

# NL Division Series:

## Mets vs Phillies

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Citi Field

### Philadelphia Phillies

### Austin Hays

#### Pregame 3 Press Conference

**Q. Can you talk about getting back, are you back to a hundred percent strength in your mind yet?**

AUSTIN HAYS: Yeah, I feel like I'm back to being myself. I don't feel reserved in any way, in any facet of the game. My power is there, my strength is there, my speed. So I feel like myself all around.

It was very difficult to get back to that point. We really had to push are hard. I'm thankful for the training staff here and all the doctors to just give me a lot of clarity and know that we were on the other side of that thing. It was really hard for us to figure out what was going on at first.

Once we found the infection and we were able to start treating it, it didn't heal quite as quick as we would have liked. We went back, kept running the tests, kept figuring out what was going on to see everything clear up and know a hundred percent that it's gone and I'm healthy. That was a big part of it, too, just to know I'm on the other side of it.

I started feeling better, my labs were coming back normal. I felt good for a few days and then started feeling a lot of the same effects again. We went back, retested everything. And then the results actually came back really good. So I think I was just trying to push it a little too hard too early, my body just wasn't ready. We gave it a couple of days and then I was able to come back and play a couple of games with the team. And I felt really good.

So it was a good thing for me that we had clinched that five-day break, because we were able to get on it, push it really, really hard, and then have a recovery break. I feel great now, I feel really good.

**Q. Aside from battling to get back, just what have the last few months been like, trying to adjust to a new team, a new city, rehabbing and dealing with the illness? What's the acclimation process been like to**



the Phillies?

AUSTIN HAYS: I felt great when I first came over. I was playing every day. Things were going well. The injury happened, I wasn't feeling really good coming back from that. I was on rehab and I was kind of doing stuff away from the team. I wasn't with the guys for a little bit. I got to know the training staff really well and got to know some other people. But I wasn't really with the team.

Once I started feeling better and came back from that, that was really good to get back with the guys. I was able to be there when we clinched. Just getting to enjoy those moments with the team, that's great as a player. When you're on the outside looking in it's tough. That's part of the rehab, too, is just trying to fight to get back with everyone.

It's been a really good experience since I've been able to get past the rehab side of it and just be back with the team, be playing whenever I can, whenever the opportunities are there, and just enjoy this ride. I was able to get my first postseason win the other night, so that was a great experience, too.

**Q. Manaea dropped his arm slot a few months ago, and he's become a different pitcher. What challenge does he present?**

AUSTIN HAYS: He's got more angle now, kind of makes his fastball play up a little bit more than it used to when he was over the top. You just have to understand that the ball is coming from a different angle. Wherever that contact point is for you to be able to combat that angle with your swing, just have to know where that is, and know how you want to attack the ball and where you need it to start, essentially.

**Q. First game you mentioned with the Phillies in postseason, first two games, actually, but what was the vibe like in that ballpark experiencing that for the first time?**

AUSTIN HAYS: Yeah, the Red October is real. It was awesome. That might have been the most fun baseball



game I've been a part of. Just the back and forth, ups and downs. And then for us to come back and win in walk-off fashion, and in one of the first games I've gotten to see there. It was really special. It's a really loud stadium. I'm looking forward to playing some more games there.

**Q. I know you only got the one plate appearance and it probably didn't go the way you wanted. But do you almost look at that as a silver lining that you were able to get one knowing that you have to play in these next couple of games and having not been in the lineup for a couple of weeks? It's one thing to be taking BP, another thing to be in live game action?**

AUSTIN HAYS: Yeah, that was kind of a big step for me, too, knowing everything I went through the past couple of months, not only did I make the playoff roster but I got in the game. That was just something that's big for me. That was my goal those last couple weeks going through everything I was going through. Like, am I going to make it back, I'm not really sure.

So that was a really positive thing for me. So now this was the opportunity that I was fighting so hard for and I'm really excited. We all had five days off at the end of the season so I think we're all in the same boat right now.

But I did get plenty of at-bats at the end of the year. I feel prepared. I feel comfortable. Yeah, I was taking a lot of BP and doing all that. We had our workout day. We had a nine-inning game that we played in the middle of that. I played games at the end of the year with the team and I played rehab games.

So I've played over a week's worth of games leading up to this. So I'm not just coming in straight off the bench. I have had game at-bats so I feel very confident.

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