

# NL Division Series:

## Mets vs Phillies

Saturday, October 5, 2024  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA  
Citizens Bank Park

### Philadelphia Phillies

### Bryce Harper

#### Pregame 1 Press Conference

**Q. How did the bye help your elbow, and do you feel like you're close to a hundred percent now?**

BRYCE HARPER: Yeah, I think the bye helped a lot of us, I think our whole team. We kind of needed that, just the reset, mentally, physically. I thought we had a good week, obviously, Monday off, Tuesday workout, and then Wednesday had a pretty good scrimmage, as well. Then Thursday, optional, Friday yesterday, being able to come in and take BP, things like that.

I think a lot of us really needed that week to kind of recover a little bit and get going. I feel good mentally. I feel good physically. Just really excited to get going.

**Q. Is there a challenge in sort of regenerating emotionally when you've had this much time off? And despite all the pomp and circumstance, is it organic or is there a way you have to create it?**

BRYCE HARPER: No, I think as a team we do a good job of that, no matter what, if you have days off or you don't. I think obviously you look at teams like the Astros and certain other guys that have had days off or weeks off and they continue to play well and perform.

Obviously people think about during the week, oh, you're going to lose this or lose that, I don't see that. I just think going out there and playing the game we know how to play, bye weeks are good, being able to kind of just reset mentally, like I said, physically, as well. I don't think we need any more emotion or anything like that. I think this ballpark and us match pretty well.

I think we're all really excited to just get out there and get going and play.

**Q. The fact you've been through this before with the Braves and Marlins, is there any advantage or does it**



**go out the window and it's just playing baseball?**

BRYCE HARPER: No, it's a new team. Obviously the last two years, we've played, like you said, the Marlins, Braves. Obviously the Mets are a great opponent. Any time you get into this type of environment or this type of -- this time of the season, I should say, it doesn't matter who you play, every single team is going to be really good. They're going to have the same goals as you: To win a World Series and get deep in the postseason.

So the Mets are a very good opponent, they have been all year. That's why they're in this situation. We're looking forward to a really good series.

**Q. Were you surprised to see Kodai Senga as the Mets starter today? How do you go about attacking a guy you've seen obviously none of this year?**

BRYCE HARPER: I don't think I was too surprised. I mean, he's been throwing, they said. So they said there was a chance. And obviously when you get a phone call from your No. 1 guy and he says he wants to start, then you're going to let him start.

Very good pitcher. Obviously he has the heater with that forkball he throws. Obviously just trying to keep him in the zone and understanding and go out there and get on base and do the things we can as a team.

So, we're looking forward to it. He's a very good pitcher. We're looking forward to getting out there and facing him.

**Q. This is a little bit of a different postseason for you guys, you're not the underdogs anymore. This is the first time you've won the Division in a while. How do you think you guys are adjusting to that role?**

BRYCE HARPER: I think as players you get to this point of the season, every team has the same goal. You just have to go out there and play your game. I think that's the cool thing or the beauty of our game. It matches really well with the NHL, any team can do it, any team can win. You get to this point of the season and you see that.



I think just playing our game, understanding who we are as a team, our identity, the grit, determination, I don't think any of that underdog mentality will ever change for us. I think we're going to go in there and just play our game. We're going to play it hard, play it fast, play it right.

We have an unbelievable crowd behind us, and I think we're all looking forward to seeing that today. There's nothing like coming in this place and playing. When you see it in the postseason, it's just a different animal. It's a lot of fun. We're looking forward to it.

**Q. When you go into a big series, big game and you know you have Zack Wheeler on the mound, what sort of feeling is that? Does it create a different mindset for you as a player and the guys in the clubhouse?**

BRYCE HARPER: Any time you have your horse on the mound you have a really good chance to win. Obviously we have pretty good guys at the top, they can throw the baseball. I think our bullpen has been throwing it pretty well lately, as well. Just looking forward to that.

I think any time obviously, like you said, you have Zack Wheeler on the mound you have a really good chance to win. But you have to play the game. You have to understand that this is a tough game and you've got a tough opponent over there.

You have to keep playing, play our game, understand we're a really good team and just go to go from there.

**Q. You referred to Senga's forkball. He calls it a ghost fork. Is that just branding or does it look different than a conventional forkball that's thrown at about the same velocity?**

BRYCE HARPER: He's probably the only the guy I've seen that has a forkball, per se. I've seen split fingers and things like that, but his is definitely really good. You've got to be smart and hit the ones that are up, and try to let the ones go that are down. But it's a really tough pitch.

Just trying to keep him in the zone as best as possible and go from there.

**Q. Out of the hand does it look different than, say, a conventional split?**

BRYCE HARPER: It will in the shadows today probably.

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