

NL Division Series:

Mets vs Phillies

Sunday, October 6, 2024

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Citizens Bank Park

New York Mets

Harrison Bader

Pregame 2 Press Conference

Q. You've played for a lot of managers. What does Carlos Mendoza do so well to create an environment where most guys feel they can thrive?

HARRISON BADER: You know, the No. 1 job of a manager's duty every day is just to manage his players, understand their personalities, understand maybe when to chime in and talk to them, when to pull them aside, when to pump them up, all these things play into that role. I actually think he just does a good job of observing that.

He's very communicative with us. Especially down the stretch in these last two weeks, identifying roles and keeping our minds ready for whatever might be thrown our way. I think he's just done a very good job of doing that.

Listen, with regards to that, he's kept it very calm, very tame, not making the situation more than what it is, and just laying out how he envisions these things going, and if we have to adjust he does so accordingly.

I just think he does a very good job of just playing the game situation out for the players and as it presents itself, we calmly take it from there.

Q. You've worn the dog tags on behalf of the hostages in Gaza and Jewish star on your belt. A lot of Jewish fans have responded to it. We're coming on a year of October 7. I'm wondering if you've taken time to reflect on not only your actions, what they meant to Jewish fans, but interactions you've had over this last year?

HARRISON BADER: Yeah, I appreciate you mentioning that, for sure. I've done my best just to play baseball, keep to myself. Anything related to my beliefs, if you will, off the field, I've just shown up every day with one intention, that's playing baseball.

But, you know, I think it is just important regardless of



whatever might be going on as it relates to Israel and Jewish families and everybody involved in the situation, I mean, it's just important to just be grateful for every single day as it does come, regardless of your religious beliefs or anything off the field as it is for me. I'm just thankful for the opportunity.

I've definitely welcomed a lot more love and gratitude into my life as a result of just listening to countless stories and experiences. That goes for both sides involved here.

I really do want to keep it just related to baseball, but again, I will just say I think it's important to just be grateful for every opportunity. This has been an absolute blessing to be a part of this game. To be given an opportunity as a free agent this offseason, I never imagined I would have as much fun as I have this year.

Again, I just think it's important to again just be grateful and just take things as they come, because you just never know how they might change up. So I'm just excited for the opportunity.

Q. I know the starting pitchers have a lot to do with fact that you guys have got started with a lot of late rallies, but the pitchers that come after those starting pitchers are really good, too, out of the bullpen. Can you pin anything on why you guys have been that good late, something about what you guys have done, whether it's your attack, anything that you could point to maybe?

HARRISON BADER: Yeah, you know, I think why we kind of got what we got going on is that no one has tried to define it, and I think that's important. I think a lot of that is the need to find an answer or to pinpoint something, that's wasted energy. I think most game situations where it matters most there's just a narrowed focus when things kind of go down for us from a pitching standpoint or even on defense.

When you have teams that get punched and then you narrow your focus to do your best to prevent it from happening further, I think that's when you kind of enter that territory of really being dangerous and being able to just



sway the momentum in your favor, and we saw it yesterday. Obviously Senga gave up the home run and he shifted his plan, which was evident of how he kind of attacked hitters from that point on, and he was successful.

I think sometimes you need to get punched in the face a little bit to narrow your focus. I think in an ideal situation he wouldn't have wanted to give up a home run, but in many ways maybe he's happy it happened.

I think that's the point is entering these games with all the noise and whatever's going on behind the scenes, you never know what in the game might end up being something helpful for you. And just attacking it as it comes and remaining present I think is what allows players to just go out there and just play free regardless of, you know, whatever pressure people might say is out there.

I think we've gone through a lot as a team for the past two weeks, and there's not a single guy that's complained about anything. We're actually having the most fun we've ever had for being traveling two weeks on the road. I think we're -- I think we love it, you know. It's a traveling circus, if you will.

So we just take the game situations as they come and zoom in our focus even more, and stayed together in that dugout, and yeah, listen, it's been fun.

Q. You had a really good, a really impressive postseason a couple years back with the Yankees. What have you taken from that experience and brought it here with the Mets?

HARRISON BADER: Yeah, it's a new environment for me, I was fresh off a seven- or eight-week stint in a boot where I was thrown into a clubhouse with guys who maybe have heard about me or just seen me around the league. But their first glimpse of me was walking into a locker room in a boot from the trade deadline. There was probably a massive question mark over my head as to why maybe we acquired this guy and this and that.

I think the biggest thing was I didn't really know what the future was going to look like for me there, but I knew that Brian Cashman said whenever you're ready, we have all the confidence in the world in you to go out there and play your game. Once I was out of that boot, in many ways I felt free and I felt like I had nothing to lose. All I wanted to do was help the team win.

I've said it before and I've listened to a lot of really good players that I respect around the league say that when you play for something bigger than yourself, all the pressure, all the expectations, whatever else can prevent you from

succeeding, all those go out the window because it's bigger than you. And fully buying into that was what I did. Got an opportunity obviously to play in the playoffs there. It was just free, it was calm, and just trying to help my team win.

I think there's a big learning lesson in there, and I think it's important to take that same approach away from the postseason, you know. You should always be playing for the team. You should always be playing for something bigger than yourself. Because it is very hard, those guys on the other side, regardless of the organization or the situation, they are extremely talented and they have a lot of information. The best way to kind of deal with that at times is just to be free from it all. Prepare, of course, and do what you have to do to be successful from a physical and mental standpoint, but be free of it all once the game starts.

I think there's a lot of power in being free. The postseason presents players with the opportunity to do just that, which is to be free, to play for something bigger than themselves. To celebrate everything as it comes with respect and within reason. But when you really do feel like you're helping a bigger entity, if you will, it builds you up and anything is possible.

We've seen tremendous performances in all sports across the years we've used sports as entertainment of heroism, if you will, and big moments where players separate themselves because they're just free and they just want to do well for the team.

That's why we love the postseason. That's why I think it's a great opportunity for teams and individuals to do well. And yeah, just taking that same approach and channeling that I think is what I've kind of, you know, what I've done since, you know, since we made it in Atlanta. I'm excited and we'll see how it shakes out today.

Q. Following up on that, was there anything specific at the plate other than having that approach, was there anything at the plate that really worked for you during that Yankees run?

HARRISON BADER: Well, yeah, you know, as important as it is to swing at good pitches, it's also equally as important to not swing at certain pitches. And I think I just had a good approach of taking what, you know, like physically taking the pitches that I couldn't really do much with and just kind of sitting in the pocket on the at-bat, then obviously delivering on pitches where they kind of were left over the middle of the plate.

I think that's what this is about, right, is just kind of, you know, playing the game situation. Obviously hitters have

more success when the ball catches more of the middle of the plate. So, you know, that might come 0-0, it might come 3-2, it might come in the eighth pitch of the at-bat, I'm not really sure. But just preparing your mind and preparing your body for when that opportunity comes I think is what's most important.

Truly, the biggest thing is to just breathe, is just to relax. We're just two adults up there. It's obviously pitcher versus the catcher, and everybody feels pressure. But I think it's the ability of one of the two, if you will, to slow it down even more to where you can find a way to be successful for your team. I think if you do that, you're pretty dangerous.

I think in 2022 I just had the ability to do it then, and just try to channel that tonight the best we can.

Q. Growing up in New York with both teams in the playoffs right now, both teams excelling in the playoffs, what does this mean to the city and obviously you're looking forward to getting back home and seeing the home crowd?

HARRISON BADER: Yeah, we take everything in stride. This team has done a fantastic job of remaining present and reminding every single person to remain present and never to get ahead of yourself even by one pitch.

Yes, I'm certainly looking forward to getting home, but we do have a game here which we're all very much looking forward to. I think New York City is home. New York City is a special place for anyone who's from New York City or just has visited, I'm sure there's a similar sentiment, if you will.

Listen, I think it would be fantastic for New York to continue to see its team win, you know. I think, yeah, we've got a long way to go. I don't even know, I don't even have a response. I think it would be nice, but before we get to that, we've got to take care of business. That's kind of what I've got for that.

Q. Part of my question, I guess I'll follow up with, do you have any vague recollections of 2000, I know you were only six back then, but any recollections of the Mets/Yankees series in 2000?

HARRISON BADER: No. I've got nothing.

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