

NL Division Series: Mets vs Phillies

Friday, October 4, 2024

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Citizens Bank Park

Philadelphia Phillies

Zack Wheeler

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. So how did you spend the five days off and how much did you throw? How much did you get ready for Saturday?

ZACK WHEELER: I spent it with family on our off days, and at the field obviously when we had our workouts. I threw when I was here, threw a bullpen on Wednesday, full bullpen. I'll throw a couple more off the mound today just to get that little refresh and just try to be ready for tomorrow.

Q. Any concerns about the layoff or anything like that?

ZACK WHEELER: No, I mean, we've done it before throughout the season. It's not always this long, but it does happen. Just, I don't know, you throw a couple bullpens in between and hope for the best.

Q. You faced the Mets a couple of weeks ago. What sort of challenge do they pose offensively?

ZACK WHEELER: They're a good team. They're pretty lengthy in the lineup. They have some power, have some speed on the bases and make contact. So it's a tricky lineup and they're hot right now. They're playing good baseball. Just try to go out there and just minimize the guys on base. And, yeah, throw strokes try to get ahead.

Q. You had a lot of success in the postseason. Can you remember how you felt before that first postseason start, and do you feel the same every time since you've pitched? Are you more comfortable, were you more nervous the first?

ZACK WHEELER: I think you get nervous any time. It's very important, especially Game 1, to set the tone, you know, keep the fans in it, and just keep them off the board. Just try to let our team score and keep the momentum on



our side.

And you always get nerves, but once you get out there they kind of settle down a little bit and you kind of forget about them. Just do your normal job and just pitch and try to do the best you can.

Q. We spend a lot of time with stats. In '22 you guys had a similar run to what the Mets went through this year. Is there something more dangerous or real about when a team gets on those rolls? And was that a legit thing that made you guys more dangerous during that time?

ZACK WHEELER: The speed in baseball, you always hear, get into the playoffs, anything can happen. You always hear that. When you aren't necessarily in it, you're like, whatever. Then once it happens to you or your team, you're like, yeah, it's kind of real.

Because you get that momentum and you're playing well, and maybe you don't necessarily expect to be there or maybe you do kind of expect to be there. But you're just playing well and you're winning and you're having a lot of fun with the guys and stuff like that. It's definitely a roller coaster. And there's some truth to just get in and see what happens and hope for the best.

So they played really hard over there, and they scrapped and they played well down the stretch and they made it to the playoffs. Credit to them, their players and staff. It's hard to make the playoffs, that's for sure.

Q. Is it a little crazy for you to be facing the Mets in the playoffs or are you far enough removed from having played there that it doesn't really occur to you?

ZACK WHEELER: Yeah, I mean, it's a little bit of both. It's fun playing against those guys always. But at the same time, I've been over here for a while now and there's no hard feelings, everything has kind of changed over there personnel-wise. Like I said, there's no hard feelings, it's just baseball at this point. But at the end of the day I want to win.



Q. You talked about wanting to be better against lefties before the season started. You put up incredible numbers against righties all season. What allowed you to be even better against right-handed batters this season specifically?

ZACK WHEELER: Don't know. Honestly, I tried to attack them the same, the same repertoire and stuff like that. I don't think we really changed too much. Maybe just execution a little bit better. But there was nothing really set against righties. I did throw the split a little bit more against them this year, maybe that helped me out just on the sinker a good bit. But our concentration this year coming in was getting better against lefties. I feel like I did that a little bit, so it's a step forward.

Q. You have the home-field advantage here. We saw the first round last two years, it seemed like the visiting teams do well in the playoffs. Why do you think that is?

ZACK WHEELER: No idea. I don't know. I don't have an answer for you. This is a tough place to play. And we always took it that way. The Diamondbacks came in here and beat us two games to win the series last year, and that kind of hurt us. But we're much more hungry this year. It kind of left a bad taste in our mouth and we don't want to do that for our fans. All we needed to win was one last and we didn't do that. So we're pretty hungry this year.

Q. Knowing you were going to face the Brewers or Mets on Saturday, were you watching the game last night at all?

ZACK WHEELER: Yeah, a few of us got together and watched the game over at Castellanos' house, we had a little cookout and stuff like that. A bunch of us were over there and watched the game.

Q. Knowing Pete the way you do, playing together his rookie year, what did you think of that moment in that spot for him?

ZACK WHEELER: Yeah, I know he likes the spotlight and that was a perfect spot for him, I think. He's a good guy, and he has the power. Maybe he wasn't swinging it like he'd like to, but he always has that power in his back pocket, and he can always do what he did at any moment. So I'm happy for him as a person and happy for him.

Q. You guys have had a lot of familiarity in the playoffs in the past two years, obviously when you played Atlanta. There's going to be familiarity now with the Mets again. How do you approach that? Do you just do what you do or say it's best on best and

see who wins, or do you try to adjust things a little?

ZACK WHEELER: Yeah, like you said, there's a lot of familiarity there. They know me; I know them. And it's kind of a cat-and-mouse game at this point. I just pitched against them two starts ago, two weeks ago, whatever it was. It's pretty fresh, but at the same time, get out there, see how the game starts going, maybe we change some things up; maybe we don't. I'm going to pitch to my strengths and how I pitch. If we need to veer from that, we will.

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