

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

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Citi Field

Los Angeles Dodgers

Manager Dave Roberts

Workout Day Press Conference



some good pitches. You can look back at the last couple of weeks where he had the big Musgrove homer. He had the big homer in San Diego.

But outside of that, there's a lot of balls that he's missing. I think we all see that.

Will's working hard. So I don't know if it's the mechanical thing. I know it's not a moment type thing. I do feel that these guys, these guys in particular, maybe the Padres as well, they're trying to crowd him a little bit. I can see that.

I just trust Will in big spots. So he's always performed in the postseason. And hopefully we have a long way to go. And I just trust his at-bat.

And Sevy's pretty good against right. I just still feel if he can kind of leave that ball alone, that ball in -- and then he's going to get some sliders. I just feel he's due for another big hit or two.

Q. Just looking ahead to Walker's start tomorrow, when you look at his start from the NLDS, what did you see from him in that one? And what did you see that he could probably carry things over or make adjustments when facing the Mets tomorrow?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think in totality with Walker, I would want the same effort, execution, focus and certainly a different result. And I say that a lot of it was Walker's not doing.

So I think a lot of the same. And obviously in this situation, the series at 1-to-1, here on the road again, which we feel really confident in Walker. I expect he's going to come out with the same kind of conviction and focus.

Q. You showed in the last round you guys can make adjustments and be nimble during a series. There's been a lot of talk about Ohtani not getting any hits without runners on base. Will Smith only has two hits this postseason. Is there any thoughts about shuffling the lineup for the rest of the series?

DAVE ROBERTS: No, there isn't. I just think that early on it's just funny how things change where there was a lot of concern about Shohei not being able to get hits with the runners in scoring position. And now we're all trying to find ways that he's -- have to get guys on base so he can hit, right? I kind of find that comical, a little bit.

So I don't think that anyone can predict who is going to get on base in Game 3 or Game 4. So I feel that kind of there's some tweaks that I do make as far as Teo, Freddie, the 5, 6, maybe the 7, 8, 9. But to think that I'm going to move Shohei to the 4 or the 3, that's just not going to happen.

Q. What do you make of Smith?

DAVE ROBERTS: That's something that he's missing

Q. When you've looked at Shohei's difficulties that he's had in the postseason, they've been against Manaea and Yu Darvish who were both difficult pitchers, deliveries unusual?

DAVE ROBERTS: Tanner Scott, right.

Q. Do you see that as all the other at-bats have been fine?

DAVE ROBERTS: I do. I do. And I think that -- I certainly appreciate the guys that he face, and understanding that that's probably some of the reason why whatever his production or average or whatever anyone wants to look at, he's faced some tough pitchers. And they're pitching them very tough.

For me, looking at tomorrow, I feel really good about tomorrow. Probably not going to see Manaea until Game 6, if there is a Game 6.

Yeah, I feel good. But I do feel that he's got to continue to manage his hitting zone regardless of who's pitching. And I do think that he can hit anyone, as we all know.



But he's still got to be kind of stubborn in his zone. And I do feel that tomorrow he's got to get back to the big part of the field. If he can do that, it should bode well for all of us.

Q. One more on Shohei, have you been surprised that he's kind of expanded the zone a bit in the postseason? And do you think that's more a byproduct of his approach and trying to do too much or trying to make something happen, or just more pitchers pitching him extra carefully right now and that's just being what he's getting at the plate?

DAVE ROBERTS: I was surprised with the Darvish. I was surprised that he expanded versus Darvish. Scott is just -- it's nitrous coming at you with the slider. That's just a tough at-bat for any left-hander. Manaea, I just can't imagine the ball coming from first base coming at you and then trying to hit him.

So I just don't see that. I just think that that's kind of an outlier.

But outside of that, for me, honestly the Darvish at-bats was a little bit for me. But, again, that's something you're facing your childhood idol. I don't know how much that comes into play, I have no idea.

Q. The other injured guys, how is Gavin and Freddie? And how are they doing today?

DAVE ROBERTS: So I talked to Gavin. Gavin feels much better today. So we'll see how he comes in tomorrow. But my expectation is that he'll be in there.

Freddie, haven't seen him yet. My expectation is that he'll be in there. And Huddy, I haven't seen him either. My expectation is that he'll be ready to go tomorrow.

Q. Is Yoshinobu in the lineup for Game 4? Is that still the plan for you guys?

DAVE ROBERTS: That's still the plan, yes.

Q. Going back to Shohei, is there a tendency where you see him expanding, something like bad habits starting to be picked up? Or is it something where it's isolated, especially when it comes to Darvish, like you mentioned?

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, I think it's isolated. There have been times that he has to reset, I think, as all fall hitters do. Sometimes certain pitchers sort of kind of trigger bad habits. And you've got to identify that to then reset.

So I do feel that he's cognizant of that. And so, again, my expectation is that he's going to reset today, get to the big part of the field and take some good at-bats for Severino.

Q. What's different about Severino than the version you saw last year with the Yankees?

DAVE ROBERTS: You know what, I can't even really speak to that totally intelligently. I know there's a lot of velocity. There's a slider in there. Certainly better versus right than left. He's been a big-game pitcher. There's some guys that have history with him. We'll be ready for whatever he has planned for us.

Q. (Indiscernible) talking about Shohei and the American League CS about Judge. Do you have a theory why the big boys seem to get shut down in postseasons, whether it was Bonds back in the day, A-Rod had his struggles? Is it a thing that people focus so much on shutting that one guy down?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think that's a combo. I also feel like, and conversely, I saw how great David Ortiz was in the postseason.

I think those guys have certain expectations from everyone and themselves. And you have to be willing to essentially, whether, I say not blink, you have to just be willing to continue to hold until you get your pitch.

If not, knowing that opposing pitchers are not going to, quote/unquote, let you beat them. And you have to be willing to be patient.

So I played with Barry, and obviously everyone saw it in 2002. Then he really came to life and he was extraordinary in that series. Once Alex figured it out he was obviously great in the postseason.

But I do think there was a lot of pressure they might put on themselves initially. But when they get back to -- it's kind of what I said before, is all people expect them to do what they've done throughout their career, their stat line, their regular season stat line, as opposed to doing more.

And if Barry probably had that mindset having a 1.500, 1.200 instead of 2.000 OPS. He might have been better because that includes walks too. I don't know, but it's an interesting discussion for sure.

Q. Going back to Freddie, when you look at these three games back to back to back -- obviously we saw him play night to day back in Los Angeles, but do you feel like with him it's just a day-to-day conversation of seeing how he's feeling? And do you think weather

could into something, considering it's cold and wanting to keep his ankle and body warm out there?

DAVE ROBERTS: It's a day-to-day conversation. I just don't see any world that he doesn't start a playoff game in the NLCS. But, again, if he can't do it, that's very telling.

The weather probably will play a factor. I hope it won't be too kind of limiting, but I think we're mindful of it.

As of tomorrow, having the off day, I feel good about tomorrow and let's just hope he can get out of it feeling good for Game 4.

Q. Want to ask you about J.D. Martinez. Guys have called him like the Batting Whisperer a little bit. You know what goes on in the dugout. What's he doing there that you think is helpful? And even outside the game, do you have an anecdote you can recall from last year?

DAVE ROBERTS: He is sort of the Hitting Whisperer. He was a very good mentor, has been a good mentor for Mookie.

Hopefully he's not giving too many trade secrets, which I'm sure he is, how we think on the hitting side.

He's a hitting savant. He loves the game. He's obsessed with hitting. Not the greatest of base runners, but he likes to hit. And he just commands respect. He's won.

He's very likable. He cares. So obviously that was a big addition for the Mets. And he's helped, I'm sure, in a lot of ways that people just don't even realize.

Q. This isn't specific to Ohtani, but with that type of elite high-impact type of player, how do you look at or weigh the benefits of batting that type of leader, lead-off, extra at-bats, instant impact, versus maybe trying to put him in a 3-4 where you can maybe leverage some of the damage in a bigger way?

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, you know what, it's one of those things, whether it's a philosophy or, I guess, philosophy, right? It's how you construct a lineup given who you have in your lineup.

Because conversely, you hit them third or fourth, and then in that ninth inning he doesn't get that last at-bat and the whole world is saying, god, why didn't he hit earlier. We all know the world would have changed.

But those are things that I think we have complete solace in knowing that giving our best hitter five cracks to be

instant offense and also believing that the guys in the bottom of the order can create some havoc and get on base, and I thought we did that really well in Game 1 of the CS.

So just give him opportunities. So I just have a hard time kind of trying to -- I can't predict the game. So I feel good about what I can predict is Shohei hitting 1 and getting the most of the at-bats from our offense.

Q. Is the plan to have Jack in Game 5, or will that depend on the next couple of nights?

DAVE ROBERTS: That will depend on the next couple of nights, yep.

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