

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Citi Field

Los Angeles Dodgers

Manager Dave Roberts

Postgame 3 Press Conference

Dodgers - 8, Mets - 0

Q. When Buehler got Lindor with the bases loaded, I thought back to the Seager home run earlier this year -- full count similar situation. He went to the fastball. Today he threw, comfortable going to the off-speed. How do you think he kind of got to that point from being that, okay, I'm just going to throw it past you to a guy who is comfortable throwing off-speed in that situation?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think it's been a lot of lessons that he's had to learn, and appreciating, understanding the pitcher he is today. And also appreciating the fact that you just can't give in to Lindor in that moment. And that's something that it's a learning lesson for Landon Knack from the other day.

Right there, that was the pitch of the game. Obviously the crowd was into it. They were gaining momentum. To get the breaking ball down below the zone and get a great hitter out was huge. And I think that just kind of speaks to experience.

Q. Were you surprised when you saw it was a curveball there?

DAVE ROBERTS: No. I was kind of thinking along with him. I mean, it was the right thing. I thought, this entire postseason, I think Will Smith is doing a fantastic job catching the baseball, calling the game, not trying to get too predictable, and appreciating the game score and all that stuff.

He's done a great job with the starters, relievers. And it was just game management.

Q. What's the biggest thing you've learned about Walker, as he's gone through this process trying to figure himself out again and trying to figure out what



works, what doesn't, in those kind of big spots?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think a couple things. Obviously he's sort of had to, I mean, I guess, reinvent himself. I say that in a complimentary way, to still be a really good Major League pitcher. Obviously this year was very rocky trying to get back from a really major surgery.

I think the other part of it is that it's easy to be, to ride when the wind's at your back. That's when he's going and riding really well.

But when there's some adversity, you get kicked in the teeth and you lose confidence, to then reset, come back and still stick it out, that's something, for me, that I don't think he's ever had to do -- outside of having a surgery. So that's something for me that speaks to his character.

You look at kind of in June or July, I don't think anyone could have seen him in this position right now. So it's a credit to Walker.

Q. How much did Kiké's home run change the complexion of this game?

DAVE ROBERTS: Immensely. We found a way to get lucky and score a couple of runs in that second inning.

But for Kiké to have that at-bat -- eight-, nine-pitch at-bat, get the ball up the zone and hit a homer, that was huge. It was enormous. I thought it gave Walker a little breathing room. I thought it allowed for me to use the pen.

And then it allowed guys like Shohei to kind of catch a breath and extend the lead. And obviously Max had a huge game, continues to get on base, gets big hits.

But the Kiké homer, biggest hit of the game.

Q. How much did Shohei's homer sort of change -- obviously it changed how you use your bullpen tonight, but it seems almost more important moving forward?

DAVE ROBERTS: It's important for Shohei, certainly, to



build some confidence. I think that's number one. And number two, yeah, you mentioned it, when you're in a long series not having to have Blake to go back out there for another inning, not having to use Evan tonight or Hudson tonight, and then allowing Ben Casparius to go out there and give us two big innings, those things matter.

Q. (Indiscernible) threw 90 pitches, but was Walker not going to face the lineup a third time?

DAVE ROBERTS: I didn't know how the game was going to play out. I just felt that after each of the innings that he threw, there was a lot of stress. So for me that's all he had left.

Q. How is Freddie feeling?

DAVE ROBERTS: Freddie's fine. Freddie's fine. I think we got through it. And my expectation is he'll be in there tomorrow.

Q. Considering all the machinations you've had to do with the pitching staff, what's it say that you have four shutouts now in the last five games against two of the best hitting teams in the National League?

DAVE ROBERTS: Guys are, I think, Mark Prior, Connor, Danny Lehmann, Bardo in the pen, the players themselves obviously -- I mentioned Will, what he's doing, controlling and kind of being the jockey for these pitchers -- these guys are locked in. And they understand they have a job to do to prevent runs. And I think we're playing good defense, too. That's a big part of it, too.

Q. What does this do for your pitching moving forward?

DAVE ROBERTS: We've got Yamamoto and Jack. So I feel good where we're at right now.

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