prepare myself to be ready and to be able to attack and then go out there for the game. Definitely going to see what he's done to me in the past, so just try to do that and then go from there.

Q. Is it hard to sit on one particular pitch when he has nine pitches that he throws?

JUAN SOTO: Yeah. I mean, at the end of the day, you've got to go with his best pitch. I feel if you're ready for the fastball, he won't be able to beat you with anything else unless you go out of the strike zone. I think that's got to be the plan with a guy who has that many pitches, just sit on the fastball, hit the hardest pitch, and then adjust to anything else.

Q. Does that change your preparation in any way when he has so many different pitches? Do you study film?

JUAN SOTO: No, like I say, I prepare myself. I'm going to put myself ready to go out there and do the same thing I've



been doing all year long and try to focus on one pitch and try to do damage.

Q. You won a championship in Washington as a young player and you've had a postseason with San Diego where you didn't get there. What in your experience are the factors that matter most at this time of year?

JUAN SOTO: I would say having a short memory would be really good in these situations. Whatever is in the past is in the past. Forget about it, try to move forward. Have that energy every day. That's going to be one of the factors that are going to help you to go all the way. And never give up. Just come every day. It doesn't matter what happens. It doesn't matter the score of the game or anything. Anything can change in any moment.

I would say that's one of the biggest things, the energy that we brought every day on that field and how positive we are to win a game. It's going to be the most important thing.

Q. How did winning so young -- do you think about that a lot? Is that a goal that you always know how great it is to win so you understand how important it is? How does that stay with you?

JUAN SOTO: How fun that race was is one of the things that sticks with me. It's one of the things that you want to keep with you and you want to do it again and again and again.

For me, I learned a lot from it. I have a lot of veteran players with me when I won it. I learned a lot of things from those guys. Now I'm trying to bring that to the team I'm playing and trying to help the whole team to win a championship because I think it's a great experience.

It's one of the biggest things in the Big Leagues, when you win a championship. For the city, for your family, for everybody, I think it's one of the biggest things you can ever do for your team and your career.

Q. Does every pitcher make mistakes no matter how good they are?



JUAN SOTO: They do. They do. At the end of the day, a lot of them get away with it. Some of them don't. That's the way you've got to look at it. They make 100-some pitches every game, and I'm telling you, one of those is going to hang in the middle. You've just got to be ready for it.

Q. Your 2019 team that did win a championship was very star-driven from the top. Do you see a comparison to this group that you're very dependent on those great star players at the top to play well in big games?

JUAN SOTO: First of all, I would say in 2019 as a team, we always came through, definitely our big stars had big moments, as we all expected. But at the end of the day, it's all about the whole team. We can't lean on one player that he's going to do everything for us to take us all the way. We've got to do it as a team.

At the end of the day, when you look at that run, that race, every single guy in that lineup and in their starting rotation, bullpen and everything, they had their moment. They had their moment where they had to show up for the team, and they did. That's how we make it all the way.

I feel like, yeah, you're going to have star players that you want them to perform, but at the end of the day, it's all about the team. And every single guy in that clubhouse, they have to have their moment to help the team to go all the way.

Q. What do you think the key is that you've had a great season and a free agent year? Judge did the same thing a couple years ago. But it doesn't happen for everyone. Aaron Boone was saying that he thought you and Aaron both have a love for the game and a grind for the game. Are there times it gets in your head or are there times you're able to completely let it go?

JUAN SOTO: Yeah, at the end of the day, I just try to focus on the game. Like you say, I love this game, and I've been playing this game since I was a little kid. I'm here more about the game, try to win, try to find a way to win and try to help the team.

The whole free agent talks and everything, I just leave that to my agent, let him handle it, and I just come every day to play baseball and to enjoy the game I love. That really makes it really easy for me, and I just play baseball. That's all I do. It just came through like that.

Q. Are there days off where you think about it a little

bit, like I wonder who's going to come at me, I wonder what the numbers are going to be, or you never think about it?

JUAN SOTO: No, no. I always keep that to my agent. Even in my house and everything, we never even talk about that. We keep it simple, just come here, enjoy the moment, enjoy where we're at, and we'll see what happens.

Q. Being a longtime fan of baseball, loving baseball, how does the tradition and the culture of the Yankees help you and help the team in the playoffs?

JUAN SOTO: Yeah, I would say yes. When you put that jersey on and those pinstripes, it just feels different. Like you say, there's so much history and everything, so many fans all over the world that we have, it's just incredible. It feels really nice to play for a team like that that has so many big moments in history.

It feels good. It feels good, I would say. It feels good. Because everywhere you go, the fans are there waiting for you, cheering for you, wishing you the best, and you feel that. You feel that in every aspect.

I think, yeah, definitely when you play for a team like that, it feels different.

Q. You've hit in front of Aaron Judge all year. Have you gotten any sense that he's been pressing at all these first two games?

JUAN SOTO: No, I don't think so. I feel like everybody goes through tough games. It's going to happen. Everybody knows it's part of the game. It's part of the life of baseball.

But no, I don't think he has any pressure. I think he's trying his best. They're making really good pitches against him. He's just got to come and connect the ball well.

I have really a lot of trust in him that he's going to come out and show people who he is.

Q. You guys have been talking the last couple days about that?

JUAN SOTO: No, no, not at all.

Q. The idea of having a short-term memory in October and bringing energy every day, is that something that comes naturally to you? Do you have to remind yourself of it?



JUAN SOTO: I would say you've got to remind yourself where you're at and what is your goal. Definitely tell your teammates and everybody to think the same way because, like I said before, it's not going to be one guy. It's got to take every single guy in that clubhouse.

I think it's one of the biggest things that we can use out here because we need the energy. We need to stay locked in and stay ready for any moment, any situation, because anything can turn around. When you're watching those guys from the Mets and Phillies and Detroit, all those guys, anything can turn in one blink of an eye.

I think stay positive with the short memory is one of the biggest things that you can use in the playoffs, and not only in the playoffs, but your whole career. I think it's going to help you big time.

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