

AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

Thursday, October 10, 2024
Kansas City, Missouri, USA
Kauffman Stadium

Kansas City Royals

Michael Massey

Pregame 4 Press Conference

Q. All the plays last night and the two games before that that could have gone either way in determining these games, do you maybe marvel at just how close postseason baseball has been for you guys?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, no, that's been something that definitely stands out. Every play matters. And you hear it, but like you said, we've had some good examples of it the last couple nights. Just got to keep going and hopefully we're on the right end of those moving forward.

Q. What did you learn facing Gerrit Cole the first time around and what do you take into this one?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, he's one of the best in the game, obviously, so it's no easy task to go against him. I felt like we had a pretty good game plan the first time. And I'm sure he's going to make some adjustments, so we're going to have to stay locked in in the dugout and see what he's doing differently, if anything.

Just going to have to, like I say, keep it simple and try to get good pitches to hit and not miss them.

Q. Especially for you young guys, younger position players, how valuable is a must-win game like this, to be in this kind of position early in your career and kind of test your mettle a little bit?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, I think a lot of us are really trying to stay in the present moment and not think about how it's going to impact us in the future. I'm sure it's going to be something that helps. It's definitely not going to hurt to be involved in games like this.

I feel like based on what I've talked to the older guys, it really helps you slow the game down, I think, moving forward when you've been in environments like this. But like I said, I think we're worried about today, like Q always



says, and we've got to win a game today. I feel like we're not super concerned about the experience at this point.

It's one game, we've got to win, and we'll go get them in New York.

Q. The sequence last night, you guys start a rally, Isbel gets a hit. Did that kind of typify your season a little bit in a small way, in one small sequence?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, I think obviously we're a team that never quits, so with our backs against the wall a little bit, I feel like we tend to come through. Izzy did a great job there of setting the table, and I feel like we're a resilient bunch. Definitely kind of showed what we're made of.

Q. You've mentioned earlier that Will Smith said something to help lighten the mood when you went through a seven-game losing streak. Has anyone said anything before this game that kind of has helped fill you guys in, getting ready for what's about to happen tonight?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, last night it was Will again. I've seen the Royals win two games in a row. Obviously it's frustrating to lose, especially as intense of a game as it was last night. To be on the wrong end of that, it's tough, and have to come back and do it against 24 hours later. It's important to have guys like that that have that mindset and can kind of put your mindset back in the right spot.

Q. How do you flush yesterday and move on today? What are your mental tips for doing that individually for yourself?

MICHAEL MASSEY: I think just routine. I think coming back to the park today, when I wake up, I get my cup of coffee, I hang out, I watch the Weather Channel. And then I come to the park and do everything that I've done for the past 162 games and Playoffs.

I think there's just some peace of mind in that of whether we win, whether we lose, whether we got a hit, whether I didn't get a hit, whether I made the play of the game or whether I'm the goat in the game. I come in and do the



same thing every day. I think that's something that's really evident when you watch the older guys in the clubhouse and just guys that have been around for six-, seven-, eight-, nine-, ten-plus years. They come in and they do the same thing every day.

Sal is always doing the same thing in the cage. Wach always doing the same thing. Lugo's doing the same thing. Will Smith, like we've mentioned. To be able to watch those guys, you learn how to be professional.

Q. Just the mantra of today, you guys haven't had a today like today, but with that, grasping that concept of being today, how beneficial is that going into a game like tonight?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, I think -- from what I was just saying, I think it's routine. So whether it's Game 7 of the World Series or opening day or the third game of Spring Training, you know what you do. When I show up to the park, there's no question marks. I know where I need to be, what I need to be doing, and just controlling what I can control.

Like I said, whether our backs are against the wall or it's opening day and we've got 162 games in front of us, the game doesn't change. The preparation doesn't change. I think that kind of helps slow you down a little bit maybe in some of those bigger situations.

Q. How much do you change your approach, if at all, when you're batting lead-off as opposed to situational or lower in the order?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, usually not much. I feel like, again, it changes a little bit as far as who's hitting in front of you, who's hitting behind you type of stuff. But yeah, you really only lead off one time a game, so after your first at-bat, everyone is kind of mixed in any order at that point.

Just try to keep everything the same, as well, because everything is changing, what pitch he can throw, the count, the score, the innings. Everything is different. So being able to have as many constants as you can, whether that be, like I said before, controlling my preparation or keeping the same approach is something I try to do.

Q. Just curious, in New York you made some kind of remarks about replay. Having had a few days to think about that, is that still how you feel or is that a heat of the moment thing?

MICHAEL MASSEY: No, that's how I feel. I think some of the people in this room know me pretty much. My dad would smack me upside the head if I talk out of line.

No, I stand by that. I saw the replay, and I truly believe that he was out. It just didn't go our way. That's part of the game, though. That's not the reason we lost the game. We had plenty of opportunities to come through. I remember when I had a runner on second base and popped out to left field. I had a chance to drive in a run and I didn't.

Again, frustrating. I believe in what I said. But yeah, not the reason we lost, though.

Q. Do you like the system as it is?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, I think the wording is a bit interesting. I think when -- clear and convincing evidence, I think the reality is there's not a DNA sample out there. There is no clear -- so clear and convincing to who? Clear and convincing to me is different than clear and convincing to you than clear and convincing to Andy. It's just a little inconsistent in my mind.

Obviously we play an imperfect game, so nothing -- I don't expect anything to be perfect. But to me, I've seen calls get overturned. I've seen a guy get hit by a pitch and they say it didn't hit him, and they go back and look at the replay and they say his pant leg moves, so it must have hit him. But how do you know it wasn't a gust of wind, how do you know his thigh didn't twitch and his pant leg. It sounds stupid, but the reality is you're never 100 percent sure on anything.

I think the wording, again, is a bit subjective. But it is what it is. Like I said, that was in the past. It's something that we've got to deal with. We were on the wrong side of it. I thought last night there was a call that the ball on the line could have gone either way, and we were on the right side of that one.

You're kind of used to dealing with those things in a game.

Q. You guys hit relievers pretty well in the regular season. Why do you think that is?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, I think a lot of credit goes to our hitting coaches and the guys that are getting the scouting reports and preparing us for those matchups. Then obviously the guys are staying in the game, staying focused.

And as far as the Yankees, they've got a good bullpen. There's a reason why they're playing in the -- they're one game away from going to the ALCS. They've got a lot of good arms out there, good stuff, and they locate pitches, they mix pitches, throw strikes. And we're going to have to

do a better job of getting to them if we're going to win the series.

Q. The Weather Channel?

MICHAEL MASSEY: The hurricanes and -- I'm fascinated.

Q. It's not a regular --

MICHAEL MASSEY: No, I try not to be 65 years old. Sorry.

Q. The atmosphere last night, you guys have been away from home for a while, but can you compare that to anything you've ever experienced before?

MICHAEL MASSEY: No, that was incredible. I remember when I was on third base with Vance Wilson, I just remember telling him, I can't hear a thing. This is one of the coolest moments of my life. It was so loud that I heard nothing.

Yeah, the fans have been incredible all year, just their support even throughout the regular season. Everyone always asks why we play so well at home, and I think they deserve a lot of that credit.

162 games is a long time. You get tired. You're beat up. Your body hurts. To have that extra jolt from the fans and that energy in the stadium is huge. Yeah, last night was like nothing I've seen before.

Q. A lot has been made about Bobby's, Vinnie's struggles this year in particular. What have you seen from them on the field, in the dugout, in the clubhouse over the last couple games?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, I think it's on the same side with Judge probably, as well. I think there's certain guys in the Playoffs that the other team is going to circle, and the New York Yankees are going to circle Salvador Perez, Bobby Witt, Jr., and Vinnie Pasquantino, and the Kansas City Royals are going to circle Juan Soto and Aaron Judge and you're going to try to not let those guys beat you.

I think that's the reason I've been asked a couple times why the walks are up and it's postseason. I feel like guys aren't going to give in.

They're certainly not going to give into those guys. I feel like they've got the toughest assignment, and they're doing a good job impacting the game, though, in other ways, as well.

Hopefully they can break through here.

Q. It was kind of addressed, but what does that tell you about the Yankees when they're able to do this and you guys are still able to neutralize Judge?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, they're a good team. Like I said, they're in the ALDS for a reason. They won the AL East for a reason, which is not an easy division to win. They've got a bunch of really good players over there. We've got our work cut out for us the next couple days.

Q. Correct me if I'm wrong, but you and Bobby Witt, Jr. were not teammates in the minors, correct?

MICHAEL MASSEY: No, not during a season.

Q. What were your first impressions when you saw him in person, and how do you compare what you first saw compared to what you see now?

MICHAEL MASSEY: Yeah, my first impression was he needed to get a haircut with the mullet.

But he's incredible. He's as advertised. Obviously you guys get to see him as a person as well as a baseball player, too, but I think we can all agree he's probably a more special person than he is player. Just the teammate he is, the character he has, the work ethic he brings to the field every day. Just lucky to have his teammate, lucky to be around him.

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