

NL Division Series: Mets vs Phillies

Friday, October 4, 2024

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Citizens Bank Park

Philadelphia Phillies

J.T. Realmuto

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. What do you think has made Zack Wheeler so successful in the playoffs the last couple of years?

J.T. REALMUTO: I just think he's a competitor. I think he's obviously all season long he's extremely consistent for us. He goes out there every day and gives us a chance to win.

I think there's something about him in the postseason where he enjoys rising to the occasion. He really enjoys being that guy for us that we all look to and we all count on.

I just think there's a little more intensity in him when it comes to the postseason, and that's saying a lot for somebody who's clearly intense all season long.

Q. What's the most noticeable difference you've seen in Sanchez from last year to this year?

J.T. REALMUTO: I would say command, specifically with his fastball command. I think he's done a really good job this year of being able to use both sides of the plate with his two-seam as well as being able to throw it up and down.

Last year was a little more of, hey, we're just trying to get in the strike zone, get him to command the strike zone, and be able to work ahead of guys, using bigger parts of the plate with the fastball. This year it's a little more specific with him being able to use different locations; up, down, in and out, and be able to pitch to those specific spots.

And also just being able to use his slider a little more. I think his slider had gotten better. He used it for strikes early in the count well, and then has gotten a lot of chase with two strikes specifically to rise this year, which I didn't think we did as much last year. And then obviously his changeup has been his bread and butter since day one, that's stayed consistent and stayed good, as well.

Q. You guys have familiarity with the teams you play



in the playoffs, kind of a regular thing. How much of a cat-and-mouse game does it become when two teams know each other so well, and you're game-playing on how to attack them both from your pitchers against their hitters and vice versa?

J.T. REALMUTO: Yeah, I think there's a certain element to that. I think just having so much experience against them and knowing obviously they're a very good ball club and they're going to make adjustments. So it's kind of a back and forth of are we going to make this adjustment and hope they don't. There is a game of cat-and-mouse there, but at the end of the day we have to go out there and execute. We can't try to think too much about what they're going to do to us; we have to have our own approach, our own plan, and try to execute that to the best of our ability.

At the end of the day, if we do that, it doesn't matter too much about what adjustments they're trying to make, we just need to execute what we're doing.

Q. The core of this team isn't real young anymore, you guys have been around a little while. Came close the last two years. Can you talk about what you're feeling going into this playoff.

J.T. REALMUTO: I think just excited, really. I think the experience we've gained the last two years, it's addicting. Winning in the postseason is something that we all really enjoy doing and we've become accustomed to it. We want to take that next step and actually be able to finish it off this year and win the World Series. And I feel the experience we've gained the last two years, both the good and the bad, will help us in this round.

Q. Last couple of years playing the Wild Card series, you've had to maybe piece your rotation together. What kind of luxury is it you can send up who you want right now and you have an Aaron Nola in Game 3 and a Ranger Suarez in Game 4?

J.T. REALMUTO: Yeah, it's nice. I think that's certainly the advantage of not having to go play the Wild Card is that your guys are fresh, and we have them lined up the way we want to use them. Obviously there's something to



going and winning a Wild Card series and getting to take that momentum into this Division Series. For us it was good to be able to set things how we want and make sure our guys got the rest they needed.

Q. In '22 you guys had a similar run to what the Mets went through this year, coming back from an early deficit. What is it about teams like that when you get on a roll that make you guys so dangerous? Do you recall what made you guys so dangerous and do you see that with the Mets?

J.T. REALMUTO: For sure. For sure. I definitely see a lot of similarities. I think it's just this game is, it's such a game of momentum and success inside of baseball, it's very contagious. So when you start gaining confidence and you start feeling good about yourself and you see your teammates succeed, and then you come in in a big spot, that's extremely contagious and it just gives you confidence going forward.

I think that's something you're seeing with the Mets right now. They're a really hot team, they have a lot of momentum, and that's very similar, like you said, to us in 2022. You get in late, you're riding the high, and then you just roll with that confidence and it takes you through.

I think it's important for us to be able to come out and start well in this series and try to put an end to the momentum they've clearly gained.

Q. You mentioned that you guys have had a lot of experience in the playoffs in the past two years. What have you learned from that experience?

J.T. REALMUTO: We've learned a lot, honestly. I think just, you know, we came in in 2022 without a lot of expectations, and just kind of grew as a team and gained a lot of confidence in each other. And then last year I think obviously there were more expectations on us, and we didn't perform the way we wanted to.

I think this year we just have to go in and know that every day is a new day, and we can't get too high with the highs and too low with the lows. Until the series is over, we can't count our eggs. After we were up 2-0 against Arizona last year we felt great about it, and we didn't finish the job. No matter what happens in the first couple of games in a series, we have to continue to push and continue to fight until the end.

Q. How do you think this week went from a hitting perspective? Did you benefit from the velocity work?

J.T. REALMUTO: I think so, yeah. Obviously nothing

quite replicates in-game pace and actually stepping in a box and facing Major League pitching. It's hard to replicate that, but the work we did do in the cage and having that inner squad, it's as close as you can get. Like I mentioned, I think the off days are going to benefit us in the long run just being to get guys healthy and fresh.

Q. What did you see from Ranger in the inner squad the other day and are you confident his struggles are behind him?

J.T. REALMUTO: Yeah, I thought he looked great. His two-seam looked back, it looked like it was sharp and late. And just talking with him after his outing I saw that confidence in him. He felt really good about how he felt and how his pitches were moving and his shapes. For me that's all I needed to see. Less about what I felt in the box. I saw him confident and he felt good about his outing. So for me, I have a lot of confidence in him going forward.

Q. Did you face him in the batter box?

J.T. REALMUTO: Yes, I faced him, and obviously we split. I think I had one at-bat off him.

Q. And that confidence you talked about, is that something that hasn't been there the last couple of weeks?

J.T. REALMUTO: Ranger always has confidence. More like he felt good about his delivery and the shape of his pitches and how sharp and late his sinker was. Hearing him talk about that, I think that's just something he's missed recently. The shapes haven't been as sharp and as late as they typically are with him.

Q. Zack was saying as well as he's pitched in the postseason, he still feels some nerves before games, and then they kind of go away once he gets on the mound. I'm wondering if you've seen any hint of nerves from him in maybe pregame meetings or any glimpses of that? What's he like before a game?

J.T. REALMUTO: Calm, honestly. I think Zack doesn't even -- talking to him in meetings before every single game, sometimes it looks like he's actually about to fall asleep, and this is like an hour before the game (laughter).

He's just that calm. It's almost like he's -- I don't know if he is or not -- but it almost seems like he's meditating. He's just laying there listening and focusing, it seems like. He never really seems nervous to me. I'm sure everybody is going to be feeling that this time of year.

Q. To go back to the momentum talk. You guys were

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

the club that kind of gained that momentum the last two years, and especially two years ago and carried it from series to series. Now you're on the flip side. You had the week off. What's the key in your mind about making sure that you stop that momentum or take that momentum back from the Mets?

J.T. REALMUTO: I think it's a good start. I think us getting off on the right foot and hopefully grabbing an early lead tomorrow, winning Game 1, just putting an end to the momentum and just getting it on our side.

Obviously in our clubhouse we feel confident about ourselves, we feel good going into the series. They just came off a big series win, they're celebrating. They're clearly going to be riding high coming into the series. For us it's just extremely important to start off on the right foot, to have good at-bats, to grind out their pitcher, throw the ball well, play good defense. That stuff is even more important early in the series just to try to end the momentum they've accumulated.

Q. Did you get in on the Castellanos cookout, Mets-Brewer viewing last night?

J.T. REALMUTO: Yeah, I was there.

Q. What was that like watching that game but doing it with your teammates, knowing you're going to face the winner?

J.T. REALMUTO: Yeah, it was fun. We do cookouts like that stuff pretty regularly throughout the season. That was probably the first time we've ever done one and actually watched baseball. Usually we're just hanging out, maybe watching a football game. None of us have ever sat around and watched a baseball game together. That was kind of interesting. It was different. It was enjoyable. We enjoyed it. We had fun together. The food was really good so that was a plus.

Q. Who was there?

J.T. REALMUTO: A lot of guys, it would be hard to name them. Probably over half the team was there, yeah.

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