

AL Championship Series: Mariners vs Blue Jays

Saturday, October 11, 2025

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

Kevin Gausman

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. How do you stay calm knowing tomorrow is such a huge game and job for you? What do you do to stay calm?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: You know, it's just another start. Everything is the same. There's a lot more of you guys to talk to and more cameras, but once the game starts, it's still a game.

Q. You've had a long career and thrown to a lot of different catchers. You've thrown to Kirk more than any other catcher you've thrown to. What makes him so special and gives you so much confidence that he's going to do a good job for you?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: You know, Kirk really takes his job really seriously. He's one of the few guys that takes the game, whether he's in the box hitting or behind the dish, he takes them both extremely seriously. He gets prepared for a game better than most guys I've ever -- that have caught me.

Practicing catching the low ball, that was a thing that -- that wasn't a thing five years ago even. Maybe a little bit later than that, but the pitching machine out there, them just throwing curveballs at guys and then working on catching, framing pitches before the game.

I think that's a huge thing that you've seen in the last five, whatever, years that has obviously become a big part of the game and why ABS is coming into existence, right?

Kirky is such a good low-ball catcher that you know he's at least going to give you that, and he's an exceptional blocker, and he throws the ball extremely well, too. And he loves trying to throw guys out.

He's always trying to back-pick guys. Really just kind of locked in on all aspects and facets of the game, to be



honest.

Q. I know there's still work to do, but you've said multiple times the reason you came here is to win a championship, and now that you're another step closer and eight wins away, how does that feel?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, it's fun. It's even more fun to do it with this group of guys. It's a special group of guys that are -- no one is selfish in this bunch. You've really seen that. If you've watched us play at all this year, I think if you've come to an entire series, you're not going to walk away with, I love this one guy.

You're going to have a lot of guys that you really like to watch play, and they play the game the right way, and they play fundamental baseball. They make it really easy to root for.

Q. The last series you had Aaron Judge to deal with. This series it's Cal Raleigh who's come into his own this year but he's always been this guy against you guys. Is there a special plan for him? Do you have to treat him the same way that you guys treated Aaron Judge?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: You know, I don't know. I don't know yet. We'll have those conversations probably later today or tomorrow. But yeah, what a season he's had and what a great switch-hitter at such a hard position to hit. To catch as many games as he has, what a season he's put together.

But yeah, I also feel confident with myself that I can go out and get him out. I've gotten him out before, so now it's just about mixing up pitches and trying to keep him off balance.

Q. When you got here a couple years ago, Vlad was only 23 years old. He was a big star at the time. In what ways have you seen him grow over the last four seasons as a hitter, as a player and as a person?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, I think as a player, I think we've all seen it. I think before he kind of would try to push the envelope a little bit and pick kind of some spots to



maybe take some big swings where maybe he shouldn't.

But he's really kind of come into his own when it comes to plate discipline and knowing exactly what he's looking for.

I give some credit to Popkins and those guys, too, as well. He's been locked in. His at-bats this season have been some of the best that I've seen since I've been here. Everybody talked about, I think, 2020 when he was here and how kind of he jumped on to the scene that year in '21.

But this year I think has been the best that I've seen him, and obviously last series he was incredible.

But defensively, too, I think people don't give him the credit that he deserves, which is crazy because he's already won a Gold Glove, but he's an exceptional first baseman and he's great at player. A lot like Kirby, he loves to throw guys out as well. So he's pretty invested in the game, and he's always thinking, and he's a fun guy to watch play.

Q. When you talk about his plate discipline specifically, is that him developing an understanding of if the pitcher misses in the zone, I can do damage, but I need to force him into my zone? As a pitcher, what is difficult about facing one of the elite hitters when they're playing their game against you?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, you know, to be honest, I feel like I've known Vladyslav now to where I can watch an at-bat. When he kind of shimmies and kind of does his thing, you can tell he's feeling pretty good.

Usually when he does that, something good is going to happen. He always hits the ball hard, so you can count on that, but his ability to get to so many different pitches. He can get to a fastball up and in. The big grand slam was I think 97 in.

He's a guy that can really get to the ball in, but he can also flip you for a base hit if you just throw him sliders down and away.

I think his maturation the last couple years has been understanding what guys are trying to get him out with and kind of using that to his advantage.

Q. You've been here for four seasons. I haven't heard the Rogers Centre so loud as it was for the Game 1 start at the ALDS. What's it been like for you to play in front of these fans and see the enthusiasm for it?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, it's really been a lot of fun. We have really loved playing at home, especially the last two months. We feel the love when we play here.

Yeah, even just driving around the city, you notice everybody -- they used to be wearing Yankees hats and now you see a lot more Blue Jays hats and Toronto.

It's turned into a really exciting -- I think part of that has to go to the organization with what they've turned Rogers Centre into. I think as a fan it's really a great fan experience now, whereas before I don't know if it was. Nearly as good as it is now.

It's kind of one big party some nights. You can hear the music up there in the Corona rooftop, and I don't know how many bars there are in here, but I think everybody is drinking and having a pretty good time, and that's why they're pretty loud.

Q. The hats, how long are they going to stick around for?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: I don't know. We'll see. Everybody likes wearing them. Nobody is going to go against them right now. We'll see what happens.

Q. John was just in here, and he spoke a little bit about how significant last September was in terms of a bit of a reckoning with the team and maybe that that was a little bit of a turning point. You've talked about it as well. Was there any point that you thought things maybe turned the corner in this team getting to where it is today?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: You know, definitely the conversations that we had in the offseason, kind of looking inward at what we needed to change, what things we really thought we were lacking.

But honestly, the biggest thing was probably Spring Training. I just remember looking back, first week, week and a half, I'm watching Max Scherzer throw 75-pitch bullpens on day two. I was pretty fired up looking at our team and what we could be.

I think we all really just had confidence in ourselves and in the talent in each other and knowing that -- older guys looking at some of these young guys like hey, they could really take the next step, and they have.

All those things kind of coming together, obviously, have got us to where we are.

Q. What did it mean to you to get another Game 1 start, and do you relish the opportunity to try to set the tone for the series?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, for sure. Anytime you're



handed -- I've said this before, anytime you're handed the ball for what is the most important game up to this point, you're always going to be fired up and ready for that.

I'm excited to see what tomorrow night is going to be like here, and I'm ready to go.

Q. 2019, that's the year you got waived, claimed by the Reds, then you get non-tendered at the end of the season. What lessons, if any, from that year have you carried forward into today?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Just belief in myself, to be honest. Even when I was in the bullpen in Cincinnati, I still believed that I could be one of the best pitchers in baseball. Maybe I was a little naïve, but that's just kind of the confidence that I have in myself.

Q. As someone who's come out of the bullpen in a postseason series to pitch late in the game the way Gilbert and Castillo did last night, can you describe how taxing an experience that is for a starting pitcher to throw under those circumstances?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, you know, I'll be lucky; I've only done it twice, I believe, or maybe three times. Two of them were -- I was 22; I was Trey, so I felt pretty good every day.

But yeah, it's definitely taxing. But at this point in the year, you're pitching on adrenaline. You're playing for each other. You're playing for the guys next to you. You kind of saw that -- I mean, I was sleeping. I didn't see it. But a lot of these guys pitched last night, and really kind of gave their team a great effort to go on.

You've got to kind of give them credit, and that's just kind of playoff baseball, and it's really fun. Me and Max joke 2021 we were both pitching Game 5 in the NLDS in the ninth inning, coming out of the bullpen.

That's just kind of what you kind of have to expect, and as a fan of baseball, I think it's a lot of fun.

Q. Physically, what are some of the things that you're doing, have done over these couple weeks, both before the ALDS start and before this one, that maybe is different from the stuff you'd be doing during the regular season to prepare?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, more so just kind of load management. If you're doing five reps, kind of take it down to four or three and kind of go down to how you're feeling.

But yeah, you're pitching on adrenaline. Once you get out there, you're going to be feeling pretty good.

Q. Kev, when Snyder was in here -- sorry, when Myles was in here, he talked about the Bo homer in Texas that he thinks started to turn things around. But when you guys were in Seattle, I think you had lost 16 out of 21 and swept the Mariners, you had the first game in that one. How big was that series given what had happened the previous three weeks to getting this thing back on the rails?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, looking back that was definitely a big series, big turning point for us. Definitely the first time we've swept them at home since I've been here. I just remember George kind of saying how hard it is to do there, to sweep them at home.

He played in that division for a really long time.

It's just such a hard place to play. I think especially the Blue Jays. When we go there, even if it's in the middle of the week, it's pretty packed. A really cool environment, and the fan bases definitely kind of go back and forth on them kind of talking crap about Canada and saying that the States are better and whatnot.

It's kind of a fun rivalry for sure. But yeah, that was a huge turning point.

Q. Just to the caps again, you've got the old-school logo on. Is it a conscious choice to bring that one in?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah. This is just what I've been wearing for the last -- for a while. Just playing catch and whatnot. Yeah, I just love these hats. This logo is so cool. This was the Hall of Fame game. So yeah.

Q. You've got a lot of experience against some of the Seattle hitters but you haven't seen them since May. How do you balance your personal experience against them versus things can change over four or five months and you might get information that's a little bit different to your own personal experience?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, you know, I'm a little bit different than most guys. I'm not Chris Bassitt. I don't have seven pitches. I don't have to do as much deep diving.

But yeah, I'll definitely take a look at their tendencies and kind of what they've changed, if I think they've changed their approach at all.

But that's kind of more something I can look at on video. I said this last week, I didn't come up with a new pitch this turn through. I'm going to throw fastballs and splits and sprinkle in some sliders. That's kind of my game.



I will take a look at maybe picking some times on their runners. They're a really good running team, so kind of going into that, I need to know, all right, spots when I can slide step and when I need to be quick and what guys are going to try to steal third base from second. There's a lot of different aspects to their game that they try to take advantage of, and that's why they're here.

Q. Just out of curiosity, was it strange running in from the bullpen for the celebration as opposed to hopping over the railing from the dugout?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, it was. It was actually kind of cool because the last time I've been to the American League Championship series was in 2014 we beat the Tigers and I was out of the bullpen and I ran in from the bullpen in Detroit. Kind of a full-circle moment. Cool moment for sure.

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