

AL Championship Series: Guardians vs Yankees

Monday, October 14, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

Cleveland Guardians

Stephen Vogt

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. Soto's been really good against Alex Cobb. In your experience, whether it's as a manager or as a catcher, what's the best way to kind of approach that matchup? It would seem to be an interesting question as far as how aggressive versus how careful you are?

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah, I think at the end of the day, Juan Soto is good off a lot of pitchers. For Alex, it's be yourself, Attack them with your strengths. We can do all of the scouting reports we want. We can dive into it all we want, but it comes down to executing pitches and making pitches against one of the best hitters in this league.

Alex knows it's going to be a tough matchup. There's a lot of them.

Q. When did you know that you had a bullpen that would be this dominant, and what are some of the traits that make it so dominant?

STEPHEN VOGT: I think coming out of Spring Training we didn't know. We lost Trevor Stephan and James Karinchak at Spring Training, so we lost our seventh and eighth inning guys from last year. We had a lot of guys that hadn't been out there before.

We saw the stuff in Spring Training. We saw what these guys were capable of throwing the ball. It just seemed over the next few months, no matter what position we put any number of our guys out of the bullpen in, they all got outs and all did their job.

We kind of knew about midway through May into early June that this was a really special group out there. They've got really good stuff and they attack. They're not afraid of the strike zone.

Q. We've seen bullpen games work this postseason for L.A., although not today, Detroit and you guys.



What makes a bullpen game an effective strategy?

STEPHEN VOGT: I think if you have enough coverage and you have the right types of pitchers, you can match up in each lineup. I think it doesn't necessarily work just for any team.

If you have a team that's one way or the other, maybe matchup heavy or you find a three, four batter pocket for each pitcher, it's a lot easier to ask one guy to get four outs than maybe one guy to get 20 outs.

Again, we've seen them work. We've seen them not work. It just depends on the matchup throughout the day.

Q. For you guys to be successful in this series, how important is being aggressive on the base pads? It seems to be part of your identity. I think you were fifth in the majors in stolen bases.

STEPHEN VOGT: I think that's who we are. We have to play baseball. We're a baseball team. We need to make things happen. Running, bunting, putting the ball in play. We run the bases hard. We don't assume anything's over. That's how we've gotten here. We've gotten here by putting pressure on the other team, and that's who we are.

Q. You talked yesterday about the off day, enabling your bullpen to have the bullets for Game 5 against Detroit. Now you have another off day, and theoretically they're reloaded again.

I guess how mindful are you of the cumulative effect of October and going series to series and the number of pitches these guys are racking up?

STEPHEN VOGT: Very aware, very aware. We asked a lot of our bullpen the last week. So going into today, we know that they've got a lot of bullets that they've used. These guys work hard. They're strong. We're going to approach each game like we have all year. That is let's win today, and we'll worry about tomorrow tomorrow.

At the same time, we're very mindful of the workload that our guys have had. So maybe we can't overextend



anybody, nor do we want to.

Q. The roster move that you made, was it directly related to the bullpen usage against Detroit? And what are some of the other moves you considered but decided not to make?

STEPHEN VOGT: We talked through a lot of different options. We have a number of pitchers that could have been added to the roster. We knew we wanted to do 13 and 13.

For us, we've had a number of guys step up and been great, and these conversations are not easy. They're not fun. But just adding Pedro to the bullpen, he has the ability to throw a lot of pitches on back-to-back days and give us some length at times.

We went around and around a lot, and we left some very good people off this roster. That's unfortunately what happens this time of year.

Q. You were traded the middle of the season in 2021. Is it difficult to be traded in the middle of the season? How do you think that Lane Thomas has handled just the transition from coming to a new ball club and assimilating to the clubhouse?

STEPHEN VOGT: It's very difficult to get traded in season. You have your roots down, your family's there. You know what life looks like in the city where you're playing, and then you have to go to a new one where you're meeting all new teammates, all new coaches. You're living in a place where you don't really know where anything is. Sometimes it can take somebody a little while to get comfortable.

For Lane, it just took that. It took him a couple weeks for him to really come into his own, but our clubhouse welcomed him right away and make him feel like a part of the team. Lane is the player we all knew he would be. He has been since day one. You can pick any couple week stretch for anybody and it doesn't look too pretty.

Lane has been phenomenal in our clubhouse. He's a great person, and we couldn't be more thankful that we have him on our team.

Q. One of those roster questions that I imagine might have been tough was Ben Lively off the roster again. 29 starts for you. He did a nice job. Was he just sort of tiring at the end of the year? Why is he not here?

STEPHEN VOGT: Like I said, we had a number of very hard decisions to make. Ben had been phenomenal for us all year, super consistent. Just looking at the series and

everything, we had to make a difficult decision. Leaving Ben off was not easy. Ben knows how we feel about him.

It was one of those things that, when we got down to the last decision, it's what felt right.

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