

# AL Championship Series: Guardians vs Yankees

Monday, October 14, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

## New York Yankees

### Gerrit Cole

#### Pregame 1 Press Conference

**Q. Carlos was in here the other day, and he spoke about trying to do a better job of controlling his emotions, having a poker face, and he spoke about you in your final game in Kansas City and how you're so dialed in, it's almost robotic-like when you're going back and forth from the dugout. Do you guys speak at all about that?**

GERRIT COLE: Yeah. I mean, we're a pretty tight group as a rotation, so we speak about all facets of the game.

That's a compliment from Carlos. I appreciate that. I think that's what we're all trying to strive to do is get in the competitive mindset and stay in there as long as we can.

**Q. Do you offer him any tips as to how he could do a better job of controlling those emotions on the mound?**

GERRIT COLE: No. I'm just an advocate.

**Q. Gerrit, what does it mean to have Rizzo back in the lineup and also at first base?**

GERRIT COLE: Yeah, it's big for us. To be honest, Cabby and Berti had a tremendous series for us last time, a lot of credit to them for filling in in that role. But Rizzo is such an accomplished first baseman, a master around the bag.

Just a slow heartbeat with a gritty at-bat, a lot of contact. Tony's a great player, so we're thrilled to have him back in the lineup.

**Q. How have you seen Austin Wells grow behind the plate this year from the beginning of when he got called up till now?**

GERRIT COLE: He's just hungry for more information. He's always staying curious. So when you're in that type of



learning mindset, you can chew up as much experience as you can.

He came in with a good footing overall, and he just -- like I said, he just tries to improve every single day. So he's grown a lot.

**Q. You'll be making your 20th career postseason start tomorrow. While I'm sure you've appreciated the opportunity every time, is there something a little different about this year? Given the injury that you had at the beginning of the year, do you find yourself appreciating these opportunities even more so?**

GERRIT COLE: I've certainly been grateful for being able to come back and having the people around me that supported that journey as well. It's not just been the postseason. It's really been every time I've been blessed to take the ball again.

As of recently, most of my focus is mostly on getting prepared, but there are still moments for gratitude, especially after games with teammates and with the people that helped me get to this spot.

**Q. It's going to be low 50s, high 40s tomorrow night. What are some of the challenges that come along with pitching in cold weather, and how is that experience different than when it's normal weather?**

GERRIT COLE: It's cold. It certainly can affect the feel of your fingers. Obviously it doesn't take much to cool the body temperature down after you come off the inning. It's about keeping blood flow moving, keeping your fingers as active as you can out there, whether that's gripping the ball or keeping your hand closed or blowing on your hand, whatever that may be. I'm not sure, it might not get that cold.

Sneaky guys stay hydrated too. Like you don't realize how much you sweat even though you're cold and you have long johns on and sleeves. So it's a little different.

**Q. What do you consider to be the strength of this Cleveland lineup and just how do you go about**



## navigating them?

GERRIT COLE: The strengths of this Cleveland lineup are a lot of good hitters. Obviously tremendously left-handed, versatile both sides of starters, key cogs in the lineup. Obviously José Ramírez, perennial MVP candidate, Josh Naylor is a perennial top of the league slugger.

They put a lot of tough at-bats. They don't walk a lot. They put a lot of balls in play. They don't strikeout a lot. They have high contact quality. They put a lot of action. The running game is high. They have three guys over 35 steals for the year -- 35 attempts, rather, for the year.

So it's a lot of action, and it forces you to play a clean brand of baseball, which they're trying to impart a lot of pressure on.

**Q. This is actually a well-timed followup. I was hoping you could expand on their running game and how it is that you guys can shut it down.**

GERRIT COLE: Just the traditional stuff. You've got to make sure you're mixing up your timings. Their running game is driven by the fact they have smart base runners, fast base runners. Sandy Alomar, Jr., is obviously an elite first base coach. He's been there forever studying every advantage he can get and teaching these guys obviously a lot of his wisdom.

We're going to have to be clean transfer behind the plate. Sometimes there's not a whole lot you can do except for try to be as efficient as you can before the steal and try to be as efficient as you can after the steal. It's certainly one of their strengths.

**Q. You've pitched in every round of the playoffs from the time you came up to now. How much better have you gotten at kind of regulating both the emotional output and kind of the physical grind of October since ten years ago?**

GERRIT COLE: I don't know how much better. I feel that I continue to chip away at it, find little things that maybe I can improve on or that I need to clean up. My evaluation process is very similar to that of the regular season. My preparatory process is very similar to the regular season.

Things are dialed up a little bit, intensity and media, and you've got to do a press conference before you pitch and whatnot, but essentially it's the same game. So I try to stay as close to what I normally do. Probably the more experience I get, the more certainty I have in that.

**Q. In what ways can an experienced first baseman like**

**Rizzo help aid stopping the running game more so than someone who's a neophyte at the position?**

GERRIT COLE: Well, he's certainly got heightened awareness of the strategies to steal a bag and what somebody would be looking at in order to exploit, and he's got a slow enough heartbeat that his focus -- he can notice things and focus on things that maybe otherwise the players are focused on fielding a ground ball or getting off the bag. He's got a little more nuance to his game.

Obviously it's an advantage that he's a left-handed thrower. The tag certainly provides an advantage in terms of reaching to the back side of the bag. Those are probably the main things.

**Q. Does anyone else call Rizzo Tony? Is that a widely known thing in the clubhouse?**

GERRIT COLE: Yeah, I hear people call him Tony. When we're mad at him, we call him Anthony.

(Laughter).

**Q. Being back in the ALCS, is there anything about this particular Yankee team that stands out among the ones you've played for?**

GERRIT COLE: Certainly the middle of the order is in a really good spot. Overall, we're passing the baton really well from a lineup perspective and from a pitching perspective. I would say it's a well-balanced team. It's a well-rounded team. There's a little bit of speed and obviously a lot of power. There is a good mix of offerings off the mound, several different looks.

It's a complete team, and we're playing really well together right now.

**Q. What would you say the mood in the clubhouse is right now heading into Game 1 with a chance to go to the World Series this series?**

GERRIT COLE: Based on the last couple days because I've just been running around for like an hour and a half already so far, it's been just the same, plugging along, focused.

It's a challenge sometimes with the off days in the postseason to replicate that daily like got to turn on the focus, but you can self-regulate that and your work. I think that's what's been going on.

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