

# AL Division Series: Royals vs Yankees

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

## New York Yankees

### Aaron Judge

#### Postgame 4 Press Conference

Yankees 3, Royals 1

**Q. We were just talking to Aaron Boone and he said one of the messages he gave to you guys before the celebration was now we're playing for a pennant. What does that mean to you?**

AARON JUDGE: It means everything. We haven't -- since I've been here with the Yankees, we haven't secured a pennant. The group that we have, how special this is, just excited for this opportunity. It's going to be something special. What a series for the boys this DS was against a good Royals team, so excited about the CS.

**Q. This was a Royals team without a lot of winning DNA. How did they test you and what did you think of them?**

AARON JUDGE: They've got a lot of gamers over there, starting with their leader Salvy, a guy that's won a World Series, been a World Series MVP, comes up clutch so many times for them. And then the young star for them Bobby Witt who had an incredible season and continues just to impress I feel like the baseball world every single day with what he can do.

It's amazing what they're capable of. They've got a lot of guys over there that are gamers. You saw them the whole series battling off tough pitches, having great at-bat after great at-bat, coming up with big hits.

You go back to that first game where we had four, five, six lead changes back and forth. There's just no fear in them and just a lot of fight. Definitely going to be a lot of battles with them for years to come.

**Q. Aaron, Boone said before the game he thought you were swinging it well, but swinging it well and getting a double are two different things. How did that feel to**



**break through the get the first extra-base hit?**

AARON JUDGE: It felt good. It's about getting results. I'll take four bloop singles at this point. It's just part of it. You mis-hit a couple balls and it's just about not -- don't worry about it. Focus on the plan, focus on what you can do. Even if you're 0 for 4, 0 for 3, even if it's the first at-bat of the game, you've got to focus on what you are you going to do in this at-bat, this situation, if there's guys on, if you're starting an inning.

That's all I'm doing is trying to treat it just like the regular season, go out there and whatever the situation calls for, go out there and do it and help the team win a game. It was good to start off the winning right there. I know I didn't -- it's been a while, but just glad to get something going.

**Q. These four games, what did you observe about the Yankees that gives you optimism for the next round? What did you like?**

AARON JUDGE: I think going back to that first game, like I said. We faced a lot of adversity in the regular season, a lot of ups and downs, a lot of tough times, a lot of good times. To come away with the best record in the AL was huge for us, and then you go to the first game where they punch us, we punch them, they punch us back, we take back the lead. Just a lot of back and forth, which that's what's going to happen in the postseason.

You guys have been watching the postseason and what's been going on. Just a lot of lead changes and who can keep throwing punches when you're getting beat on. A lot of fight out of these guys. Just never quit.

Even going today, Gleyber starting it off in a big game for us, a big spot. He starts off with a lead-off double in one, gets a single the next at-bat to give us one-run lead. And then hand it off to our ace to go out there and do his thing. Just no quit in this team, they'll fight.

**Q. Talk about you; how much do those LCS disappointments fuel you? How often do you think about it?**



AARON JUDGE: I usually think about that stuff when the season is over with and just kind of reflect on it. But I think what fuels us more is in '23 our season ended here. Our season ended, no postseason, no playoffs, no nothing. It's just go home and get ready for the next season.

I think a lot of guys took that to heart. There's a video out there, quite a few guys just sitting in the dugout just kind watching the field, just kind of soaking it all in. And I think that's what fueled a lot of guys to go out there and say, hey, I don't want to have this feeling again.

There's quite a few guys that it was their first season. Wells, Dominguez, Volpe, their first season in the Big Leagues missing the postseason was definitely tough, but they put in the work this offseason. They were down in Tampa early. We all got together, got to put in a lot of work, got to know each other.

And that's what it's all about, it's a team, it's about us coming together, because there's going to be adversity, there's going to be tough times. And just all of us leaning on each other to get through it.

**Q. It's easy to quantify what the players are doing. What kind of a series do you think Aaron Boone had?**

AARON JUDGE: That's our Skipper. He made some great moves. You go back to just the moves with the bullpen, having Clay, Tommy, and then Weave in Game 3 come out there and shut down the Royals. He made the right moves when they needed to be done. Him and Ausmus are always working, he's getting guys up in plenty of time, he's always prepared. That's why he's our manager. He's going to come through big for us in big moments.

Another thing is he lets us go out there and play. He lets us go out there, be free, and just do what we need to do.

**Q. What was your perspective of what happened in the bottom of the sixth inning? You had it from a different angle than we did up in the press box. What happened with Volpe and Garcia?**

AARON JUDGE: I think it was just a little bit of a late slide and Garcia is protecting himself, Volpe is trying to protect himself. When you go in that late, as a shortstop you've just got to protect yourself. I think it's just both guys were -- hey, this is the postseason. For them it's win or go home, and for us it's the same thing. We're out here on a mission to go out here and win this game. It's just two competitive guys going after it.

I really didn't think much of it. I think the benches clear,

bullpens clear, stuff like that, but we're not trying to rile anybody up. I don't think they were trying to rile us up in that situation. It's just two guys trying to protect themselves when it was kind of a late slide.

**Q. You've been on a Yankee team that came within a game of the World Series and you've been on a Yankee team that didn't even get to the postseason. What does your intuition tell you about this club this year?**

AARON JUDGE: I don't like to look too far ahead. I'm focused on what we did this series. Like I said all year, we've got a special group. The guys we acquired, Verdugo, he came in clutch for us Game 1, Game 2. And then what Juan Soto has done for us all year. And then you go back to our core group of guys with tonight Gerrit Cole going out there and doing his thing, shutting down a great offense with the Royals.

I always like our chances. I'm always betting on our guys, man. There's something special here. I think we got a little bit of the ghost from the old stadium, a little bit of magic there, too.

**Q. Do you have any predictions?**

AARON JUDGE: I'm not a good predictor. I wish I was. But that's what makes this team special is they live in the present. They live in the present moment. They go out there and try to do what they can on any given day. We go out there and do that for the next I don't know how many games, I think we're going to be in a good spot.

**Q. You've noticed the other New York team is also in the LCS. Knowing what you know about New York, can you imagine what the next couple weeks are going to be like for both sides of the city?**

AARON JUDGE: It's going to be exciting. The Mets have had an incredible season. I know they didn't start off the way they wanted to, but they've got a great manager over there in Carlos Mendoza, who I've had a chance to be around for quite a few years in the Yankees organization. And what a leader, what a guy that prepares his team. Even when he was here as our bench coach, he prepared his guys, prepared the infield, prepared everybody to go out there and compete on a daily basis.

That's what you're seeing, I think. There's been so many games where it's been battling back and forth, back and forth, and all of a sudden the sixth, seventh, eighth, down to your last out, guys come up with big hits.

It's a testament to Carlos, a guy that's cool, calm, collected in pressure situations, makes the right calls, makes the

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

right moves. It's going to be definitely a fun time in New York, man. They're having a great season, and it's going to be fun to look forward to down the road, getting a chance to face them again.

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