

AL Championship Series: Mariners vs Blue Jays

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

John Schneider

Pregame 6 Press Conference



Q. A lot of players talking about making this seem like a regular game, but what is your message? It's obviously not a regular game.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Sure it is, right? I mean, I think we're really good at doing the next thing. We all know what's at stake. But I think you have to go play your game. I think the minute you start getting out of what has gotten you here, you get into trouble.

So that's the mindset I want them to have. I think that's what we've done all year. And you got to lean into it, man. It's an important game, for sure. These guys are really good at getting prepared every day. There's no other way to go about it. But they understand the magnitude of it.

Q. I wanted to find out from you, one can only imagine late at night you're doom scrolling on your phone. Do you ever see the comments that people leave questioning the decisions you make, saying that they disagree or whatever? Do you ever see those comments? Agree with what they're saying? What are your thoughts on what they have to say?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: For one, I don't have TikTok.

Q. I find that hard to believe.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No. Two, I don't have Twitter; and three, I could care less what people think about me other than in my clubhouse.

Q. George is back in the lineup. You said yesterday that all you need to hear from him was that he was good to go. So what was that conversation like?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: He was in good spirits yesterday, I think just getting some reassurance with the CT scan coming back. It was going to take a whole lot more, I think,

to keep him out of the lineup. So he was feeling better yesterday, feeling better today. I was checking in with him via text this morning. He basically told me to shut up. Did the same thing when he got in today.

He'll be ready to go. He's a little bit sore, he's got some good seam marks on his knee from the sinker there, but I trust when George says he's good. He's played through a lot in his career, so he's good to go.

Q. Relatively short amount of time for Pete to work with Trey, but what have you observed in their relationship and the ability to make quick adjustments, as in the case today?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's interesting, you know, because this guy got drafted last year and we've asked a whole lot of him this year. He's been an open book since he's gotten here. There's always things, I think, to kind of -- I always joke with Pete, it's like finishing school when you get up here. There's always little things that he can help with or that other veteran pitchers can help with.

So Trey's been really, really pretty quick on learning some things since he's been here. Whether that's with his delivery, whether that's with varying his times to the plate, how to read a game plan, how to dissect it, how to make adjustments, they have been pretty seamless. I can't speak enough about Trey and how seamless he's kind of transitioned to this level.

But I think Pete is a really good voice for him, and I think the pitchers are a really good voice for him, and they have been working really well.

Q. What do you make of the uptick in splitter usage across the league over the last couple years?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think for a long time it was a pitch that people just thought they couldn't learn, you know, if their middle and index finger couldn't bend a certain way. I think guys have adapted different grips and different styles to it.

So like anything, I think the game evolves with what they're



seeing from hitters. Five years ago it was high fastball, 12 to 6 curveball, and sweeper comes in with a sinker and a cutter. I think guys are just more well equipped off season and facilities and all that kind of stuff to kind of learn how to make a pitch do a certain thing. So I think that's kind of where we're at.

Q. Great to see George in the lineup, but you've got a lot of guys banged up. Nate took that foul ball in Game 1. Ernie banged up at the end of season there. Is it the adrenaline of these guys? Is it knowing, hey, look, I can rest in the wintertime? Just talk about how tough and what gamers these guys are.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Everyone who is still playing, every player on every team is dealing with it. Everyone's tired, everyone's banged up. Again, we always talk about if this were a postseason game, would you be good to play? And we got a few guys like that. And they're doing everything they can to be ready, stay ready.

I always say there's always a little bit of a compromised version of somebody when you get to this point and the number of games they played. So adrenaline does kind of take over and the moment kind of makes you feel a little bit better when you are out there, better than you did right now and better than they will after the game. So it's definitely a real thing.

Q. Have you guys looked into or discovered anything about the velocity drop that we saw from Trey in Game 2 and figured out what that might have been?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No, I think that kind of happens. You kind of look at that with every pitcher. I was a little even aware of Max in the 5th inning. He goes back out for the 6th, and it kind of ticks back up.

So I don't think it was anything rather than kind of circumstance. It's like a hitter getting his good swing off or not. Sometimes it doesn't really come out of your hand exactly how you want it. He hasn't said anything physically, nothing from a delivery standpoint, so I think he'll be -- adrenaline, talking about today, I think he'll be good.

Q. Further to that question about TikTok and all of that stuff, you've answered before in the past as like this job comes with whatever that spotlight's going to shine, you're going to get criticism. Your answer here was a little bit different. But is there a conscious effort from you now to shut that stuff out or to ignore everything more because there's more coming just because we are in the place in the calendar where we are?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, you know, I think back to a couple years ago, when you're starting in this position, I think you care about it more then because you're trying to make a name for yourself, you're trying to do what's right by your players. I think the more you do it, the more you kind of take it with a grain of salt. You know what I mean? Again, not everyone in this room is privy to information I am.

Again, man, I get that this is a job and these guys have jobs where everyone gets to go to their job and ask them why they did something. I've never been to your guys's places of work, don't pretend like I want to, but I think it's just matter of circumstance, you know. I think just the more open and transparent I can be, the better off it is.

I've said this a lot this year. I think you just have to be very prepared, very convicted in the decision, trust the people around you that have helped get to this point. You make a decision, you move on. I've lost plenty of sleep over the last couple years about things that haven't gone right, and I don't gain sleep when things do go right. You realize this is the position you're in and you're trying to do what's right by the group.

Again, man, when you have a group this tight -- like I love talking to you guys, but at the end of the day, it's like I care what they think and I care how they respond to what I say. Everyone has the power to type something and hit send in the world we live in. So that's kind of just where I'm at with it.

Q. José Berrios was playing catch in left field. Do you have an update on him?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Nothing concrete. He was not throwing there for awhile, a couple weeks. So I think he's just back to playing catch. We'll kind of revisit everything when the off-season hits and kind of see what that looks like for him.

Q. At this point, given all that's happened in this series, how much stock, if any, do you put in the idea that one team has momentum over the other or is every game just its own discrete event?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's crazy, you know? They win two here, we win two, they win one. I think every game is kind of just its own thing. Again, that's why I think we try to approach it that way. You try to approach it like a normal game. Again, easier said than done. But every game, I think, is just its own thing that is going to happen.

So momentum, yeah, I get it. They have a one-game



advantage on us. We got a chance to play two games at home where we play really well. It's weird. Those moments happen -- they unfold in front of you. So you never know who is going to make the big pitch, big swing. A couple days ago it was them. Two days before that it was us. So you got to just focus on what you're doing.

Q. Ahead of a day like this where it's kind of must win and presumably all hands on deck, do you let your relievers know, Hey, I'm putting you in this situation or against these hitters or do they just know they have to be available?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, they know. Again, I think postseason is different than regular season, for sure. But I think that they know it's all hands on deck. We're not worrying about tomorrow, you're worrying about today. If you don't worry about today, there is no tomorrow. So, yeah, they will be ready for anything. I think that they have been for a while. I still haven't down loaded TikTok.

Q. How are we ever going to do a TikTok dance together? So I also want to find out -- I also want to ask you, look, the team values your opinion, they love what you have to say, the country loves what you have to say. Moments before the team goes out on the field tonight, what is your message going to be to the team, what is your motivational speech, what are you going to say?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Don't have a motivational speech. The message is the exact same every day: Be you and enjoy the moment. We're one of three teams left. So when we play really well, every single guy in that clubhouse is being who they are. Nothing more, nothing less. And that's going to continue to be the message as long as we play this year. That's it. You have to enjoy the moment. This is what we all sacrifice for, this is what we all work for. I said it yesterday, we've won one game in a row 99 times this year, so we got a pretty good chance to do it again.

Q. Can I ask you to zoom out and, end of September 2024, if someone had told you that October 19th, 2025 you would be in a Game 6 ALCS at home what would you have said?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I'll take it. I'll take it. We've done a lot of work behind the scenes to improve ourselves, our roster, improve our communication, improve our processes, all that kind of stuff. This is why you do it. How you get there always gets magnified and scrutinized. But when you look at a chance to play in front of our crowd, on October 19th, when most of the league is sitting at home, you take it. So you have to enjoy it, you have to be proud

of the things you've done to get here. But again, if you told me that last year, or day one of spring training if you say, Hey, you got a shot to win two games at home to go to the World Series, sign me up every time.

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