

# AL Division Series: Tigers vs Guardians

Monday, October 7, 2024  
Cleveland, Ohio, USA  
Progressive Field

## Detroit Tigers

## Tarik Skubal

### Postgame 2 Press Conference

Detroit - 3, Cleveland - 0

**Q. Congratulations, Tarik. Did you have some fun with the fans today coming up to those double-play balls?**

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. That was -- I don't really know where I was at mentally in those situations, but I probably shouldn't say some bad words with some cameras on me with kids watching, but it was just emotion, raw emotion. The environment here, first off, was great. I think Cleveland fans, this environment was incredible to play in, hostile, all that stuff that as a kid you dream of playing and pitching in front of. So, yeah, it was kind of both those things, I guess.

**Q. Just to follow up, after you hit Noel, the crowd was really on you. Did you feed off that? Can you shut that out? Or how does that play? Because the next pitch, double play. Same thing happened the next inning.**

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. I think that's why there was probably -- you get booed in that situation. Obviously I'm never trying to hit anybody. The pitch was actually -- it was barely off. But, yeah, you never try to hit anybody, and I made sure like he was good at first base just because I would hate to like have his hand break or something and he be out for the rest of the postseason. It just would suck all the way around. That's probably why there was a little emotion there because you get booed in that situation and that's never what I'm trying to do.

**Q. Describe what you felt and what you saw when Kerry hit his homer.**

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah, I was in the weight room kind of doing the post-throw stuff, and what a swing. I was on the ground, and I think that's the fastest I've ever stood up in my life. What a swing off a really good pitcher, too, the



best closer in the game. So, yeah, it was -- I mean, that was incredible to watch.

**Q. What have you seen from Kerry over the course of the season, especially since you guys really started to heat up once he joined the lineup in August?**

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah, his bat is very important to our lineup, very, very important. The power, the slug, contact. I feel like he doesn't punch out. He's kind of what you want as a hitter. I think he's every right-handed pitcher's nightmare. It's like where do you go with him? I've watched him. Like, I don't even know how to get him out, and he's left-handed, left on left. To have him in the lineup is very important for us.

**Q. Not the first time that the boys have come up with some big double plays. Just to end your outing, and obviously that fuels the emotion too, but how nice is it to have the defense right behind you?**

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah, our defense was huge. Rog was great behind the plate, too, and Parker catches that ball in whatever inning that was. It's kind of a blur. But, yeah, defense is huge, and especially against a team like this where runs are at a premium just because of what they can do with the bullpen and their starting pitching and the way they play defense, too. Yeah, defense is a big part of the victory today.

**Q. Tarik, when you walked off for good, you kind of spread your arms out and almost motioned to the crowd. Was that kind of a "Let's go" or "Bring what you've got" or "Boo all you want"?**

TARIK SKUBAL: I'll be honest, I don't know what that was. (Laughs.) I don't know what that was. Never done that before in my life.

**Q. I know you're a competitor. What's it like facing Ramirez? One of the times you faced him it was fastball heavy. Next time it was change-up heavy. What was that battle like for you?**

TARIK SKUBAL: He's a great hitter. His numbers off me



are really good in his favor, too. I think he's one of the best five players in the Big Leagues, too. What he can do defensively, switch hitting, power from both sides, you name it, he's got it. He's got every tool in the book.

And I love watching him play across the field, too. I hate when he does well against us. But I love watching him play. I got a ton of respect for that guy.

But that stuff is kind of on Rog and what he's reading, to go over the scouting report and what you're supposed to do. But when you get in the game the game will dictate what you throw in that situation and Rog does a great job back there.

**Q. You guys couldn't have died here today. Obviously it wasn't an elimination game. Can you speak to how big it was to go home even and the fans in Detroit haven't seen playoff baseball in a minute? So can you kind of speak to how big that is and how huge it might be on Wednesday?**

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah, steal a game on the road and now we got kind of home field advantage. Two of the next three are at our yard. I don't get to play in front of those fans, but I look forward to those environments and creating tough situations for their defense, their pitching, their hitting and use it to our advantage as best we can.

But, yeah, I mean, it's huge to split, especially after the last game. Yeah, it's huge, huge to get home even.

**Q. Along those lines, Tarik, it's a lot different obviously going back 1-1 than it is 2-0, and I know A.J. and a bunch of guys had said this was no elimination game, no backs against the wall, but as a competitor how much was it in your mind to ensure this wasn't a 2-0 hold to do everything you could to make sure of that?**

TARIK SKUBAL: I think every time I take the mound I'm trying to put my team in a position to win and do what I can to win however it's possible. So in the moment you just can't make the game bigger than it needs to be. As a competitor you can't make it bigger than it needs to be. You gotta stay in the moment.

And as much as it is tough to overcome a 2-0 deficit, you gotta understand that you just gotta keep executing pitches and keep going right after guys and keep the game simple in the biggest moments, and I think I did a good job of that today.

**Q. Just piggybacking on that, did you have to trick yourself into not making it a bigger game, going to**

**sleep last night, hanging out earlier today before you get to the park?**

TARIK SKUBAL: I don't know if it's tricking yourself or truly believing in it. I truly believe that. I think that's when I'm at my best, when I keep the game simple and just go right at guys strike one, strike two and get guys uncomfortable.

Yeah, I don't want to nibble. I don't want -- I don't really like thinking like that either. It can get the moment too big and then maybe you misfire or start to spray it a little bit.

I truly believe that, though. I truly believe that you gotta keep the game the same and just worry about executing pitches and what you can control, and that's just your effort level on every throw. So that's what I do when I'm on the mound.

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