

AL Championship Series: Mariners vs Blue Jays

Thursday, October 16, 2025

Seattle, Washington, USA

T-Mobile Park

Toronto Blue Jays

Isiah Kiner-Falefa

Postgame 4 Press Conference

Toronto - 8, Seattle - 2

Q. When the Blue Jays acquired you, you said you wanted to be the best 10th man that you could be. To be here in the ALCS getting two hits, contributing to this win, what does that mean for you and for this team?

ISIAH KINER-FALEFA: It means a lot for me, it means a lot for the team. I think the biggest part is not being in the lineup as coming into the day and just being ready for the opportunity. The coaching staff has done a great job of kind of helping me get to where I was last year, and trying everything I can to just get back to where I had so much success last year. It was nice to come out with a win and also have some individual success tonight.

Q. A couple ones for you: Number one, after watching the first couple innings of at-bats how did the observations that you took in this those two innings lead to the approach that you had there in the third?

ISIAH KINER-FALEFA: Yeah it was just, I had some success off of Castillo in the past. I've had a lot of years in this league and had a lot of at-bats off of him. So I was able to just slow the game down, and kind of just go with watch how he attacks all the big boys. And if he attacks those guys that way they're probably going to attack me the same way. So just making the adjustments in game. But hitting at the bottom of the order, it is nice to get those reads early and I'm able to make my adjustment.

Q. As an infielder, you had one of the best views of anybody in the ballpark of John Schneider walking out to the mound to talk to Max. What was going through your mind as you were watching that encounter happen?

ISIAH KINER-FALEFA: That was incredible. It was a, you



know, first ballot Hall of Famer. I was nervous. I'm always nervous around Max when he's pitching. I was told not to touch him, not to talk to him. And for him to see that fire, or for me to see that fire and for him to finish the inning, I think that was the coolest part. A lot of guys try that and then they end up not finishing the inning, but Max was able to finish the inning. That's why he's a first ballot Hall of Famer.

Q. Schneids has talked about kind of having some more feel this year. What do you think about the decision to kind of back off and let Max have that inning?

ISIAH KINER-FALEFA: He's earned that. Not many people in this game have earned that right. But he's earned that right. First ballot Hall of Famer. He knows himself. He's been in this game for a very long time, he's had so much success. And if he wants to go back out there, he can go back out there, he just needs to get the job done, and he got it done.

So for him to double down and get it done, especially with that tough lineup, just shows why he is who he is. And it was pretty cool to see the fire. I think the fire right there was something that was like, Dang, you're talking to the manager (laughing). But for him to finish it off was like, it's pretty impressive.

Q. When you look back a couple days ago when you guys were down 0-2, this team's talked about turning the page so well, what was kind of the message from Schneids and the coaching staff before these last two wins?

ISIAH KINER-FALEFA: We dealt with adversity all year. We almost lost the AL East lead and we played every game the same way we have been playing the last couple days. Our backs were against the wall. We had to go on a little bit of a run, and we ended up getting the job done.

So I think just going through that adversity during the season has allowed us to kind of stay the same. We didn't get too high, we didn't get too low. The coaches did a great job all around of not panicking, kind of keeping the



mood light. Normally you go down 2-0 and you're doing PFPs. We kind of kept our normal routine and guys were able to kind of just slow the game down, and we were able to come up big here in these last two games and hopefully we can keep going.

Q. You mentioned not knowing that you were in the starting lineup initially. Obviously, Santander was taken off the roster. Can you walk us through, like, what your day was like when you found out that you were going to be playing, what your preparation was like, that kind of thing?

ISIAH KINER-FALEFA: Yeah, so, like, we go back to the 10th man, my job for this team is to be ready if someone was to get injured and that could be during the game, before the game. So I just went at how I go out every day, just ready for any opportunity. Ready to pinch bunt, ready to pinch run, defense, hit off a lefty. So just being ready for every opportunity that I get. And, yeah, just so happened that they called my name. For me nothing changes, just going at it the same way every day until I get that opportunity.

Q. Fair to say you kind of keep yourself mentally locked in throughout this process?

ISIAH KINER-FALEFA: Yeah, because usually if I'm in the game it's the biggest spot. Ninth inning defense, close game. So if I'm not locked in I'm doing the team a disservice. So try to be almost extra locked in, knowing that if I do come in the game it's going to be very crucial spot. It's almost more nerve wracking to come in late in the game, but just being ready from the beginning, just in case someone was to get injured or at any point. So that's my job, and I was ready to do it today.

Q. Fellow 10th man here, I know a little bit about what you're going through. Take us behind the scenes of what you kind of do to prepare, whether it's machine to keep your timing; and is there something you do at the plate to kind of slow the game down, whether it's sitting on pitches, relying on video to kind of pick a pitch that you feel comfortable swinging at?

ISIAH KINER-FALEFA: Yeah, you kind of know your window. So just preparing off of guys you think you're going to face. The trajectory, the new machine that came out has been a big help in Toronto. Not having it on the road, but the coach is able to adjust the machine to the shapes of the pitchers and just a lot of mental reps and a lot of velocity machines. So, yeah, just doing everything and anything I can to stay ready.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports...

