

AL Division Series: Tigers vs Guardians

Saturday, October 5, 2024
Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Progressive Field

Detroit Tigers

Kerry Carpenter

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. How you doing?

KERRY CARPENTER: Doing well.

Q. Can you talk about your comfort factor in this ballpark. Your numbers are good here. You've played here a lot. Going into a series like this, is that even a factor that you do have some comfort in this park?

KERRY CARPENTER: Yeah. I think it's a factor. I don't know how big of a factor, but yeah, I like playing here. I think a lot of the guys like playing here. And even in the outfield and just knowing where the wall is, I think helps our outfielders, and just having that comfort factor is kind of good on offense and defense.

Q. We've talked a lot about what this postseason means for the team and you guys are so quick to make everything about the team and not yourselves, but indulge me for a minute. What does this postseason and these opportunities to keep playing in October mean for you, just considering everything you've been through this season?

KERRY CARPENTER: It's just a blessing, and being here and what makes it so much fun is being with these guys and the fact that we've come up, a lot of us have come up together throughout the Minor Leagues, and then now we get to play in the ALDS against Cleveland and go try to get some wins. That's what makes it special, even just on a personal level, is that I get to do it with these guys.

Q. You mentioned the fact that you guys a lot of you guys came up together. How much does that factor in to kind of the selflessness of this team and the willingness to buy into what A.J. does in terms of pinch hitters or platoons or stuff like that when you know the guy who you're sharing playing time with?



KERRY CARPENTER: I think it matters a lot. I think just the fact that we have that trust factor with each other and we're like really good friends off the field. I think it matters, and we trust everybody that goes up to the plate or everybody that goes in on defense or comes out to the mound.

It's really cool being on this journey with those guys, and, yeah, I think it matters.

Q. On that note, in terms of the closeness of you guys, A.J. has also talked about how important it is to emotionally detach from maybe your spot in the lineup or the opportunity you're going to have that day. And that can be hard when you're competitive and you want opportunities, but when you're best friends with the guys that are swapping in and out, does that make it easier to emotionally detach and take yourself away from a certain role, or harder?

KERRY CARPENTER: Probably. Yeah, I just think that there's no ego on this team. And we've been doing it the whole year, and we've been playing this way the whole year where if somebody gets hit for or somebody gets put in for defense, like we just support whoever comes in. And I think the lack of ego on this team is a big deal.

Q. Are you starting to feel the gravity of this at all? Did you sleep well last night? Is there any extra, you know, butterflies coming up right now?

KERRY CARPENTER: Not really. I slept like a baby last night. And I think we're ready for this. And we love playing this first game of the day, and we're going to go get them at 1:00.

Yeah, I don't know if anybody is nervous or excited or anxious, but I think excited is probably the word to describe us all. But it's pretty loose and pretty free in there.

Q. Kerry, yesterday Will Vest was talking about Houston and saying that in his mind he wanted that postseason juggernaut right out of the gate. So you guys go to Houston, sweep the Astros. And I think you're a confident group as it is, but how much does it



help to know, okay, we can do this, we can play with some of the best teams?

KERRY CARPENTER: Yeah. I think it matters based on what they've done in the past and who they are as a group. And especially what we did that last game against that bullpen is pretty impressive. So just taking that to this series, I think, can't help but build confidence for everybody.

Q. Kind of a twist off of coming up together, like the fact that not only you guys came up together, but on the other side, the Guardians have a very home-grown squad?

KERRY CARPENTER: Uh-huh.

Q. And at most of the Minor League levels, the Tigers prospects and the Guardians prospects are playing each other. Is there a familiarity there with a lot of their team from having seen them on their way up the system?

KERRY CARPENTER: Yeah. That's a good point too is they've probably faced all of our pitchers a bunch of times, and we've faced their pitchers a bunch of times.

Yeah, I've faced probably more than half their pitching staff in the Minor Leagues, and obviously we play them a lot in the Big Leagues, too. There's something to be said for that. There's just a ton of familiarity with this matchup.

Q. Kerry, when you came back from injury, missing a long time, did it take you a while to feel like yourself? Because you obviously jumped back into things pretty seamlessly it looks like.

KERRY CARPENTER: I wouldn't say it took a while. I think more on the rehab assignment is when it usually is -- it's just getting my eyes back at the plate is kind of the thing that takes a while for me.

But once I got back with the team up here, it seemed like it was just back where I left off, and I'm really thankful for that. And these guys helped a ton, the coaching staff, the players.

Yeah, I didn't think it was too big of a jump back in.

Q. I know you didn't play with Matt Boyd a ton, but you were around a little bit with him near the end of his last Tigers tenure. What sort of impact did he make on you, and what sort of impact did he make on the team factor?

KERRY CARPENTER: Yeah. Speaking for myself, he's like -- he's a leader in the clubhouse, and I really liked him. And he's just a great guy to have in the clubhouse. And I know a lot of guys miss him, and we're excited to compete against him. But, yeah, he left a great impact on me and I'm sure a bunch of other guys.

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