

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

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Dodger Stadium

Los Angeles Dodgers

Andrew Friedman

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Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. How tough was the decision with Rojas and where is he at physically right now?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: It was obviously difficult. We are a much better team with Miguel Rojas a part of what we're doing. Obviously he impacts the game in a lot of different ways. But just the re-aggravation of it, diving on defense and just how compromised the range would be, and the importance to get him right.

Hopefully we can figure out how to win four games and have him alive for the next round. But it was one of those things that, we felt like, all we would do is set it back even more and have him not necessarily help us in this round and then also not be available.

So it wasn't easy. It's unfortunate, but we've seen it a lot this year with the next-man-up mentality. And we saw it in the last round. We've had a lot of different things go on and guys have elevated their game and stepped up.

Q. Do you have any more details on Gavin Stone's shoulder surgery?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: Not really. I've been more focused on this. He's in good spirits and it went well, but the details I'm not current on.

Q. And Dave yesterday mentioned weighing the idea of potentially using Tony Gonsolin, how that affected his rehab. What went into that final decision there?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: It's tough when a guy's coming back from surgery and especially in a role with some unknowns around it. I think if he were built up and was a starting pitcher, it's easier. You know the schedule.

As a reliever, that's more challenging. Things may get going in a game where you've got to get up and loose



quickly and that's not fair to him right now.

Q. Is Vesia an option for the next round in terms of his timeline?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: We're hopeful. We're not sure. But it's something we're going to do everything we can to keep treating it and put him in position for that. So we're hopeful. It's two days later, we don't really know. But the early signs yesterday were optimistic, but who knows what that means.

Q. What do you remember just like the last 24 hours before the trade deadline? Obviously you guys pursuing starting pitching, and especially that last hour when you were getting the deal done for Flaherty?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: Not a lot. It was crazy. The final 60, 90 minutes of the trade deadline is always crazy. There's lots of action and things going on. We had some back and forth with Detroit but had been kind of more focused on other fronts thinking that Detroit was going a different direction. And then got back to us, I think, 40 minutes before and things happened pretty quickly from there.

Jack's been great for us. The look in his eye, he wanted the ball today. And we feel really confident with him on the mound.

Q. Considering all the injuries and the moving parts, has this been your most challenging year when you have 10 pitchers on the IL right now -- you don't add Vesia because it's not that time of year. So you have 11 out. So you've had to mix, match, the bullpen games.

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: I'm not very good at comparing current years to previous years. Just being mired in this current year, it always feels like the most. Any year, if you ask me that, it always feels like the most.

Obviously we have had a number of things go on this year and it's something that certainly made it more challenging.



But it's also been really rewarding, I think, to our scouts, our player development staff, our Major League coaching staff for the number of guys who have come up and contributed and played a big part in where we are right now.

Q. How much do you think Doc has been a part of it, basically juggling everything?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: He's been great. I think the number of injuries that we withstood during the year at different times, you could see where it was a little deflating to the clubhouse. They're out there battling, doing everything they can to accomplish our regular season goal of winning the division, and things keep happening.

And I think Doc's just relentless optimism helped keep things directionally positive and moving forward and allowed us to do what we did to put ourselves in position to have the bye that allowed us to kind of reset some of our pitching, which then put us in position for the five-game. And it's been a massive player in the success we've had to this point.

Q. What did you think when you saw the roof blow off the Trop?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: It was jarring. It's funny, because seeing that material, it always was in the back of your mind. I think we had two, three, four, at least, hurricane scares every season -- none that I think had the impact of this one.

But there was always a thought in the back of your mind -- I'm not an expert on construction, but that material did not seem the most sturdy.

But it was really jarring and it gave me great perspective on just the effect that those storms had in Florida and the impact it had on people's lives.

Q. How many bullpen games do you expect to have to resort to in a seven-game series?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: Not sure. I think a lot of it comes down to we have to assess how each game goes. Obviously this has been a little bit of a frantic pace, winning on Friday. Yesterday spent a lot of time -- our advanced team came and in presented and our guys in the office and our coaching staff and everyone just working together to put together the information and distill it down into the nuggets that were most important, kind of spilled over into today.

So we have a decent idea of what we want to do tomorrow;

we're just not going to know for sure until we get through this game. And I think it's going to be a little bit of that of just understanding what has taken place to that point and then building a plan from that.

Q. When you expect to get a few innings from starters as you did last round and probably will this round --

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: I disagree with that. I think we'll get more with this round.

Q. Because you're playing seven games. (Laughter)

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: You're on to me. You're on to me. (Laughter). I think they will pitch well. But that's a separate point.

Q. How many more variables does it introduce when you do have to do bullpen games and more relief innings?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: Just right out of the gates we played five games in six days. So how to balance that and divvy up the workload and make sure that our best guys are in position to help us win games is really important.

Again, each game, as you guys know, the theater of October baseball, each game takes on its own life form and takes you down paths and things that you can't possibly foresee. So we'll assess at the end and the most important thing is to do everything we can to win tonight and then figure out where we are after that.

Q. Was there ever much consideration at any point this year to try to get Yamamoto on a five-day schedule? And did that kind of go out the window with the shoulder injury?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: Yeah, we talked about it a lot in Spring Training of kind of phases of the assimilation process. Him missing the time he did made that more challenging. And then it became about when he got back, was just trying to build up pitch count as much as we could in that time period.

And then even looking ahead to next year, just that urgency wasn't the same with potentially adding Shohei into the rotation. That urgency to do it wasn't the same as we got there.

But had he not missed the time, I'm sure we would have at some point. But we are where we are.

Q. How much did you guys feel like the pitch tipping was a root cause of his issues in Game 1? And how



much better was it in Game 5 when you went back and looked?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: I definitely think it was a factor. Another factor was he was just a little too fine. He was trying to be a little too careful and not appreciating how elite his stuff is. And I think the messaging from anyone and everyone to him in those days in between was how good his stuff was and to be aggressive and go out and attack. I think that was a big difference as well.

Q. How much did that bullpen game strategy exceed expectations to the point where now it's almost a weapon for you guys, you've got so much more confidence in that?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: I guess the game itself played out as well as we could possibly have hoped. I think as far as the confidence, I don't know that it changes it that much in that we think really highly of our relievers. We think we have a really deep and talented pen. And even coming into the playoffs, that was going to be a real weapon for us and one of our real team strengths.

So for them to do as well as they did, can't say I expected exactly that, but for those guys individually to pitch well wasn't surprising.

Q. And if there was ever an option to have a starter come out of the bullpen, how much do you have to strike that fine balance between liability, possible injury? Does that ever come to mind?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: No. I think it's about giving that pitcher enough advanced notice -- we've done it with some guys during the year just so they can get accustomed to that -- and then how to give them enough lead time to get ready.

We would never be, like, oh, hey, you're in the game. We would always make sure we gave them sufficient time to get loose and each guy has a little bit different pregame routine. So it's understanding each guy's pregame routine and making sure they have the ability to do that.

We've had guys warm up, the outfielder in between innings, as a way to like get some long toss in. It's just about figuring out what it is for each individual and then making sure that it fits in accordingly.

Q. I know the players have to execute obviously, but with you guys pitching 24 straight shutout innings how impactful was the advanced scouting for you guys in that series?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: Yeah, we've had teams of guys out on the road for a month now just living and breathing whichever respective team that they're assigned to. A lot of times you end up not even playing that team. So the month they invested went for naught in real life implications.

But I can't say enough about the work and the effort they put into it and getting there early and watching early work and seeing who is moving around well and watching bullpens.

So the guys that worked on San Diego definitely had thoughts on what the Padres lineup looked like coming in. Didn't execute very well in the first couple of games, but did thereafter.

There were little nuggets here and there that they were helpful with.

And the Mets guys were really happy that it lined up we're playing the Mets. And they came in and did a really good presentation yesterday and kind of walked through a lot of the team's strengths of the Mets.

And it's important. Our Major League coaching staff is focused on what's right in front of them. They don't have the luxury to look out ahead, whereas our advanced guys that's exactly what they're doing. So the combination of them knowing what the coaches are looking for, the communication back and forth, I think, has made it something that helps close that gap when we have a quick turnaround like this.

I mean, we had one day off between a really emotional game and Game 1. And I think the work that our scouts did in the field really helped prepare us for that.

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