

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Monday, October 14, 2024

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

New York Mets

Manager Carlos Mendoza

Pregame 2 Press Conference

Q. Win or lose today, you're going home for preferably three games. Having only played two games in the last three weeks or something like that at Citi Field, how much are you looking forward to get back there in that atmosphere?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, obviously we have an important game to play here today. But exciting. Every time you get an opportunity to play in front of our fan base at Citi Field, especially the way they've been showing up, not only in the playoffs, but the last two months, it's electric. It's intense. It's fun.

So really looking forward to it. But we've got to take care of business today.

Q. For weeks you guys were playing for your season at the end of the regular season, then in a very quick three-game series, then in an also quick five-game series. Now that you're in a seven-game series, how different and long does it feel?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I don't think it feels long. I think every game is important. Whether it's Game 1, Game 2, like today. You're right, I feel like we've been playing the most important games of the season for two months now. And here we are, after a tough one yesterday, gotta be able to flush that one and be ready for today's game.

Seven-game, five-game, three-game set, every game's important.

Q. Nimmo is in there today, but how limited is he with the foot?

CARLOS MENDOZA: He's good. He's battling through the foot injury, obviously, but good enough not only to be in the lineup but to be in the outfield as well.

Look, this time of the year, there's a lot of people battling



with -- you could see Freddie doing it for them. But he's going to be honest with me and with the training staff. And he's good enough to, like I said, not only be in the lineup but be a player for us defensively as well. So it's good.

Q. You've mentioned you've been playing these really important games for a while now. How much does that experience help you in another really important game today?

CARLOS MENDOZA: It helps, not only for me as a manager, for the coaches, but for the players. This is not the first time we're in a situation where, after a tough loss, we find a way to get the job done.

Those are the expectations going into today. We know we're facing a really good team in the Dodgers. We saw it yesterday. This is nothing new for us.

So we'll treat it the same. We come here. We prepare. That's what we're doing right now. We're going to go out there, compete and give it our best.

Q. How do you explain your team's resilience?

CARLOS MENDOZA: It's been hard for us, the whole year, ups and downs, a lot of adversity. We continue to find ways to get the job done.

Not only have we got really good players, we've got really good people that care about each other. And they're not afraid to call each other out when they need to and when they have to.

They continue to believe. And they know that after a bad game, there's always an opportunity the next day. That's the case here where we didn't play well yesterday but we know what we need to do to make some adjustments and go out there and -- like I said, that's a really good team we're facing.

But this group is tough. And we'll continue to find ways.

Q. I guess part of it is that your big guys, like your shortstop and first baseman, have risen to the



occasion?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, and that's why they're some of the best players in the game. And you need those guys to step up, and they've done that.

Lindor has done it. Pete's done it. And those are the expectations. For us to get to where we want to get, we're going to need those guys. They'll continue to show up and they'll continue to help us.

Q. You have gotten everything you could have probably hoped out of Sean Manaea so far. What were your sort of realistic expectations for him? And maybe how does that compare to the version of him that you ended up with?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, we knew we were getting a really good left-handed pitcher that he's been through a lot the past couple of years. Obviously, number one, we needed to keep him healthy. He feels healthy. We knew he was going to help us.

But, man, since he makes those adjustments, whether it was lowering his arm slot, he's been unbelievable. And he continues to get better. I think the biggest thing from him was he's continuing to take the baseball.

Coming into the year, we were like, you know, hopefully we've got to find a way to keep him healthy. If he's healthy, taking the ball, we'll be in a good spot.

You've got to give him credit because he's put in a lot of work. And his ability to make adjustments when he needed to and he continues to go out there and give us a chance to win baseball games.

I'm proud of him. And those are the expectations that he goes out there and gives a chance to win a baseball game.

Q. What's the unique challenge of facing a bullpen game? And how does that preparation look like for your offense coming into today?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I think this is not the first time that we're going against a bullpen day. We saw it against the Brewers in the Wild Card, when we knew they were going to either bullpen aggressively.

And they've got a good one here too. They've got some legit arms. A lot of right-handed pitchers.

We'll be ready. We'll be ready for what's thrown at us. We've got good hitters. Yeah, but as far as our preparation, it's not the first time that we're going through a

situation like this.

Q. With Manaea and Severino and Quintana, those three guys have all stayed healthy all year, they pitched more innings than they have in the recent past, how have you been able to keep them healthy, and to have them really pitching their best at this time of year?

CARLOS MENDOZA: You've got to give them a lot of credit, because they invested a lot of time in the training room, the weight room, making sure they're taking care of themselves. And they are in a territory where they haven't been in a long time.

You mentioned Sevy, you mentioned Sean. And that's why those extra days, when we're going through the decisions and how we're going to line up our rotation, the extra day for those guys was huge. But they should feel proud.

There's a lot of people that work really hard behind the scenes to keep those guys healthy all the way to this point. And they continue to perform. Not only are they taking the baseball, they're giving us a chance to win baseball games.

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