

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Citi Field

New York Mets

Manager Carlos Mendoza

Pregame 3 Press Conference



Q. How confident are you in your ballclub coming home for three right now?

CARLOS MENDOZA: A lot of confidence in our guys. Basically after what we went through the past couple of months, what we went through the whole year -- go back to the first week of the season -- just to be back here playing in front of our fan base, it's going to be electric. It's going to be loud. We can't wait.

They deserve this and we're really excited to be here in this situation and playing against a really good ballclub. Should be fun.

Q. What factors did you look at when you decided to put J.D. Martinez in there as the DH?

CARLOS MENDOZA: So when we knew we were playing the Dodgers, looking at the rotation, looking at some of the guys with splits and things like that, Buehler was one of those guys that are fairly neutral. Even the lefties hit them pretty well, too. But the righties have done some damage.

And J.D. is a really good hitter. He's a big reason why we're where we're at now. We're going to need him. And I thought today was a good match-up for him.

Q. Any consideration to use McNeil? And what made you decide to stick with Iglesias?

CARLOS MENDOZA: The same. There's always consideration. I'm looking at everything. I've got 12, 13 guys on the roster, right, that could easily be in the lineup. So I'm looking at previous match-ups, I'm looking at projections, I'm looking at pitch types and where we're at.

So Jeff is going to play a big role, but I just like Iglesias in there today and go from there.

Q. The playoffs are a time for aggressive bullpen use,

actually, but you've had a rotation that's been managed to typically pitch pretty deep into games. How much can that be an advantage for you guys going forward? And can it continue even in these high stakes?

CARLOS MENDOZA: You could make a case that one of the big reasons we're here is because of our starting pitching and their ability to go deep in games and allowing us -- giving us an opportunity to win baseball games and be more flexible and give guys from the bullpen a breather, you know.

We are going to continue to need them and we feel good with Sevy going today. But they've also got a really good starter. They've got another one tomorrow. We've got another -- a good one tomorrow, too.

So it will be interesting. It will be fun. But like I said, with baseball, it comes down to starting pitching. That's where it starts. It starts on the mound. And pretty confident that Sevy is going to give us a chance today.

Q. Just the other day, I know Sean said he ran into the wall pretty fast with those two walks the other day. Like how much alert -- when do you start being on alert for a starting pitcher -- that it has to be more in tune with that; there's not much wiggle room.

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yes, and we also have to understand where we're at in the season and where they're at physically. They're in territory now where nobody expected it.

They took the baseball the whole year -- Sean, Sevy, Q -- and those are some of the things that we will consider, when we're watching them.

It's the middle of October, you know. And, yeah, Sean hit the wall right away. He was looking pretty good and then two walks right away -- and the way he was missing.

So we'll talk about those in the dugout and we'll make the decisions. But they're a big part of what we're doing here.



Q. Did the cold temperatures have to give you any extra consideration about Nimmo being able to play left?

CARLOS MENDOZA: No, not really. No. Look, he's going to feel it. He's going to play through it. He's doing everything he can in the training room, the weight room to put himself in a position where he's a player for us. And that's why I'm comfortable with him in the lineup.

The one thing with these guys, they're going to be honest with me. If there's any type of hesitation, hey, man, they're going to let me know. So that wasn't the case, and that's why he's in the lineup today playing left field.

Q. Following up on Walker Buehler and his being fairly neutral platoon-wise, in about a half season worth of starts lefties have an .890 OPS; righties about 60 points less. I know that's not a super sophisticated way to look at it, especially in that sample size. What do you guys look at when deciding platoon stuff?

CARLOS MENDOZA: We're looking at a lot of things, not just OPS. We're looking at pitch movement, pitch uses, swing path from our guys, how they're attacking some of the righties, how they are attacking some of the lefties. There's a lot that we look into it. And I feel like today was a good match-up for J.D.

Q. Following up on the Nimmo/weather question, more generally how does the climate, lower temps factor into the games?

CARLOS MENDOZA: It's fun. You're playing Opening Day, it's freezing here. And we get to the summer days, the hot days, and here we are again now in the lower 50s. That's a good feeling. That means you're doing something right.

You love it. And you've got to go out there and gotta play baseball. Gotta find a way to get the job done.

Q. Given how good Quintana has been during this run, any conversation for him to get this start as opposed to Severino, or was it always Severino?

CARLOS MENDOZA: When we were going through how we were going to map out who is pitching Game 1, 2, 3, 4, there was a lot. I think it comes down to where they are physically.

Those three guys, they are on territory right now that they haven't been. Q came from an injury last year. He didn't pitch that many innings -- Quintana, Sevy.

So just giving them those extra days of rest was the key for us. That's how we decided to go with Sevy today.

Q. One more on Nimmo. I assume -- I want to ask did the off day help him? Is this the kind of thing where the rest helps and treatment can help? And the three games in a row, is there any particular concern on him being able to play three in a row at this stage?

CARLOS MENDOZA: The off day definitely helps a little bit. That's something that's not going to get better overnight. He continues to get treatment. He continues to do everything he can.

And the three in a row, I think it's a day-to-day type deal. I will check with him after every game. Like I said, he's going to be honest with me. If he feels like he cannot go, he's going to let me know. And then I'm going to have to make some adjustments.

But as of right now, I don't want to get too far ahead of myself. He's good for today. I will check with him after the game. I will check with him tomorrow morning. Wait until he gets to the ballpark. And then if we have to make adjustments, we will.

Q. You have guys like Vientos, who don't have playoff experience who are thriving in this spotlight, but you also have some guys with a lot of playoff experience like Stanek, Maton, J.D. Martinez. How much does that playoff experience come into play as the postseason goes on?

CARLOS MENDOZA: It's huge, especially when you've got guys that are going through it for the first time. You mentioned Vientos, but we've got a kid like Alvarez behind the plate and some of the other guys that are experiencing this type of game for the first time.

But having guys like Lindor, J.D., Maton, Stanek, that's huge, especially when we're talking about a pitching staff with guys that never have this type of experience.

So just having conversations, how to prepare, how to control their emotions. There's a lot that goes behind the scenes that's impactful. It's powerful, especially when it's coming from your teammates and not a coach.

Yeah, that's what makes this a really good team, too, because we've got playoff experience from a lot of different guys there.

Q. When you were with the Yankees, their history is always in your face. What's your reaction here to the Met history and what you're trying to do here -- get to

the World Series again and maybe win it for the first time in almost 30 years?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Look, what we are experiencing right now, we're making history. That's what we want. We want to create something here special that we're playing meaningful games this time of year when it's getting cold again.

And this is something that we're all embracing. I know it's been a while, and that's why you see so much excitement around the city and around baseball.

Nobody expected us to be here, and here we are. And we will continue to do so. I just wanted the fan base to continue to enjoy it, continue to show up and support, which they will, because we're doing the same thing.

It's special. And this is a privilege that we get to play baseball here and especially here in New York, here in October.

Again, we're facing a really good team. And we've got to go out there and execute and get the job done.

Q. I know you don't like to jump ahead, but do you allow yourself to think a little bit in the back of your mind about if you survive this you can wind up playing the Yankees in the World Series?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I don't want to get too far ahead. That's a good team right there. That's a really good team. I don't even want to think about tomorrow. We've got a game to play today and we'll go from there.

And they've gotta do the same. They've got to advance.

Look, it's great for baseball. It's great for the city of New York that the two teams are right now playing baseball and competing for the same goal.

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