

AL Division Series: Tigers vs Guardians

Friday, October 11, 2024
Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Progressive Field

Cleveland Guardians

Stephen Vogt

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Do you know who's starting tomorrow?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah. Matthew Boyd will start tomorrow.

Q. Is that a no-brainer based on the way he pitched, or what were your other options?

STEPHEN VOGT: We had discussions about everything, right? Best ways to win Game 5, and we talked through a lot of different scenarios, but the one that just continued to come up was Matthew threw the ball well, he's been great for us. So we feel very, very confident in Matthew taking the ball tomorrow.

Q. You surely predicted that he'd be given the ball with the game on the line?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah. 100 percent. Yeah, we knew way back then. No, I mean, you never know how the season is going to play out, right? We talked about Spring Training, it would be great if we had 26 guys from opening to closing, but with the additions that Matthew and Alex have given us and the way Matthew has taken the ball every time and competed, we feel really good about him taking the ball in a Game 5 scenario.

Q. Austin Hedges was in here a little bit ago, and he was talking about how you guys use analytics, but then in the dugout they're making adjustments and how important the eyes are to watch. In the dugout do you guys talk about those discussions?

STEPHEN VOGT: You're talking about like for pinch-hitting and things like that?

Q. No. How you attack the opposing batters.

STEPHEN VOGT: Oh. That's more the catchers and



pitching coaches' area. But we come up with game plans. We know where hitters have their damage, and we try to avoid it. That's how everybody pitches.

Analytics, I think, gets a bad rap. All that is is the data and the facts about each player, and data doesn't lie. So you use that as a tool. You use that as an information piece. But you also have to go out and play the game. You have to feel what the hitter and pitcher are doing, and you're always making adjustments based off of what people are actually doing.

So the numbers and analytics are a tool, they're an educational tool that help us navigate through games, but you still have to use your eyes.

Q. And your experience as a catcher for all those years, how does that help you in making those in-game adjustments?

STEPHEN VOGT: I mean, it's the information you have in your mind going into the game, and then you read the hitter, you read what the opposing team is trying to do, and you know that you have to pay attention to what's going on in the game.

Q. Yesterday was the first time you ever had a chance to manage a "win or your season is over" kind of game. Did you learn anything about yourself?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah, it was fun. I had a blast. I mean, it's what you want to do. You want to be in those games. You're not in an elimination game if you're not having a good year.

And I think for our guys, they went out and they earned it. It felt like any other game, it really did, once it started. Leading up to it and the decisions you have to make, yeah, they're a little more crucial, but it felt like just another game for us. And I think that's the way our players have attacked every game. It's helped me stay calm and under control.

Q. We've heard you guys talk so much about how much this group loves each other. So this probably won't surprise you, but just to see Pedro this whole



series be the guy who's top row the entire time. He's the first one out of the dugout when a pitcher is coming out of the game. What more does this say about this group for a guy who didn't make the roster?

STEPHEN VOGT: It speaks to how close that group in the clubhouse is. They put their teammates ahead of themselves. Pedro is the number one example of that as well as Ben and Tyler and Nick Sandlin, these guys that we had tough conversations with last week, and here they are cheering their teammates on like nothing changed, like they're active.

And they just want to win. And if their job is to support their teammates, they're going to do it to their fullest.

Q. Skubal's numbers speak for themselves. What makes him so tough?

STEPHEN VOGT: His stuff, his demeanor, his confidence. He can throw pitches at any time to any part of the zone. He can add, subtract. He can move, shape the ball differently. He's just a premier pitcher with elite stuff, and we got our work cut out for us.

Q. You guys have gone back and forth with them all year. It's coming down to this winner take all?

STEPHEN VOGT: I don't think anybody thought this wasn't going to go five games. It's the way our season's been. It's the way their season's been. It's been the way our head-to-head matchups have been.

It's going to be a fun day tomorrow. I don't know how it's going to shake out. I don't know who's going to win. Somebody's gotta win, somebody's gotta lose, and I know it's going to be a really fun day at the ballpark tomorrow, and I'm confident our guys are going to come out ready to go.

Q. Start time for you or any concern about that?

STEPHEN VOGT: No, not at all. I'm just glad we're going to get it in before the rain. No one wants to play through rain stoppages and then you gotta keep a starter going through a rain delay. It was the right call to move the game up, and it'll be a beautiful Saturday in Cleveland hopefully.

Q. After Game 3 you said you put your chips in in the situations where you thought you had the right matchups and you didn't get the results that you were looking for in those situations. Last night you put your chips in and said you held back a little bit until it was the right moment. Do you allow yourself a few minutes to sort of go back and self-evaluate and sort of puff

your chest up about it?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah, I mean, it's fun when it comes out. I think we've had a very similar cadence to how we use our chips or our pinch hits or our bullpen. We've had a similar cadence all year. And we stuck to it last night. We didn't go all in early. When you're not down, you're afforded that chance to hold or to take a shot or to do things like that.

We've had times where we've held, we've had times where we go. It's just that feel of the game and the understanding what the matchups are going to be, and we felt like it was the right time to go, and David Fry is a great baseball player and comes through.

Q. How are people in your personal life handling the series like this?

STEPHEN VOGT: The kids are having fun. All of their voices are gone today. Alyssa is enjoying this. She's having a blast. She's a big support system for me. My dad, Randy, is here. My in-laws are here. Everybody is enjoying it. It's just fun, and they view the team as our family.

Q. Obviously this is your first year here. So it's not like you had this long history with the Tigers. Is there something, though, about the fact that Cleveland and Detroit are meeting in the playoffs for the first time after literally thousands of meetings before that? Do you feel like maybe this could be the start of two young rosters of a rivalry that has a little more weight to it?

STEPHEN VOGT: I think anytime you play divisional opponents throughout the year, you form little rivalries. And, yeah, I think a playoff series can really propel that.

But being the first year here, the way our guys view division matchups is they are playoff series. They mean more. So I think it was already there. It's just fun to have a team that you are so familiar with that now you're competing in the playoffs. It's been a blast.

Q. Along the lines that Joe asked, how big a difference does it do when you make moves, when you have the lead and when you're behind? Because I think Wednesday you were down early, and last night you got up early.

STEPHEN VOGT: It's huge. I mean, playing from ahead is much different than playing from behind. And I think for our guys, when we score early, that really gets us going. And so I think it allows you to make more moves when you



are ahead or be able to do more creative things when you are ahead. When you're behind, you gotta take your shots to get back into the game. So it's important to get a lead early, and then it's important to hold it.

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