

AL Championship Series: Guardians vs Yankees

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

New York Yankees

Aaron Judge

Postgame 2 Press Conference

Yankees - 6, Guardians - 3

Q. What were your emotions as you went around the bases?

AARON JUDGE: I was excited it went out. You never know on these windy, chilly nights what that ball is going to do when you hit the center here, but the ghosts were pulling out there to Monument Park, that's for sure.

To add two more runs, trying to keep Weaver out of the game there, trying to save him for Game 3 a little bit. Just happy to add a couple more runs.

Q. Aaron, did you feel extra energy after that? It seemed like fans were waiting for it. They were certainly thrilled when you were able to hit that shot out.

AARON JUDGE: Energy from the fans, yeah, they were loud in the beginning, kind of hit a lull there for a little bit. Then any time we score runs, this place explodes. It's something special. There's nothing like it in baseball.

Excited to give them something to cheer about a little bit, and then you hand it off to that bullpen to do their thing.

Q. We don't typically see managers intentionally walk someone to get to you. Were you surprised to see them intentionally walk Soto there in that second inning?

AARON JUDGE: It happened earlier in the year, so it's not really a surprise. He's been swinging the bat well recently, and trying to get a double play there, try to get him out of the inning. I would probably walk him too at this point.

Q. Rizzo was just in here. He said you guys were disappointed that Gleyber tagged up on that. How



much were you guys on him?

AARON JUDGE: He did that this year earlier too when I hit, so I was pretty pissed then. I was pretty pissed again. It was him and Chappy. Chappy was telling him to tag up a little bit.

Like I said, you never know, when it's windy like this, what the ball is going to do to center field. He's trying to get into scoring position. So I let this one slide.

Q. What's the feeling in the clubhouse being up 2-0 in this series?

AARON JUDGE: Guys are excited, but we still know there's a lot of work to be done. We're playing against a good Cleveland team that all year they battled, had some tough games, went through a tough series with Detroit taking it to Game 5 and came out on the other side. So a lot of work to be done. So we're excited.

The guys in there are focused. They're prepared. They know what needs to be done, and on our way to Cleveland.

Q. When you see the Guardians walk Soto in front of you, obviously the takes are high, it's the ALCS, do you take that personally, that they'd rather face you in that moment?

AARON JUDGE: No, it's win or go home. Everything's on the line here. It's just you've got to come up in that spot. In that spot, lesson two, bases loaded, I am trying to get something out to the outfield and drive some runs in. Luckily we were able to get one run there and just pass it along.

Every out, every inning, the first inning, everything's important. They're trying to grab a couple outs there with a double play in that situation, but we were able to scratch out a run.

Q. Aaron, you don't win these games, you don't win these series unless you have a multitude of guys that are contributing. What do you think of the overall efforts of this club right now?



AARON JUDGE: Like you said, a lot of guys are contributing. You can start at the top of our lineup with Gleyber and Soto have been doing this whole series and even the DS just getting on base and getting things moving. Then pass it off to the big boy in the middle with Stanton. Get him up with a couple guys on, and something's going to happen.

It takes a team effort. It's not just one guy to carry any team, especially when you're playing the best of the best and guys are coming after you.

You can talk about our pitching staff. Every guy that comes out of that bullpen, they've been lights out and continue to be lights out. It's going to take everybody if we're going to get to where we want to go.

Q. The way you're able to keep even keel, not getting too up after a good postseason game or get too down after a tough day, is that something you had to learn, or do you think that's just you?

AARON JUDGE: I think that's what playing 162 games, getting beat up, the ups and downs of that, you learn that you can't ride the highs because there's always something coming behind it.

It's a tough game. It's a humbling game. You can go out there and be 4 for 4 one day and the next day you're 0 for 4. I've been on the losing side of a lot of postseason games, and those are tough. I've been on the other side of some good wins. All that matters is we went out there and took care of business, and we've got to move on to the next one.

We won this game, but it's over with. Now we've got to focus on Game 3.

Q. Do you think you had that attitude when you were first in the postseason, or did you learn that over the years?

AARON JUDGE: I definitely feel like I had it. Something you learn your whole career playing baseball, the ups and downs, and learning this is a humbling game. You've got to face every opportunity like it's Opening Day and just move on from that.

If you do something good, hey, it's great. But once you hit that homer and touch home plate, that moment's over with and you've got to move on to the next one. Or if you strike out, you get back to the dugout, learn from it, cheer on the guy behind you, and then go try to make a play on defense.

I think it's something you're born with, but something you also learn.

Q. You mentioned the bullpen. I'm interested to know, with Luke Weaver, when you played with him in the Cape Cod league, what were kind of your impressions of him back then? Did he kind of have that same quirky personality? What maybe stood out about him?

AARON JUDGE: Yeah, he was a funny dude, man. When we were out there, he was one of the only freshmen that was out in the Cape Cod league. He was a guy that could get it up to 97, 98 in that kind of skinny, lanky body.

The guy always had a smile on his face, but also when he got on the mound, he turned into this different guy. He was just focused, locked in. Kind of watching his career unfold, he's been the same guy. Funny, great dude in the clubhouse, great leader. Then when he steps out on that mound and gets an opportunity, man, he turns into somebody else, which we kind of rally behind and we love, man.

That's who you want in a big situation. He's not afraid of anybody. He's going to attack guys. Kind of what we saw from him last year kind of stepping up in a big role for us, and even this year, stepping up into an even bigger role being the closer. Hat's off to him and the hard work in the off-season putting in all that time.

Q. You mentioned in one of your answers the long season, the 162. But when it's a short season like this where you could go home so quickly, do you feel some greater urgency to kind of get -- like when it isn't going your way, I need to get on the board in some way here and have some big moments?

AARON JUDGE: It's just about taking every moment and try to do what you can with it. It's about having a short memory. If you lose a game before or 0 for 4, it's like, hey, let's take it into my next at-bat, my first at-bat the next game.

Just like tonight, come up, they walk the guy in front of you, you've just got to go up there and treat this moment like it's the only moment that you've got and do what you can with it. If you don't get the job done, pass it on to the next guy to pick you up.

Just don't make any moment too big, man. It's still the same game we play and we've been playing our whole life. So that's how I try to treat it.

Q. Just following up on Joel's question, how hard was



it to learn what you just said to not dwell on it, especially when you know the crowd is anticipating, hoping for a home run every time you get up there?

AARON JUDGE: You've just got to stay focused on what you can control. I've been booed here plenty of times. There's been a lot of legends that played here that have been booed. It's just part of it. You can't focus on that.

You've got to go out there. They want to see you win. They want to see you do well. You've just got to focus on what you can control. What I can control is what I do in the box and what I do on the field. All that other stuff, you just kind of ignore it and go out and have fun.

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