

# NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Citi Field

## New York Mets

## Manager Carlos Mendoza

### Workout Day Press Conference



**Q. Did that Game 2 feel like a summation of you guys after losing big the night before? You struck back really quickly in Game 2.**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, we've done it the whole year. Like I said that day, we got punched, we found a way to get back up. It's going to be a fun series. A lot of back and forth. Two really good teams. We've just got to continue to fight.

But it was good for us to, especially after we played that Game 1, for us to come out on the first inning with Lindor and then continue to add on, obviously Vientos with the big one, and then finish it off and get the victory there. What's important now, back here at home and getting ready for Game 3.

**Q. If you look back to May when you moved Lindor into the lead-off spot, what sort of went into that decision for you? And now looking back on it, is this a best-case scenario for how it could have worked out?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, not a secret, we were struggling offensively as a team. I remember it was after a tough loss in Miami, we were going back to the hotel. I was right next to Francisco. We were having a lot of conversations. And then the lineup construction came up.

I put it out there, just wanted to give him a different look, wanted to get his take. The first thing he said was, yeah, when I first came up to the league, I hit lead-off.

So we continued to have that conversation. The one thing that he said was, if you want to do it, let's give it a good look here. We didn't want it to be a couple of games or a week or so, let's give it a run and see how it goes.

And, man, he took off. And it seems like the lineup kind of fed off that. He's a good player.

**Q. Ohtani is 6-for-8 with runners on base in the postseason and hitless in, like, 19 at-bats with nobody on. How does the equation change dealing with him when there's traffic on the bases and when there's not?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: I don't think you change. He's Shohei Ohtani. He's one of the best hitters in the league. Whether there's nobody on base or people on base, you've got your work cut out. And you have to manage the game and see how you're going to attack him, how you're going to pitch to him in certain situations.

But like I said, runners on base, no runners on, he's an elite hitter. He's dangerous. I don't think it changes much.

**Q. Why do you think a lot of times in postseason game history the big stars seem to struggle and the guys down the order are the heroes, whether it was a Barry Bonds back in the day struggled earlier on, Judge has gone through his struggles, Ohtani? Is there so much emphasis on the scouting reports and keep the big guy in check?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, I guess, you know? But they're still really good players. They're one swing away. I said it with Pete Alonso when we were facing the Brewers, they are elite. And there's a reason why.

Maybe teams are a little bit more careful when you're trying to pitch around certain guys. And different guys have different ways of approaching those situations. But I don't know that you can put too much into it.

There's times when they're going to struggle, but there's also times when they're going to be huge. And whether it's Aaron Judge, Barry Bonds, Ohtani, you name it, there's a reason why they're superstars.

**Q. A lot of guys have talked about the impact J.D. Martinez has had. What do you see specifically he's had from a hitting standpoint? Is he almost like another coach in uniform? What is the specific impact?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: I think just how guys starting to prepare individually. Like, what to look for, just by having conversations with him. What are some of the teams that you look for where you are doing your homework, when you're preparing and you're going to face this guy, not only individually but collectively?

And then whether it's swing path, whether it's -- there's a lot mechanic-wise. He's pretty smart when it comes down to hitting. He's been a huge part of this team since he got here. Yeah, I think it's a privilege to have a mindset like that.

But then you've got to give credit to our hitting coaches too that are willing to listen and then just kind of bounce ideas off each other. And then, okay, this is what we're seeing, what have you got? And then just, like, with every player.

But J.D. has been huge for us as a team. Great guy in that clubhouse, not only for the offensive side, but just the experience and the way he sees the game and how he prepares and a special guy.

**Q. How is Brandon Nimmo feeling?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Nothing new to report there. I haven't seen him today, but I would expect to be the same. I expect him to be in the lineup tomorrow.

**Q. Just to follow-up on J.D., in LA there was a lot of talk about Kiké being a playoff player. J.D. has that reputation as well. How do you see him working into this series?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: He's going to be a huge part of this team. He's been huge for us. And he continues to do so.

There's a good chance he's in the lineup tomorrow. Like I said, he's a professional hitter, and he means a lot to this team and to that lineup. So his presence -- like I say, whenever he's in there, he makes us a better team as well. So yeah, he's going to continue to be a big part of the team moving forward.

**Q. What did you think Francisco Lindor not being a finalist for the Gold Glove Award?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: I don't know -- if you ask him, he'll tell you he's not here to win personal awards; he is here to win the whole thing, the World Series. That's his goal. He's an elite defender. I was shocked that he wasn't even in the finals.

**Q. With Kodai Senga, are all indications that he's still healthy and fine?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, right now everything is fine. He'll go out there and play catch and see where we are.

**Q. Now that you're guaranteed to play a Game 5, is Senga essentially penciled in for that start?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: We'll see how he feels today and how we're going to get there to Game 5 and we'll make a decision.

**Q. Is Peterson an option for that start or are you more or less set on using him in relief?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Again, we'll see how the game goes tomorrow, if Peterson is available for tomorrow or the next day, but we've just got to get there first. But he brings a lot of out of the clubhouse.

**Q. And Game 4 will be Quintana?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Game 4 is Q, yep.

**Q. What are you seeing from Francisco Alvarez's at-bats? And he's played a lot of games. Is he starting to tire a little bit, do you think?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: No, maybe trying to do a little too much at times, especially with runners on. But he's a good hitter, man. I like the conviction. I like that he's aggressive. And he will continue to get opportunities because he's a big part of this team.

You're facing elite pitching and you're going to have to make some adjustments because they're going to be tough. They've got good scouting reports. Like I said, you have to make adjustments. Specifically that last game I think he was trying to do a little too much with runners on, but he'll be fine.

**Q. Just asked Sevy about how he would think about facing Ohtani. He said he would watch what Darvish did against him. Darvish has, like he mentioned, 11 pitches or so to throw in that. As much as you can try to game plan for Ohtani, even if you execute his pitches he can still hurt you. How do you play -- just base his attack on the situation of the game and figure out what to do?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Like I said earlier, he's an elite hitter. The situation of the game will tell us how we are going to approach him. Sevy can go back and look at all the film. And Yu Darvish is a complete different pitch package.

But Sevy has to be himself. He has to stick to his strengths, attack, and have a good feel for the situation of the game. If we have to make adjustments, we will. But I just want Sevy to be himself and go out there and execute.

**Q. Buehler against lefties has been slightly less effective than against righties. Is there any temptation to get McNeil into a start here?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: We'll see. Those are only conversations here. Buehler is kind of neutral. So I could go with righties. I could mix a lefty in there. But I've got to go back and look a little bit more in there.

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