

# AL Championship Series: Guardians vs Yankees

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

## Cleveland Guardians

### Stephen Vogt

#### Pregame 2 Press Conference

**Q. With Ben replacing Alex, just do you have any plans on how you might get through the middle games with your starting pitching has been available out of the bullpen, or how do you handle that?**

STEPHEN VOGT: Obviously we're working through a lot. First of all, I have to talk about how bummed we are for Alex, everything he's been through this year and with us in and out, IL, off the IL, and for him to have a new back strain last night, I just feel for him and what he's been through and so thankful for what he gave us.

In light of that, Ben will be on the roster, and he'll be available out of the bullpen, but we also have the option to start him later as the series goes. We're still working through what we're going to do Games 3, 4, and 5.

**Q. As great a bullpen as you have, what are some of the challenges of trying to game plan a postseason series and then utilize them in the right way?**

STEPHEN VOGT: I think it's we know our guys and we try to put them in positions to succeed. When it goes well, it's great. When it doesn't, then there's questions.

But for us, it's put our guys into positions to face guys that they have a good chance of getting out, and we navigate the game that way. We know what they're capable of as far as how many pitches, as far as how long to push them, how long not to.

It can be challenging, but we've had a lot of practice at it. Our regular season has been very similar. So for us, it's just that.

**Q. Does the format give you more possibilities for creativity with a couple of off days sprinkled in?**

STEPHEN VOGT: Definitely. For us, Tanner specifically



tonight, Tanner's been great all year. So we're excited to see him go, and our bullpen is in a good position.

**Q. Does the injury to Cobb, does that impact anything for you guys today? As far as just trickle down to the entire pitching staff, with Cobb being sidelined and you guys having to reshuffle, does that change the approach today at all?**

STEPHEN VOGT: It does because we don't know what we're going to have. Alex was going to start Game 5. Now we have to figure out today knowing that we have six more games to cover.

**Q. Broadly, like you've said that you don't go into a game with a plan and you're obviously going to watch and see how things unfold on the field, but is today a game that theoretically, with an off day tomorrow, you could be more aggressive with some of those top relievers that didn't get into the game yesterday?**

STEPHEN VOGT: We have a plan going into the game. It's just we don't script things.

I think we are going to be aggressive. We've been aggressive all year with our bullpen. So that's not going to change just because of today. We're going to use the same cadence we've used all year long. We have a very good bullpen, and we bring them in when it's time.

**Q. Did Alex go for a test or scans today, and what did they show?**

STEPHEN VOGT: After the game last night, he was diagnosed with a lower back strain. We had to make a decision, and it's just unfortunate.

**Q. There was no chance he'd be available ten days, just the type of severity?**

STEPHEN VOGT: This type of injury would be a full blown IL stint, and with the timing of the year, the chances of him pitching again were very, very, very slim.

**Q. If Lively gets a chance to start, what do you like**



**about him? What has he shown you this season?**

STEPHEN VOGT: Ben's been one of our most consistent starters. I think the thing with Ben is he's uber competitive. He attacks the zones. He throws strikes. He has the ability to keep people off balance. We've seen it all year long with Ben.

We trust him. We love having him. We know he's going to go out and compete and give us everything he has.

**Q. Where does Gavin Williams fit into this? Is he also a candidate on one of these games to start?**

STEPHEN VOGT: Yeah, he's definitely a candidate for sure. Gavin, we've seen what he can do for us, and we've had games where he's available out of the bullpen. We've had games where we have him in the plans to start. As the series unfolds, that will become more clear.

**Q. Just like big picture on where you are now, at the start of Spring Training, you mentioned a couple of the relievers who you were counting on who you don't have. Bieber and McKenzie were supposed to be big guys. They're not here. Did you know you had this much depth, and if you had known those guys would be out, did you think you'd be sitting here?**

STEPHEN VOGT: I don't think we knew. I think every team experiences injuries and losses, and for us, our roster looks very different than it did on Opening Day.

When you lose a Karinchak, Stephan, Bieber early in the year, Sam Hentges. We lost some big impact arms, and we've had a number of people step up. Sabrowski, Walters, Eli Morgan, Nick Sandlin, Cade Smith, Hunter Gaddis, Tim Herrin, these guys have stepped up and really done a nice job. And Ben Lively has been a huge story for us.

We didn't have Gavin Williams for the first four months of the year. We've been through a lot. This team has overcome a lot of things, and we know we belong here. The beauty of this team is it's not, oh, no. It's who's next? Who's going to step up for their teammates? That's why I love this group so much is they've all stepped up for each other all year long.

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