

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Monday, October 14, 2024

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

Los Angeles Dodgers

Manager Dave Roberts

Pregame 2 Press Conference

Q. As you mapped out the bullpen game what went into starting with Brasier? You did that in Game 4 for you guys?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think with Brasier, we feel he's pretty neutral. He's done it numerous times. And it's essentially deploying whatever guys we have in the pen today, but I plan on using a lot of them today. But I think with Brasier it's just more that we know he's done it and it's neutral.

Q. How does Knack fit into the plan today?

DAVE ROBERTS: He's in there. He's in there. I don't know when I'm going to run him out there. But he's definitely in there. And my expectation is that he's going to take down most of the outs today.

Q. With Freddie, is he in there today?

DAVE ROBERTS: He's in there today.

Q. I know yesterday a lot of the conversation was about just not kind of taking your foot off the gas. Obviously we saw what they were able to do. How important is it, though, to carry it into a new day and into today's game?

DAVE ROBERTS: It's very important. Obviously I think getting back after it, a day game after a night game, I think that's good for us.

I thought that we were really good early offensively. Jack certainly set the tone. We did some little things well, and we added on late.

Manaea is a different pitcher than we've seen in the past, dropping his arm angle, and so it's a different kind of look. Kind of liken him to a little Chris Sale-ish. But he's going to compete.



We've got our work cut out for us. We've got to take good at-bats. If we can stress them and make them go to the pen, then it's going to bode really well for us.

Q. Obviously every series is different, but with these bullpen sessions that you guys are putting out there, what have you learned from the last series that you can pretty much add to what this series is, as far as learning and being able to be effective and get the win that you're looking for?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think what we learned from last series is there's a lot of capable guys in the pen. They're very confident right now.

So for me, certainly in a longer series, you can use these guys whenever you feel. Just the level of trust is as high as it's ever been. I think it's working both ways.

Q. How is Gavin doing today?

DAVE ROBERTS: Gavin is doing okay. He'll be available off the bench in a big spot to pinch-hit. I don't see him coming in to play defense. Very fortunate that we have an off day tomorrow and we'll see how Game 3 plays out.

Q. When you look at what the lineup has done so far this postseason, what's standing out to you about that's leading to what seems like a higher level of execution than you guys have had the last couple of Octobers?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think we're taking better at-bats. The execution part of it is huge. I think that obviously having guys that I feel that we can play small ball or do some things with is certainly helpful. We're stealing bases when we need to. I just like the ability to be able to get a hit.

Case in point, Max, yesterday, where typically there's a big swing in there. But for him to downshift and get a two-out knock, I thought, was the hit of the game.

Just kind of what Tommy did, Shohei, to check down to get a base hit. That right there is huge for our guys. And still with the potential to slug.



But, yeah, you have players and they're playing good baseball.

Q. With Ben Casparius, hasn't had a long track record of Major League success, but he's been good when he's been out there. Wonder how you approach the usage in a series like this for a pitcher like that?

DAVE ROBERTS: With Ben, it was trying to find an opportunity to cut his teeth. Obviously when it was 6-0, I wanted to still shorten the game and I used Hudson and didn't want to use any other leverage guys.

I felt certainly -- I was going to run him out there at 6-0 in the ninth, but tacking on more was even better. I think even for Landon, what we did in San Diego, to get him a playoff inning, I thought it's still different in the postseason.

So what we did with Ben, I felt good about that, and just kind of allowing for him to build a little confidence going forward in this series. Henriquez has already pitched in the postseason. Knack, checked the box. Honeywell is a guy that's on our roster, but he's an older guy, so I feel good with him.

But I think with Ben it was just trying to cut his teeth and get him involved.

Q. What went into your thinking, you guys thinking about having the bullpen game today rather than the next one at Citi Field? You could have probably pitched Buehler on regular rest today, right?

DAVE ROBERTS: We could have. We could have. I think that just appreciating the fact that we had an off day coming into this series, we have an off day tomorrow, I like Walker on the road. And if Knack is going to take down a lot of the outs, having him pitch here makes sense. There's a lot going into that, yeah.

Q. Why do you like Walker on the road?

DAVE ROBERTS: Experience. He's done it. Thinking maybe his first one as a rookie in Atlanta wasn't great. And then as he's gotten more experience, he's done it. So that's kind of -- for us it was a no-brainer. Obviously having him available later in the series if it's needed as well.

Q. Given the kind of uneven season that he had but that experience, as you said, can a guy like that lock in or take it to a different level this month when he maybe didn't have the best season?

DAVE ROBERTS: Absolutely. I think he's showing that.

His last four outings have been his best by far.

This is a guy that's coming off surgery. So the year after a surgery, there's an adjustment period, kind of trying to get the feel and really kind of get your feet back and understanding who you are as a pitcher coming out of surgery.

Now, we're on the back end of that year, removed from surgery. I talked to Walker yesterday, and he's obviously never lacked for confidence, but he's in a good place physically. And certainly he lives for big moments.

What better way to change the bad taste that you had in a regular season for him to have a dominant postseason. And he's on a heater right now.

Q. Did you see a different Walker after he gave up the sixth in San Diego last week, mentally, especially?

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, I did. I think that certainly it's about results. We didn't play good defense behind him. I was very pleased to see that he came out of that outing knowing that he was throwing the baseball really well. He kept us in the ball game. Gave us two huge innings in innings four and five.

Felt that he could have went seven shutout if we would have made some plays behind him. So I like hearing that from him.

Again, the results are the results, but the way he was throwing the baseball, the confidence that he had -- and that's something, for me, he's taking confidence from that outing and that's a good thing because that's what I saw from him that night.

Q. As you were watching Freddie Freeman score on that Muncy hit in the first inning there, wondering how you were running through your mind a guy pushing himself to the limit to do so for his team versus how you consider maybe needing to protect a guy from damaging himself further, how do you weigh that as you're watching that play out?

DAVE ROBERTS: I was watching his gait. He actually -- when you're running straight ahead -- and obviously he's running bases -- but his gait looked good. Yes, the face didn't look great, probably. But his gait looked good. So I think that when you're in control, that's something that I think you can manage. When you have to stop or start real quick, that's what scares me.

Thank goodness Mookie was there to save him. But I thought the gait was fine. So I wasn't really worried about

that moment. What you're worried about is after the fact, the stress, how he comes out of it.

So for me, a play that's like an awkward -- the other night he had a play that was kind of up the line. He to leap to catch it on a double play ball, I think. Those things kind of scare me. But when you're in control, I was totally fine with it, yeah.

Q. In terms of the impact on his teammates of seeing him put that kind of effort forward, how would you describe what that does for a group of players for a clubhouse?

DAVE ROBERTS: It's everything. I think we all believe that if you sacrifice something, then it means more. So he's sacrificing his body right now. He's doing a lot that people don't know about to stay on the field. And so when he's doing that, it means more to him.

When people see him doing that, it means more to them. So there's a big sacrifice going on. And not much more you can sacrifice than your body.

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