

AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

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

Kansas City Royals Manager Matt Quatraro

Postgame 4 Press Conference

Yankees 3, Royals 1

Q. What's the feeling like having the season end this way?

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, frustration, disappointment, sadness. Feel really badly for those guys in the room, because as you know, this is seven, eight months of the year that they just pour it all into it and give every ounce of effort and energy they have. They played the game the right way. They respected each other, they treated each other well, they treated the staff well.

Really proud of what they've done, and it stings, but that's okay. It's okay to have it sting because this isn't where we want our season to end. This isn't what we hoped for when we started out.

I think that's okay to embrace it, that it doesn't feel very good.

Q. At what point do you think you might get some perspective? You're coming off the first 100-loss team to win a playoff series the next year. Clearly the franchise took a big step forward this year.

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, that's true.

Q. When do you think the gut punch of losing this game will go away and you'll be able to reflect?

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, I have no idea. That's not what I'm thinking about right now. I mean, I'm happy for the city. I'm happy for the organization that we did what we did this year, but it doesn't matter what other people thought we were able to accomplish this year. Our guys had bigger expectations for themselves, and that's how you should approach this game. You don't come here thinking, oh, I hope we get a little bit better. That's not how it works at the



big league level.

I think it's okay that it sucks right now.

Q. Just looking at the pitching staff top to bottom with Michael Wacha and the bullpen, what was your overall thoughts of how they pitched today?

MATT QUATRARO: They battled their butts off, man. They gave everything they had. We've got guys that have thrown in every game of the postseason. We've got guys that are coming in, putting it all on the line. We kept those guys to three runs the last two days.

You've got to tip your cap; they beat us. But it wasn't for lack of effort, wasn't for lack of desire or any of that kind of stuff. They put it all out there.

Q. What was your perspective of the situation at the bottom of the sixth between Maikel and Volpe?

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, Volpe had the ball, blocked the bag, Maikel probably didn't care for that too much, and it got a little chippy.

Q. A couple things about the game. The pitching, rough beginning for Michael and he really battled through that. What did he show you getting through that first inning?

MATT QUATRARO: Same thing he's shown us all year, to be honest. That was three pitches into the game, it's 1-0 and he bowed his neck and went right after him. He doesn't back down from anybody, and why should he. He's been doing this a long time, he's got a lot of confidence in himself, and it showed it right there. He composed himself and got us some big outs.

Q. The decision to go to Erceg early, talk about the process of making that decision and how you guys came about that one?

MATT QUATRARO: Well, they had put three hits together, they had scored a second run. They're in the middle of the order with Soto, Judge, Stanton coming up. I felt like that



was our best opportunity to keep the game where it was and try to give us the best opportunity to come back.

Q. Did you talk about the difference between -- I don't know if you had more good swings, but you had certainly put Cole in more trouble in the previous start than this one. What did you see as the differences?

MATT QUATRARO: I think his fastball was a little bit better today. He located it at the top of the zone, which he's got 18, 20 inches of carry at 96, 97 miles an hour. That's a tough thing to get to, and I think to me that was the biggest difference.

Q. How much does it hurt that your starters weren't able to (indiscernible) in any of these games? I know it's the postseason and might have a little bit shorter of a leash, but that was your strength all year was pitching deep into games?

MATT QUATRARO: Some of that's because I took them out. It doesn't mean they couldn't have done it. But like you said, usually in the postseason, you're going to have a little shorter leash. Playing a team like this where the 2, 3, 4 hitters are who they are, there's a little more urgency in those situations. But by no means does that mean they could not have done it.

So some of that's on me, as well.

Q. Isbel, did you think he had it when he sent Soto to the wall?

MATT QUATRARO: I was hopeful. He put a good swing on it. I had a good feeling going into that at-bat, but unfortunately we're playing in Kauffman.

Q. In the same vein, just some of the swings tonight, MJ Melendez early on in the game, what was the emotional roller coaster as he could potentially hit a home run?

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, I didn't think he got that ball. He hit it pretty -- he squared it up, hit it straight up in the air. Bobby squared one up, Verdugo made a nice play on it.

There were some good swings in there, some good swings throughout, but clearly not enough to string things together against Cole. Tommy had a heck of a night at the plate.

This is a tough game. Hitting is a tough game, and you miss it by a fraction of an inch and you're looking at a fly ball versus a homer or a line out or a ground out instead of a line drive.

Q. Having guys like Witt and Perez being able to lead this team to the playoffs, what do you hope to see from them in years to come on this team?

MATT QUATRARO: Well, they are our leaders. They're the heart and soul of not only the team, the organization, the community. We're very proud of what they've done this year, and we would look for that to continue.

Q. Speak a little bit to Vinnie. I know all the work he's put in, you've spoken about that before, but what he meant to you guys during this run to the playoffs?

MATT QUATRARO: It was a huge emotional lift to get him back, and good for him, that was a long shot. The way he went about it, the way he just really got after it from the minute he got hurt, probably uncomfortably so, his hand was broken. But to come back and show that fight and the fortitude to do that, that shows who he is as a person and the team respects the heck out of him.

Q. I don't know if you can share as much or as little as you want to, just your message to the guys as you addressed them there?

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, it's simple. I thanked them up and down and extremely grateful for having been around them for this season. And regardless of how a season ends, you've got to appreciate the people that are in that room and how they treated each other, how they treated us as a staff. The things they did for the organization this season were phenomenal. I just thanked them up and down because really that's all there is to it.

Q. What do you want to say to the fans? That's a packed house out there.

MATT QUATRARO: Yeah, I said it today. I'm extremely grateful that they came out like this in force. Clearly they were hungry for playoff baseball, we were hungry for it, as well. I wish we had given them more to cheer about. That's disappointing to me. I know the guys feel the same way.

But it certainly wasn't for a lack of anything they did or a lack of effort on our part. Sometimes that's how this game goes. But thank you very much for being here. Even when it wasn't a packed house throughout the season, they're into this team. They love baseball here. It's a great baseball town. The way that they supported us throughout 81 home games was phenomenal, and I'm forever grateful for that.

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