

AL Championship Series: Guardians vs Yankees

Monday, October 14, 2024

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Yankee Stadium

New York Yankees

Juan Soto

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. Emmanuel Clase is one of the best closers in baseball. I know you've only faced him a couple times. How good is that cutter compared to other ones you've faced, and what makes him so good at the end of games?

JUAN SOTO: I think I only faced him once or twice in my career. I couldn't tell you how good he is. Definitely you can see what he's been doing throughout the year, how tough he is and everything, and the movement that the ball has.

I think the last time I faced him, I didn't get the chance to see it too much because I swung early, and he makes like two pitches to me and it was two different cutters.

We will see. I think his stuff is really good. Definitely we're going to go out there and try to have success against him, but we will find a way. We have our plans and everything against him. We're going to figure it out.

Definitely, he's one of the best in the business right now. I think for me probably reliever of the year and everything.

Q. With the way Cleveland's pitching staff is lined up here, they're not getting a lot of length out of their starters and their bullpen has been tested. How much do you guys have to take advantage of that and try to do it early on to kind of get some fast starts and not let the game get into the bullpen?

JUAN SOTO: For us, it's been a plan since the whole year long to be aggressive, to be the team to score first. That was the mindset that we've been having since day one. So I think we're going to try to do the same thing.

We can't count their starters out, so we've got to be aggressive. We can't get too comfortable with that. We have to show who we are early and try to get control of the



game early.

That's the mindset for us, I think, and never count the starters out, as you say, even if they don't have too much good starters and everything. We want to be out there and try to take control since the first pitch. I think that's what's going to help us to go through the bullpen and try to win the game.

Q. What's been your key to success against Cobb? You have some pretty good numbers against him.

JUAN SOTO: I can't tell you that right now. I can tell you after the game, but not right now. I bet you he's listening.

(Laughter).

Q. What's been your favorite part about playing with Aaron Judge this season?

JUAN SOTO: I would say my favorite part is the way we've been getting along with each other and how we've been having fun and helping each other out, I think is the biggest part for me, how we've been enjoying the game together.

Day in, day out, we try to find a way to make it fun and to make it good for us and for the whole group. I think that's the biggest part.

We all know how good he is and how he's managed himself in the clubhouse and everything, but I feel like even with all that stuff, the way we have fun every day, I think that's the biggest part for me.

Q. And what have you learned from being around him? I know you've played with a lot of great players over your career, but is there anything that stands out?

JUAN SOTO: For me, it's how big he is for the team, for the organization, but how he handles himself with his teammates and everything and how he shows that he really cares about his teammates, I think is one of the things I learned more about him and how he handles himself.



Q. Heading into Game 1, what do you think of this team's chances of getting to the World Series?

JUAN SOTO: I think we have a really good chance. We have everything that we need to do it. We have a great team to go out there and try to take it all the way. We feel really confident.

Definitely we know it's not going to be easy. Those guys in the other dugout, they won't make it easy for us. Definitely, we feel comfortable that we can go out there and perform.

Q. What does getting Anthony Rizzo back mean for this team, and what can he bring?

JUAN SOTO: It means a lot. He's one of the veteran players that have done it in the past. He knows how to win a World Series and be a champion. What else can you ask for? He's a guy that's going to be out there. He's going to have really good at-bats. He's going to play Gold Glove defense at first base. I think it's really important for the team to have him back.

Q. Looking back to how you were a year ago, how do you think you've grown or changed as a player being here?

JUAN SOTO: I think I've been growing a lot. In baseball, you never stop learning. I think you're always learning something new every year, getting to know more people, getting to know more guys around you, staff and everything that always bring you something to help you out.

I think every year I try to focus on something and learn a lot of things. Even defense-wise, hitting-wise, base running-wise, I've been learning a lot this year, and mostly because I'm moving from the NL to the AL.

I think the baseball plays a little bit different in the AL. Talent-wise, I think it's the same thing, but there's a couple different things that probably AL teams do over here that impress me a little bit.

Q. What things did you notice?

JUAN SOTO: It's mostly on, I would say, inside stuff in the clubhouse, and even on the field, how the fans and everything in the division that we are is one of the hardest divisions in the Big Leagues. So that's all that stuff. And pitcher-wise, everything, I think, I learn a little bit of everything.

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