

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Sunday, October 13, 2024

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

New York Mets

Manager Carlos Mendoza

Pregame 1 Press Conference



Q. Obviously you have a big series to manage. Does any part of you get caught up in the history coming out here to Dodger Stadium and kind of playing in an iconic venue like this?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, I mean, gotta take a step back and realize what a privilege it is to be able to come to Dodger Stadium and play in the NLCS. There's obviously history.

But the fact that you come to the ballpark with an opportunity to do something special and it's against a really good team means a lot. So definitely humbling, but, yeah, you do take the time to step back and realize that what a privilege this is.

Q. You're in your first year. Doc, on the other side, your managerial counterpart, is obviously a veteran. Do you have any sort of relationship, do you know him? What's it like going up against somebody like that who has so much ...

CARLOS MENDOZA: Not really. I met him when I was a bench coach, but then briefly conversations like before a game, things like that.

But I've got a lot of respect for him. He's done a tremendous job not only this year after facing so much adversity with the injuries and all that, but you look at, I don't know, 11 years or so, a special human and a really good manager.

So it's a privilege to have the opportunity to go out there and compete against him.

Q. With Senga short today, how do you decide whether to go with Peterson like last time for a chunk of the game versus any of the other avenues?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I think the game will tell us what to

do. We'll go out there, wait, see what happens, let the game unfold and play out. And we'll be able to make adjustments and make the decision for who's coming in after that.

The good thing is everyone is rested. Everyone is ready to go. Like I said, the game will tell us, and we'll make the call.

Q. With a guy like Jeff McNeil, what does he add in the possibility that he's back and playing?

CARLOS MENDOZA: A lot. He's a left-handed hitter that his bat-to-ball skills are off the chart. Provides versatility defensively. He's a guy that cannot only play the infield at second base but can play in the outfield, corner outfield -- right field, left field if we need it.

And he's been a huge part of this team the whole year. Obviously him being down for the past six weeks or so, we missed him. But he worked really hard to put himself in a position to where he's now a player for us.

He's a huge part for us just because, like I said, the bat and the versatility makes us a better team.

Q. I was also talking to Harrison Bader and we both agreed this team has that "it" factor. How do you describe that "it" factor?

CARLOS MENDOZA: It's hard to describe, to be honest with you. But it's a special group. We've been through a lot since the very first week of the season, a lot of ups and downs, a lot of adversity. And we never gave up. We kept trusting in each other and here we are.

For the past two months, I feel like we've been playing playoff baseball.

But it's a special group. Not only they're talented, they're really good players, but they're special people. And when you have that type of combination, that could be scary.

So here we are playing a really good team. You could probably say the same thing about the Dodgers. They've



been through a lot. They just got done playing a really tough series. It will be a fun series, and we just have to go out there, enjoy it.

Q. If you go back to June, at the point when you guys were 11 under .500, how would you describe some of the conversations you had at that point to steer everything back in the right direction? It can often take teams a lot of effort to get just back level and then sometimes they fall back. What are some of the conversations you guys had to ensure that didn't occur for you?

CARLOS MENDOZA: There was a lot of conversation. I think the biggest thing was having that mentality of one day at a time and winning each game, each day -- not necessarily the game, but our process, our preparation.

So you've got to give credit to not only the players who were the ones who went out and did it but the coaches, the support staff, the trainers, the front office. So there's a lot of people here that had a hand on it.

And just a lot of conversations I'm going to go back to, how can we get better today? Are you doing everything that you need to do to get ready to play and win a baseball game?

Are we doing the things we need to do in player development, in scouting, in the training room, in the weight room, with the information?

So we knew there was a lot of season left. We knew we had good players, but we needed to be better. You've got to give all those guys credit because they went out there and did it.

Not only did we have those conversations, but you needed to follow up with actions, and we did that. And here we are.

Q. The Dodgers had a quick turnaround to this NLCS. What do the extra days afford your team or allow you guys to do? I imagine you did have some advanced scouting on the Padres/Dodgers series, but what did the two days give you guys?

CARLOS MENDOZA: A lot of guys needed it, especially the past two weeks, we felt like we were never home. But time for guys to take a step back and reset and get treatment, a rested bullpen. We were able to adjust our rotation accordingly.

Yeah, a lot of meetings in preparation for potential two teams. We needed those two days. And now here we are

getting ready for what is going to be a fun series against the Dodgers. And we're ready to go.

Q. Your experience with the Yankees, how did that prepare you for the season here and just getting into the postseason?

CARLOS MENDOZA: It helped me a lot, every step along the way, not only at the big league level but in the minors. I wore a lot of different hats -- extra coach, manager, defensive coach, coordinator, field coordinator.

I went through a lot of positions there that I feel helped me get to this position. Obviously getting to the big leagues as a coach and then as a bench coach and doing it in a big market like New York, where there's going to be a lot of noise. There's going to be a lot of expectations. And you have to be able to navigate tough times. You have to be consistent.

And I feel like with a lot of years that I spent with that organization helped me prepare to get to where I'm at right now. So I'm grateful for that.

Q. How do you find the difference between what the expectations are like being a Yankee as opposed to being a Met?

CARLOS MENDOZA: They're high expectations whether you're with the Yankees or Mets -- any big market team. I'm pretty sure here with the Dodgers in big cities like that where the fan base is intense and they're passionate.

But I love it, man. Especially with our fan base. They've been through a lot, not only this year, but it's been fun watching them going to Citi Field and live and die with every pitch, just like we are.

And it's a privilege, it's an honor for me to put on this uniform and couldn't be happier.

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