

AL Division Series: Tigers vs Guardians

Saturday, October 12, 2024
Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Progressive Field

Cleveland Guardians

Stephen Vogt

Postgame 5 Press Conference

Cleveland - 7, Detroit - 3

Q. How close was the script going in that you wanted to follow, and how much was just managing by what you're seeing, what you're feeling?

STEPHEN VOGT: I think kind of all of the above. We had a little bit of a script, but it went pretty close. There was a couple times that we had to kind of go off the script, but at the same time it was watch the game, see what the game is telling us to do.

Matthew Boyd was outstanding. I think he could have gone longer, but we've won with our bullpen all year, and that's been who we are.

Q. How much have you learned about the script just as a manager, in the first year, maybe just in this series alone? How much have you learned about that?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah. I think the best thing that we do is that we plan the game every night, and we've done this all year long. We plan the game. Obviously there's nights where you have to rip it up, but we've talked through exactly what we want to do and when, and using Carl, using the pitching staff, using the analytics, using everybody.

And I think I've just learned that there's times where you can follow script when the game tells you to and there's other times where you have to rip it up and go rogue, and you can't be married to one idea.

Q. Stephen, what can you say about Lane Thomas? August was a tough month for him, but he's really turned it around since then, especially today.

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah. When we were approaching the trade deadline, we identified Lane as a player that we



wanted. He fit a lot of what we needed, and this guy's been a great player in this league for a few years now.

Lane has just been -- obviously had a great series for us, the two biggest hits, outside of Fry's homer. But Lane is a phenomenal baseball player, and we're thankful we got him.

Q. The fifth inning they get one across, you get five. What did you see and the buildup of that five-run inning with Gimenez getting a single, Kwan, Fry, and so on?

STEPHEN VOGT: That's who we are. That's who that group has been in that room all year. As soon as we get punched, we answer. That's been our M.O. all year long, is as soon as we give up a run, our guys come right back.

And to put up the five spot, José gets hit by the pitch, Lane comes right up and gets the big blast. But we can't rely on the home run. We have to string things together, and our guys did both today. And then we got the add-on runs at the end, and I thought today was just a perfect picture of who our team is at our best, and couldn't have come on a better day.

Q. Clase going two innings, was that in the plans?

STEPHEN VOGT: I mean, we got to that point, and that was what we had, that we got the add-on run, I wanted Eli to get back out there and get us one out, and unfortunately the first hitter gets away from him. But that's where we had him. Emmanuel was ready to go. He's been super efficient all year. He's had a couple outings now of one plus or two innings where he stayed efficient, and he's the best closer, best pitcher on the planet. And you want the ball in his hands.

Q. Stephen, I know we asked you a bunch about Skubal, but what does it say about your guys to be able to get after him like that?

STEPHEN VOGT: Skubal is the best starting pitcher in the game right now, and our guys -- we saw him four days ago, five days ago, whatever it was, and our guys showed up



confident today. And we didn't know when it was going to happen, but every single person that walked in our clubhouse today believed we were going to get to him.

And we were fortunate to do that because he has had an unbelievable year. He's an unbelievable pitcher. I have a ton of respect for him and what he's done in this game. He's going to be really good for a very long time, and we were very fortunate to get to him today.

Q. With the Thomas Grand Slam, is it communicated to him to think two-seam early given the bases-loaded situation, pitching to contact?

A. We just talked about being on the heater. He's got two really good fastballs, and he threw them a lot to us over the last start, starting the regular season and all that. So we just talked to our guys about being on the fastball, and we were. And Lane didn't miss it, and it was a beautiful thing.

Q. What have you seen from Rocchio this postseason? Looks like he's kind of emerging defensively and offensively?

STEPHEN VOGT: I mean, Roc's been one of the best shortstops if not the best shortstop in the American League all year. For him, he looks relaxed. He looks like he's just playing. He's not playing for numbers. He's not going out chasing hits. He's having quality at-bat after quality at-bat.

And Roc has arguably been the most consistent hitter in our lineup, other than Kwan, for this postseason. And it's just been really fun to see him kind of come out of his shell.

Q. How draining is a series like that where the last four games were especially close, there's so many matchups going on, so much bullpen usage going on. What is that like for you?

STEPHEN VOGT: What are you talking? No. (Laughs.)

It is. But that's how we play. And when you're playing a team that's similar to you, there's going to be so much thinking and talking and planning and reacting to what the other team does.

And I have so much respect for A.J. and the Tigers. It was such a fun series. Again, it was indicative of our matchups throughout the regular season, and it's kind of whoever got the big hit was going to win. And fortunately Lane got it, and then, like I said, we added on. They didn't go away. They don't quit. We don't quit.

And it was an unbelievable series. No matter what the outcome of today was, I was going to be super proud of

our guys because that was a tough series for us, tough series for them. Two very evenly matched teams going at it, and it was a lot of fun.

Q. Stephen, how rewarding is it that when a guy comes here, Lane Thomas comes here in the trade, and he goes cold, but you stick with him, you put your faith in him? And obviously he came out of it a while ago, but this is his first playoffs. And to see what he's doing, how rewarding is that for you? And were there conversations where you told him, This is going to be the way it goes, I have your back?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah. I think if you look at Lane's journey with us, he gets here, comes out with a bang, gets a hit in his first game, big game his second game, and then he struggled, and he wasn't playing every day.

And there was a day in Kansas City when we were at Kansas City that he asked me, he goes, Hey, I thought I'd be in the lineup today. And I just said, Lane, look, here's what we've got. We've got guys that can hit righties. And we had a really good conversation and I challenged him.

And to Lane's credit, he asked -- he wanted to know. And then he steps up, and I can't take him out of the lineup. And that's what big-time players do. They step up and they get it done.

Q. So, Stephen, when you turn your attention to thinking about the Yankees, what do you think about the Yankees?

STEPHEN VOGT: I mean, we're playing a very, very good Yankee team. We've seen them in the regular season. This is one of the most talented teams in the league. So we know we have our work cut out for us.

We're going to enjoy tonight, and when we wake up tomorrow, it's go time. And our mentality is this is awesome. We're going to enjoy tonight, but we know our work's not done. We don't want to be satisfied with this. We want to keep it rolling. That's the rhetoric is we're not done yet, and I think that's for our guys, that's what's keeping them going.

Q. Stephen, before the game you were talking about you believed you'd be getting on a plane, either tonight or tomorrow. Where does that come from?

STEPHEN VOGT: You have to believe. If you don't believe in your group, don't even show up. We knew, as soon as we got back to Cleveland we had a chance. And, yes, we're facing the best pitcher in the league but that's who that group in that room is. They wanted it. They

wanted to face him today. And if you don't show up fully confident that you're going to win, you don't show up to the field, and our guys have taken that approach all year, and we're not going to stop now.

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