

AL Championship Series: Guardians vs Yankees

Saturday, October 19, 2024

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Progressive Field

New York Yankees

Aaron Boone

Postgame 5 Press Conference

Yankees 5, Guardians 2

Q. Just talk about your feelings taking the Yankees back to the World Series for the first time in 15 years.

AARON BOONE: I mean, it sounds so good when you say it like that. I mean, a lot of emotions. Just really proud of this group, proud of this organization. To get to do it with these guys every single day and what they have is very special. Just going to look forward to in the next couple days see who we play. I keep saying we get to go play for a World Championship now. That's pretty sweet.

Q. Can you just talk briefly about the at-bats Giancarlo and Juan had and what the impact those had on the game?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, first of all, congrats to the Guardians. They had a great year. We ended up winning in five, but that was not easy. Those guys played us so tough. All these games were great games. And the level of at-bats that they were putting together on obviously what they bring from an arm standpoint.

Giancarlo you can't pure a ball any better than that. That's as good a swing that you can put on a ball, and then Juan just an at-bat for the ages. He's kind of taken some funky swings, spoiling things, and just kind of outlasting him. It's not surprising either that he does it. It is like that's who he is. He's so good at seizing the moment.

Just some really good at-bats -- Austin Wells, the walk to get things going to kind of set them up, just a meaningful day.

Q. Talk about your bullpen tonight.

AARON BOONE: Yeah, first of all, Carlos was great, got us off to a really good start. If I would have told you a



month ago or two months ago that we're going to close out the American League with Mark Leiter, Junior, Tim Hill, Jake Cousins, Luke Weaver, I don't know if many people would have thought that, but it's a credit to each and every one of those guys. Just their ability to do their job, their ability to focus, their ability to lock in, and just proud of that group.

Q. What does baseball mean to you?

AARON BOONE: It's in my blood. It's all I know. My faith and my family is first for me, but this is my livelihood. This is what I've poured my life into.

To be able to play the game, be a Major League player, go to an All-Star Game and a World Series as a player -- haven't won one yet, though, and now getting to go as a manager, and with a lot of these guys that I've been through the battles with them.

We've been to this point where we've gone home a few times, and to go break through and play for it all, 51 years old, baseball is what I know and in my blood. So very blessed to get to do it with these guys on this stage.

Q. Three pretty epic games here in Cleveland. Your thoughts on this whole series?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, again, hats off to the Guardians. They're tough, man. They're good players. They play the game tough. Steven Vogt, a ton of respect for. Obviously such a great first year managing. Obviously they have a following in Tito's footsteps, not the easiest thing to do. Cleveland has a great leader over there.

I know Chris and a lot of the people in this organization from having the opportunity to play here 15, 20 years ago, so I still have people that mean a lot to me in this organization. They do things so well and year in and year out are right in the mix.

Tough series, and glad we were able to get through.

Q. Any thoughts on what's next; Dodgers or the Mets in a subway series?



AARON BOONE: Whatever. I'm looking forward to sitting on my couch in my pajamas in my basement watching three TVs, watching a little NFL with my son tomorrow and fire up the barbecue and watch the Mets and Dodgers and see how that unfolds and then we'll start to get to work Monday or Tuesday.

Q. Can you talk about what Juan Soto brought to this ballclub this year?

AARON BOONE: Incredible, and just such an ability to seize the moment. Every big moment that he finds himself in the middle, he delivered over and over and over again for us. Obviously he put up an amazing season statistically speaking, but in the biggest moments, that's what he does, and it shouldn't be taken for granted.

Q. How about Luis Gil?

AARON BOONE: Luis, what a great year he had for us, has had for us, especially with Gerrit going down to start the year in kind of an open spot in the rotation. He wasn't -- coming into camp, coming off the injury, he wasn't necessarily the first choice, and he just kicked the door in in Spring Training and said I'm the guy and forced our hand, and he came out and has had an amazing rookie season.

Then hadn't pitched for whatever, 10 days, 2 weeks, was in the bullpen in the Division Series, gets a start the other night and goes out and just so proud of his effort, his poise, his intensity, his focus. Was just really good and put us in a position to win a game and one of the reasons we're sitting here right now.

Q. It's been 7 years trying to get to the World Series and you finally did. What does it feel like?

AARON BOONE: It's amazing. It really is. You pour so much into it all year, not just the baseball season. It doesn't stop in the winter, in the spring. You pour so much into it, and I couldn't be more proud to do it with this organization.

The Steinbrenner family has been amazing to me. Getting to work with Brian Cashman who's been amazing to me and all his front office, and then the guys I get to go to work with every day, my coaches and these players, that's why you do it.

We've had some great groups, some great camaraderie, some great clubhouses. This group is as close as I've ever seen, and they trust each other. They lean on each other. They love each other. They play for each other. Those

are special things to have in a team sport.

Q. How much of that is you, that closeness? Do you foster that or does it happen organically?

AARON BOONE: Look, I try to, but that's them. We try and foster a culture where you want to play for -- I always say it's a little trite and maybe even a little corny, but when you're on a team where you can answer the question genuinely, I want it more for the guy next to me, you know you've got something special. That group has that in spades. They play for each other.

Q. At what point did you think Soto really became a Yankee? He started as an outsider and slowly worked his way into the inner circle. At what point did he become one of the guys?

AARON BOONE: You know what, I thought pretty early on in Spring Training. I thought he did a great job of assimilating and making it a point to be part of the team and one of the guys. It felt very easy. It's not always the easiest thing when you bring a superstar player in that you don't know how is he going to -- right away, and that's a credit to who he is. It matters to him to be a good teammate.

Obviously he's an amazing player, but he's a really good teammate, too. He's one of those guys.

Q. Everybody knows who Juan Soto is right before you traded for him. What are the biggest things you've learned about him that enables him to do what he did tonight?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, how much he cares about his craft. He loves the game of baseball. That's usually a common trait for great players. Not everyone loves it, loves it like Juan Soto does or like a lot of our guys do.

He loves it. He loves the preparation, I think the physical preparation it takes in the winter. He loves the preparation and the skill development. He takes pride in -- we know him as this great hitter, but he takes pride in his defense and running the bases and being a complete player, and he invests in that, and he's just been a great teammate, too.

He's just easy to be around. You bring a superstar player in, how is he going to look, what's he going to be like. No, he's just one of the guys. That's been rewarding to see, man, I don't have to go out of my way to worry about him. He's good. I feel like I've developed a great relationship with him, but he's one of the guys.

