

AL Division Series: Tigers vs Guardians

Sunday, October 6, 2024

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Progressive Field

Cleveland Guardians

Stephen Vogt

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. I know it's hard to put yourself in someone else's shoes, but maybe how cool of a moment do you think it is for Matthew Boyd to be in a postseason start against his old team, and are you able to appreciate just the full-circle nature now of this whole story for him after everything he's been through?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah. I mean, obviously, I don't know what it's like to be in his shoes, but I can imagine, you know, after what he's gone through over the last year and a half with Tommy John and signing a contract halfway through the year and getting himself back and being back on the mound, and now he gets to take the ball at a postseason game against the team that he's spent the most time with in his career, I think it's gotta be a special day for Matthew and his family. And we're definitely excited to watch him take the ball in that situation.

Q. It was mentioned from yesterday just the job that Bo did calling the game. How have you seen that part of his game evolve throughout the season?

STEPHEN VOGT: I can't speak enough to what we've put on Bo's plate. We've asked a lot of him, and all of our catchers, but to be in your first full season, to navigate a pitching staff with Hedgey and David with him at the same time, they've all worked together. But Bo's game calling has come such a long way. Having Sandy with him every day, Carl Willis, Joe Torres, Craig Albernaz, all the support that he has catching, but Bo has taken it and run with it. He learns on the fly. He asks really good questions, and he wants to get better every day.

So it's been really fun to watch Bo progress over the course of this year.

Q. Stephen, how quickly did you see Matthew having an impact on some of the young guys on the pitching staff?



STEPHEN VOGT: Day one when he got here. You know, he came into the office -- we had spoken before he showed up to Cleveland, but once we got back into town and he was here, he just asked. He said, How can I help? And I said, Just dive into this team. Be a part of this team. This team is going to love you, and you're going to be a big part of it.

And from day one he started just immersing himself into the clubhouse. They met him with hugs and brought him in right away. But he's been such a big part for our young pitching and just our pitchers in general. Everybody has gotten better since Matthew has walked through the doors, not to mention what he's done for us on the mound. But just a great person and been a leader in this clubhouse.

Q. How much does that help you to have a guy like that that you can lean on, another guy that you can lean on?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah. I mean, I think it speaks to a number of the guys on our team. They're all leaders in their own way, and they all want to step up for their teammates and help any way they can.

And that's the culture that that group in the clubhouse has created, is we're in this together. We've got each other's backs, and we want to help each other get better as quickly as possible. And they've taken that, and I've seen that from day one, and it's just getting stronger.

Q. Ideally, when you sit down to set up a lineup for a game, especially for an opening playoff game, you don't probably don't envision going five straight batters and everybody reaching base and everybody scoring, but how gratifying, how satisfying is it for you that that's what happened? And when they got to the matchup with Lane Thomas, and that's the matchup that they were looking for, he was able to come through in that moment?

STEPHEN VOGT: I thought it was great for our guys to come out with a bang like that. It's a testament to them and the hard work they put in this week, the layoff and then



the break. And all of our hitters really got in the cages. They worked hard. They challenged themselves all week long in their practice, and they were prepared.

And for us to come out swinging like that and putting pressure on the other team, and obviously for Lane, we've loved having Lane since the first day he got here, and for him to get the big hit there, that was a big moment.

Q. Stephen, fortunately I've never had to catch a pop-up in the sun at Progressive Field in the afternoon game. How tough is that glare there, and did that have something to do with Lane missing that ball in left center field yesterday?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah, depending on where the sun is, I mean, it's impossible to see a ball when it goes into the sun, and you have to be able to work around it. But you see games like that all the time all around the Big Leagues.

Definitely looked like Lane had a beat on it and lost sight of it for just a second and that slowed him up. But it happens, and those are times there's nothing really you can do about it other than fight through it.

But if the ball goes into the sun, there's just not a whole lot you can do about it. Fortunately it didn't end up hurting us. But it's difficult. That's probably a rep that he hasn't had yet here, and that's times that you can't practice every single ball. You can't practice for everything. And so now that he has the experience of it once, I think he'd make the adjustment next time.

Q. Stephen, you've said all along that you ask a lot of your catchers, and I was wondering, with all the responsibility Bo has had defensively, has that affected his offense?

STEPHEN VOGT: I don't think so. I think there's not one or the other. When you're a catcher, your job is you have the biggest job on the team. You have to prepare to call the game. You have to prepare to catch the game. You have to have relationships with your pitchers, and have you to work on your offense.

And we've seen Bo has had stretches. In the second half Bo was one of our better hitters from an OPS standpoint. So when you just look at the overall season, maybe you can nitpick, but we've seen Bo really well. And he gets pitched tough. If you watch the at-bats, you have to make pitches to Bo. If you make a mistake, he's going to get.

And you we couldn't have asked more from Bo this year, and I know there's more on the bone there for him offensively, but we know he's going to come into his own.

Q. Stephen, did you play a part at all in the Boyd recruitment as he was trying to figure out where to sign? And then he said what pushed him over was he watched I think you guys were playing the Orioles in Baltimore in late June and he saw the camaraderie on the bench and how much energy there was in the dugout and he wanted to be a part of that. Just hearing that, what does that mean to you?

STEPHEN VOGT: I mean, it means everything to me. I think what this group has established and the culture that the players have established for themselves of we have fun, and we're laughing, we're talking, we're smiling. We're always having a good time. And it is. It's contagious when you get around our group. You can't help but want to be a part of it.

And I think that's really neat to hear that Matthew saw that just on TV. We had one phone call before he signed and just told him just that, like, Hey, we'd love to have you. You gotta make the best decision for you and your family, and whatever that is, it completely makes sense. I hope that's with us.

But for me, we knew how valuable Matthew could be and we knew that this group was special, and he saw that from afar and there's nothing I could tell him that would push him one way or the other.

Q. Stephen, John earlier asked about -- asked Matthew about the bullpen and if there was a nickname for the bullpen. I guess he said the beat writers might have a nickname, but we don't really have one collectively. So what's your nickname for the bullpen, if you have one?

STEPHEN VOGT: I don't have a nickname for them. Those things kind of happen organically. So I haven't heard of one. I just know that I like them. I'm a big fan.

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