

AL Championship Series: Guardians vs Yankees

Sunday, October 13, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

New York Yankees

Aaron Boone

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Volpe said we haven't played our best ball. Do you agree? If so, what do you need to do to be better?

AARON BOONE: I hope so. You're always chasing that at your best in every aspect of the game, right? I thought we did a lot of good things in the first series against a good club.

We didn't break through big time runs-wise, but I thought our guys had a lot of really good at-bats. The amount of walks we had, those talking points, I felt like out there, that's what we do. I thought our at-bat quality was heavy, strong. Hopefully in this series we're able to break through more and throw some crooked ones on there.

But I thought we did a lot of really good things. I feel like guys are in a really good place heading into this series.

Q. How much debate was there about your Game 1 starter, and what led you to go with Carlos?

AARON BOONE: A little bit. Obviously Gerrit is going Game 2. So it was really kind of choosing between Clarke and Carlos. It just felt like it was close, and I feel like this kind of keeps them on rhythm as much as possible without giving one guy a huge, long layoff. They both line up to pitch a game in Cleveland.

Yeah, there was debate, but it felt like Carlos was the guy.

Q. What do you like about Carlos going into Game 1?

AARON BOONE: He's a really good pitcher. For him struggling there and getting knocked out in his last outing in the fourth, also feel like came out throwing the ball really well in his first big experience. Hopefully it's something he can take from that outing that allows him to really break through and have that outing we know he's capable of.



Q. Cleveland obviously has a dominant closer in Clase, but what stands out to you about the rest of their bullpen?

AARON BOONE: It's probably on balance been about as dominant as they've been. They've got four or five guys down there that are high leverage. For the most part -- especially their righties really are by and large neutral guys that are really good against right and left.

Some different looks down there. Herrin's been a beast against lefties especially. Big time stuff, and they're a team that obviously can and likes to shorten the game.

Q. Based on what you know about the fans here, do you expect a loud reception for Naylor?

AARON BOONE: I don't know. Look, I'm sure Yankee Stadium is going to be rocking tomorrow night. It looks like cooler weather is moving in for these first two games, so it's going to have that October feel to it. We're now in the round playing for a chance to win a pennant and go to the World Series. It's going to be an awesome atmosphere.

Obviously we have some history with a lot of guys over there in the playoffs, so I'm sure it will be a great environment.

Q. After Gerrit in 2, Clarke in 3, Hill 4?

AARON BOONE: Yes.

Q. Carlos came out extremely amped in Game 2. Have you talked about just him needing to regulate his emotions better, or do you want him to be that amped?

AARON BOONE: I think that's one of the learning things you kind of go through. Again, I think he's in a really good spot, throwing the ball well, and hopefully going through his first playoff game here in the Bronx and experience all the emotions that you do, hopefully there's something that serves him well in this next time.

Q. With how well Cleveland hits left-handed pitching, was there any pause given to having him probably



start twice in the series rather than waiting until Game 3?

AARON BOONE: A little bit of that. But starting Game 3, he's in line for two potentially also, so considered all that. I feel like, when he's at his best, he should be able to go out there and give us a good outing.

Q. Where do things stand with Anthony Rizzo right now?

AARON BOONE: We're going to see today. He did a lot more yesterday and did pretty well, but I want to see more today.

Q. Is there a chance he's on the roster tomorrow?

AARON BOONE: There's a chance.

Q. Aaron, when you were piecing together your bullpen in September, there was a moment you were here and you said you felt you had five or six guys who could get the final three outs of a game.

At that moment there were probably some skeptics who said you don't have those guys. Now you look at the way your relievers have performed in the postseason, what you said has been accurate. How confident were you at the end of the September that you would get those kinds of performances from your relievers?

AARON BOONE: I think I was speaking, just based on like for -- we've had our bumps in the road for our bullpen this year, but I did feel good like in the month of September like we had four or five guys throwing the ball as well as they had at any point and a complementary group that I feel like match up at different parts of the lineup and you kind of protect each other a little bit that way. And we're getting some guys back in the mix as well.

So I feel really good about that group that they're able to get important outs for us. Obviously they were super successful in the first round, but now we move on, and we've got to keep it up.

Q. Aaron, what makes José Ramírez such a good player?

AARON BOONE: He's the complete package. I get on people all the time. If I hear another how underappreciated, underrated he is from somebody on a network or something, I want to rip my arms off and throw it at the TV. He's not underappreciated. He is not underrated. He's a great on track Hall of Fame player, and everybody knows it, including everyone sitting out here.

Switch hitter, power, great base runner, great defender at third. Like he's a great all-around player, period. He creates some problems. Hopefully we can keep him quiet enough, but I think he has the utmost respect from everyone in the game and very much is not underrated.

Q. I just wanted to ask if José Ramírez is underrated possibly (laughter).

AARON BOONE: It's almost, when someone starts talking about him, you have to mention how underappreciated he is. It's incredible. It's like when a broadcaster goes on a show, and they always introduce him as the great so and so is coming on. It's like it's part of the sentence.

Q. Obviously there's going to be plenty of changes, I assume, for the roster that you put out tomorrow based on what you had, for some of those guys you had even for the Division Series, even guys that didn't get any run at all, what are the benefits you hope some of your young guys would have gotten just from being part of the experience, being on the roster and being available?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, that experience. We ended up not deploying things, but we were a play away or a situation away from having pretty much all those guys in the game in certain situations. They really didn't end up manifesting themselves at the very end, but hopefully just being in there and going through the preparation and the time lag leading up to a game hopefully are things that serve everyone well.

Q. Just wanted to ask one more question about the famously underrated José Ramírez. When the best player on the opposing team is a switch hitter, how do you go about trying to neutralize a player like that when you can't necessarily throw a platoon advantage at them?

AARON BOONE: With three batter minimums and stuff, that's a big part of this. So you're just trying to get guys in position to where they can be successful and where they might match up. You're obviously going to be careful in situations.

So it just plays into who's in and around them and how many outs there are, and all those kind of things when you're making a decision on a guy to go after him.

Q. You're a watcher of baseball on TV. This time of year, there's a lot of studio shows, a lot of things like that you just mentioned with Ramírez. Do you find yourself listening to those shows and almost like

there's a lot of Hall of Famers or do you feel like maybe I'll turn this off?

AARON BOONE: Not necessarily turn it off, but I can't really say I saw many so far in the postseason like because usually you're coming in from your game, you're doing your thing, or you're watching the other game and you're kind of in and out of it.

So not necessarily turn it off, but I'm not necessarily paying that close attention to that stuff.

Q. Volpe hit the heck out of the ball to the right side in that series with very little reward. Do you like that and tell him to keep going? Or do you think there's actually more hits if he pulls it?

AARON BOONE: No. I thought in these games and the week of preparation leading up, he's looked as good as he has offensively at any time all year. So I will sign up for what he's got going on right now.

Q. This series presents the opportunity for the Yankees to go to their first World Series since 2009. Do you think about that, or are you the manager, one day at a time mentality? Or is it kind of in the back of your mind about the great opportunity this club has?

AARON BOONE: We certainly understand that we're playing for a pennant now, for the right to go to the World Series. So you're aware of that. But you're also like, man, it's Game 1. That's where we're trying to get ready for that. In a lot of ways, that's a long ways off still, and we've got a series to play out.

So you understand what's at stake, but it's all about the game in front of us.

Q. Can we revisit that question at another time?

AARON BOONE: I hope so.

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