

AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

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

New York Yankees

Clarke Schmidt

Postgame 3 Press Conference

Yankees 3, Royals 2

Q. Can you talk about it seemed like you retired 13 of the first 16, and then three batters, it just kind of spiraled. What happened?

CLARKE SCHMIDT: Yeah, I think -- I mean, that's the playoffs. Things kind of -- if you give them an inch, they'll take a mile. I think the momentum swings are a major thing here, and especially on the road when the crowd gets involved. I mean, if you look at the inning, it's like a 67 mile an hour single. I don't know how Isbel kept that ball down the line, and then the Massey hit.

It's just playoff baseball is what it really boils down to. But really good game plan tonight. And I think there's a lot to be said about coming out hot and trying to put up zeros early. It gives your team a chance to win. Really happy with coming away with a win.

Q. What did you feel like you were doing well today to execute early?

CLARKE SCHMIDT: Yeah, I think the main thing in these atmospheres is just staying within yourself and trusting yourself. I had a really good state of mind and we had a really good game plan and being able to adjust and trying to see what they were trying to do to me. And it was just a lot of fun.

Wells and I were working well together and we were getting to good areas and staying away from damage areas and making speeds well and keeping guys off balance. We made some pitches when we needed to. I think back to the Melendez AB with the curveball. But just a really good game plan and really good job between both of us just adjusting and getting what they were trying to do to us.



Q. What was the game plan to go after this lineup?

CLARKE SCHMIDT: I mean, I don't want to give away all my secrets, but I think just -- you're trying to avoid damage. And when you're playing in a park -- obviously this is a bigger park, and trying to get them to put the ball in the air and trying to induce weak contact. I think we knew going in they didn't swing and miss a lot, they don't strike out a ton.

So I wasn't really trying to go in and get a ton of chase. I was trying to make them put the ball in play and let my defense work behind me, and it ended up working out.

Q. When you came out, how much confidence did you have in the bullpen to keep it there?

CLARKE SCHMIDT: Yeah, I mean, just complete confidence in them. I think that's been one of our strengths if not our main strength the whole year. I think Gerrit -- we were talking yesterday before catch play, and he set the over-under at pitches for me at 72, 73. I think I hit the under by like two pitches.

I think you're aware of how high stress every pitch is and that you don't really have too long of a leash. So I think there is power in that, going out and trying to come out hot and put up as many zeros as you can in a short span of time knowing that you're not trying to go to the sixth or seventh like you are in a typical regular season.

Complete confidence. Getting to the fifth, passing the ball to the next guy, Clay, obviously, and then Tommy Weaver, and we have even more guys down there that get the job done every time. Credit to them.

Q. How would you describe what Giancarlo means to this team?

CLARKE SCHMIDT: Yeah, he's just such a veteran. I think everything he does, it seems like the right thing to do, and he's always saying the right thing and doing the right thing. He's just a good guy to follow, and you learn a lot from him.



I think when it's the playoffs, he takes it to another level, and I think there's something to be said about players that can do that.

He's done it throughout his whole career, and he wins us big ballgames day after day. We were all saying it in the dugout when he came up for that last AB or the AB where he hit the homer. It was like, he's about to hit a homer here. You just kind of feel like he's going to do damage when he goes up there.

Q. To that point, what do you think it would be like to have to face him in a situation where you know he's up there about to hit a home run?

CLARKE SCHMIDT: Yeah, I think you know it's tough because maybe right on right -- and I'm speaking for myself, maybe you think you can get a bunch of chase on him on some breaking balls. But he sees the ball so well in playoffs and he's got a really good game plan and he's very smart, so he thinks along with you, and he's obviously very talented.

Q. Game 3 so pivotal is a short series like this. What was your emotion, your nerves like before this, and have you ever pitched in a game this critical?

CLARKE SCHMIDT: No, nothing this big, obviously. But I think my -- I just trust the preparation that I put in. I trust the game plan that we had. There's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes for me to go out there and try to have success.

I think I like to be fearless when I'm out there, and there's only so much I can control when I let go of the pitch. After that it's out of my hands. I think just trusting that and trusting myself. I just try to be like a state of Zen almost, just being calm and not letting too much get to me, regardless of how loud it may get.

But I failed on -- I've pitched in the playoffs before. I remember Cleveland, I blew a game; Houston I ended up blowing a game. You learn from those moments. And I think I've taken punches in the face out there and I've been able to kind of respond and kind of roll with the punches. You just learn a lot from your failure if you let it.

So I'd say that's definitely helped me. When I'm out there -- I can't really get too much worse than losing a couple more playoff games, so when I'm out there, I'm just trying to execute and do my job.

Q. I was going to ask you about Luke's five-out save. What do you think has made him great in that closer role?

CLARKE SCHMIDT: You talk about five outs, obviously he was a starter before, so when he's going multiple ups, it seems like it's easy for him. So him being able to five outs at the end of a game is -- words can't describe how big -- and it seems pretty easy when he's going out there.

He's throwing a lot of strikes, and he's very confident in his pitch package and getting to his areas. And just complete transformation from the guy I saw last year to who he is now, and it shows on and off the field. He's very confident.

You feel very confident when he's out there in those situations, like we've got a really good chance to win this ballgame.

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