

NL Division Series:

Mets vs Phillies

Saturday, October 5, 2024

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Citizens Bank Park

Philadelphia Phillies

Manager Rob Thomson

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. Can you talk about what went into the decision to start Rojas in center, Marsh in left for this game.

ROB THOMSON: Today, because it's 4 o'clock, there's going to be some shadows early, so there's a potential it's going to be tough to score some runs. So I want the best defense available.

Q. Can you quantify what Rojas brings to you as a defensive center fielder?

ROB THOMSON: Yeah, he's one of the best in the game. I can't quantify it. I don't know how many runs he saves versus how many runs we could score if we had a different bat in the lineup. And I think it depends on the game, if he gets a lot of action he probably prevents more runs.

But I'm really comfortable when he's playing center field. And then Marsh, who's one of the best left fielders in baseball, is manning left field.

So again, for today, anyway, and probably tomorrow with the shadows, I just want the best defense out there.

Q. What are the things that he does defensively, Rojas, that make him, in your opinion, the lead?

ROB THOMSON: I think it's ever since he was a kid he was well trained with taking batting practice the right way, defensively, and reading balls off the bat. Getting jumps. Anticipating where the ball is going to be hit. He does a great job at that. Not only is he fast but he gets off the ball quickly, takes very efficient routes. Arm strength, arm accuracy is there, attacks the ball, gets it out quickly.

He's as complete an outfielder for me as you will see. And there's a few out there but he's one of them.

Q. How surprised were you by the Kodai Senga



announcement that he's starting today, and how difficult was it to prepare since he hasn't really pitched in a Major League game much this season?

ROB THOMSON: Yeah, it is difficult. But we'll just have to adjust on the fly. I was surprised. Mendy announced it in his press conference yesterday. That was the first I had heard of it. They kept it under wraps pretty good.

But, yeah, we're just going to have to adjust.

Q. When you expect shadows is there anything in particular that hitters should be focusing on or is there anything they should key on?

ROB THOMSON: I think do the best you can to pick up the baseball and pick up the ball coming out of the hand and try to adjust. These 4 o'clock games in the postseason can be very difficult. I'm not sure what else to do.

Q. What made Allard the right guy for you guys to add to the roster?

ROB THOMSON: Just length. He's going to probably give us the most length if we get into an extra inning game, the rules go back to Abner Doubleday rules, so I just wanted as much length as we could get.

Q. What's your relationship like with Carlos Mendoza? Did you guys overlap during your time with the Yankees?

ROB THOMSON: Yeah, when I was a Big League coach we had hired Mendy in the Minor Leagues, and he ended up becoming our defensive coordinator. Every Spring Training we would invite all the coordinators to Spring Training to help out with Major League camp.

He was a fascinating guy, because it was right at the time where a lot of shifting was starting to come into the game, and I really didn't understand much about it but he did. So I learned a lot about infield positioning from him.

We'd sit, you know, and just talk about situations for -- very close. I love Mendy. He's a really good baseball man, he



understands the game. He understands players and how to -- he respects players so he knows how to treat them. He understands how difficult this game is.

I have a lot of respect for him.

Q. Have you talked to him yet?

ROB THOMSON: I have not. I'll probably see him at the plate.

Q. Is it a little different facing off against like a good friend?

ROB THOMSON: Not really. I mean, you know, players are playing. We're just sort of managing the game. So it's not like he's pitching and I'm hitting.

Q. Can you just take us inside the clubhouse. Throughout the week the guys and you have been talking about maintaining intensity through the bye. Is it loose? Are they still having fun? Are they feeling ready or are they locked in and intense and ready to go?

ROB THOMSON: I think they're pretty normal, which is locked in and having fun at the same time. And they create a great balance with that. I thought our workouts were really good. I thought they got after it really well and were really focused on what they were doing. The intrasquad game we played on Wednesday was pretty intense. And they played the game the right way. So I think we're as ready as we can be.

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