

# AL Championship Series: Guardians vs Yankees

Thursday, October 17, 2024

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Progressive Field

## New York Yankees

### Aaron Boone

#### Pregame 3 Press Conference



#### Q. Why Berti and not Trevino?

AARON BOONE: I mean, they've got a lefty going. I'd say the first one we faced this postseason because I don't count Ragans because he's so the other way. Trevi is an important part of this club and have a ton of confidence in him and what he brings to the table, too.

With Berti, also just loved how he looked in the Division Series, love the dynamic he brings to the table. I kind of went into this series knowing that it might be Boyd in Game 3. Probably that would be the day coming off an off-day with Riz.

Now Riz is giving me pause just with how good he's looked. But I still want to be mindful of what he is playing with and through and feel like a lot of this is the confidence I have in Jon, too, and what he can bring to the table here.

#### Q. In winning five of these first six games in the playoffs, what are some of the things you've liked most from what you've seen? What stands out?

AARON BOONE: I think a little of everything. Obviously we've pitched really well and been able to close out games. When we've had a lead, we've been able to close it out. I feel like for the most part, our starters have either been outstanding or at least getting us off to a good enough start to go win a baseball game.

I feel like we've caught the ball pretty well. I feel like the at-bat quality has been there. Again, haven't totally necessarily broken through offensively, but I feel like we have given ourselves a lot of chances night in and night out. And I feel like a lot fortunate guys in the lineup are putting together a lot of really good, heavy, tough at-bats. That's how we want to be.

Hopefully in one of these games, we really break out and

throw a big one up there, but that said, you get into the playoffs, and I think we've scored five and six in these first two, and feel like there's still more -- we've even left some on the table.

Really like where everyone is at just from an intent and focus and playing with confidence, but that's all it is so far. We understand we've got another important one in front of us tonight.

#### Q. When you talk about pitching, how much does it help to have a normal pitching staff where you can throw in an actual starting pitcher and let him go?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, I mean, hopefully it's -- I think right now with the teams left, it is probably something that differentiates us a little bit because I feel like we're going to roll out four really good starters at you that have a chance to get us deeper into a game and hopefully set our pen up to be used even better. That's with Stro down in the pen.

Part of it is we've been able to remain fairly healthy from a starting rotation, which I think is one of the reasons we were able to win our division and secure the best record in the American League. It starts with those guys and them being able to go to the post as consistently as they did this year.

But like where all those guys are, and like the chance they give us every time each one of them takes the ball.

#### Q. I saw Alex Cora made a comment about you guys, felt like you played with more joy this year and more appreciation. One, do you agree with that? And two, is that an intentional? Where does that come from?

AARON BOONE: I mean, we always try to strike that balance. We talk about perspective a lot, especially playing in New York. Different times of the year for different individuals, sometimes as a team, it can be challenging.

You try to have that perspective and try to remind the guys, like, hey, as we go through this and there's times where it's pressure packed or it's hard or you're going through a



tough stretch, having that perspective of how lucky we are to get to do this.

So showing up to do your job with some joy, it is something we're mindful of. I try to remind the staff when we're going through it and grinding every single day, hey, we did this because we love it and we're good at it, and making sure you have joy in what you're doing I think is an important element to a team.

**Q. Was that a separator for you guys mid-season when you were going through it?**

AARON BOONE: I don't know, I feel like this group has done a really good job, even when we were going through some low moments of the season or we were getting tested at different times, a really good way about them.

Through it all, I felt like at times we were even remarkably confident. It's like, let's go, boys, and they were showing up every day unfazed, unworried, understanding the adversity and the grind you face in a season.

But to their credit, they've done a great job with that.

**Q. You mentioned Stroman. You guys haven't had to go too deep into your roster in a lot of ways. What is the work involved in keeping everyone sharp and ready when they haven't been out there yet?**

AARON BOONE: Well, I mean, like for Loáisiga, he threw a four inning sim game, so he'll be going on his fifth day, obviously had a side in between.

We got a few of our relievers that were on the Division Series roster that either barely pitched or didn't pitch. They got a live inning in a sim game. They'll get off the mound when they haven't for a couple days, just to try and stay as sharp as you can.

Nothing is perfect this time of year just with how the series go, and that's part of it. You're not always going to have everyone on their fifth or sixth day for the starters or relievers aren't always going to get used or you're getting used a lot and you've got to go to the whip a little bit more.

That's just the nature of October baseball. You've got to be prepared as best you can mentally for it, and we do all we can to keep them as sharp as possible.

**Q. How much of that balance is a mental thing versus a physical thing?**

AARON BOONE: Yeah, I think that's part of it, without question. But I think also I feel like our pitching group does

a really good job with making sure that these guys are getting some volume in what they do, especially for the guys that maybe haven't worked in a handful of days or something.

You want to try to keep them as sharp as you can with things they're doing physically, but there's certainly a mental component to that, too.

**Q. These next three games that row, is it on the table to use certain relievers each day if you needed to?**

AARON BOONE: No, it's Game 3, so we'll see what's available to us as we go through our catch play and all that, and I'll circle up with our pitching group and try and come up with a plan of striking that balance between making sure guys are fresh.

But we spend the whole season, too, being real vigilant on making sure we're protecting guys and monitoring their workloads and things like that. When we get to this time of year, hopefully there's a couple weeks left, but here we go, and guys understand that.

**Q. How important is it to have somebody like Stroman in your bullpen if you do need to cover a lot of innings in one game if something goes wrong?**

AARON BOONE: Yeah, that's certainly one of the things he'll bring. Again, he's been now for a few weeks off his normal routine, and he's one of those guys that we try to keep as sharp as possible. He's had a couple of sim games scenarios to try and keep his volume of pitches up as best we can because he wasn't on the Division Series roster, too, so he threw in the middle of that.

But yeah, it's certainly something that he could potentially bring to the table that may become very valuable in this series.

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