

# NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Thursday, October 17, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Citi Field

## New York Mets

## Robin Ventura

## Edgardo Alfonzo

### Pregame 4 Press Conference



**Q. I guess the obvious question, can you believe it's been 25 years since the grand slam single?**

ROBIN VENTURA: No, I got reminded of it a lot today I will say that. But it is weird it's been 25 years because in some ways it seems like it happened a few years ago and in some ways it might have been 50 years, the way it goes now. So it is weird, though.

**Q. You obviously were well known in your playing days for hitting grand slams. Jim Duquette said yesterday he wants you to get credit for that in retrospect. Do you want credit for the grand slam or --**

ROBIN VENTURA: Nah, it's the mileage. It gets more mileage not being one, really. Maybe if that would have been the only one I ever hit, probably. But I think just the way that it ended up was a better ending than if I would have ran around the bases.

**Q. You guys both have managerial experience. What do you think of the job Carlos Mendoza has done? And also having played under Bobby Valentine, do you think there's a certain set of qualities or attributes that helps a manager manage here in New York in the postseason?**

EDGARDO ALFONZO: Carlos has been doing a tremendous job since the season start. I know it was 0-5. It was, like, hard. It's going to be a long, long year.

But the team's turned around. I think Carlos has been doing great with the management of the group. One thing I talked to him is the communication is perfect. It's great. He's the right guy to do it.

Compared to Bobby, it's a totally different type of management. Bobby's more, like, you want to be the guy

but is it great, too? But the personalities are totally different. Carlos is more quiet and more into it. And Bobby liked to talk. You know that, right? Bobby --

ROBIN VENTURA: I didn't know that. Thanks for telling me that.

EDGARDO ALFONZO: Both are great managers. (Laughter).

ROBIN VENTURA: I think New York is just different. But again like Fonzie said, when you start 0-5 here it already jumps on you. And for him to be able to handle that and get these guys to where they're at now -- I think for most managers, every team's different.

He has to know his players very well. And I think that's the thing that sticks out to me. Every team's different and every year is different. So just next year will be a different set of challenges for him.

But what he's done this year, with his team, he knows them well. He's been able to get them here, and I think that's the biggest thing is looking from the outside, you can kind of see the guys play. And you think you know the personalities of everybody, but you really don't.

And he does. I feel like I can see that of the way he's handled them.

**Q. A lot of the guys, a lot of the athletes here have been talking about how much fun they've had this season. Of the Mets playoff teams that you guys were a part of, do you have the most fun team or do you have the most fun season that you can recollect, '99 or 2000 or whatever?**

EDGARDO ALFONZO: This is the type of group that we have. I mean, this year is "Oh, My God," with Iglesias. I think the group is so exciting and they're pretty good.

Back in those days we just have a lot of veteran guys but we really enjoyed it. I think what the team does to get to the playoffs or get better is unique. And I think in '99, 2000, we had that.



Compared with this team I think this is what it's all about, get together, go out in the field, get together, go in the clubhouse, be a family, enjoy it. This is what baseball is all about. I think they're doing a pretty good job this year.

**Q. Were you here last night? And when you've been back to Citi Field, how would you say the environment compares to when you played at Shea?**

ROBIN VENTURA: I was not here last night. I was here about a month ago, probably a month ago. And I think at that point it was still a little up in the air about if they were going to make the playoffs or not. So it wasn't as raucous as it was last night.

But I think you've seen these fans since the playoffs started. It's about as close as I've seen it to a Shea kind of crowd than any other time I've ever been here.

**Q. After Game 5, in '99, you guys had that incredible Game 6 in Atlanta where you came back from the big deficit, had a couple late leads and Atlanta won it. Do you think what could have been? If you had won Game 6, especially five years later we see the Red Sox come back from 3-0 and they rolled a Game 7. Do you think what could have happened if you had gotten to Game 7 and could you have pulled the first 0-3 comeback?**

EDGARDO ALFONZO: The memories --

ROBIN VENTURA: Again, you can sit there, shoulda, woulda. They were just better than us. I don't like it when there's teams that win and somebody on the other team says, we were a better team, they just won.

They won because they were better in that series. And that's just the way sports goes. It's not always a story book ending. It could be a good ride and it could be fun, but at the end there's only one team that actually wins it all. So everybody else goes home and the team that wins that year is the best team.

**Q. Darryl Strawberry was here last night, described his '96 team as crazy, among other words.**

ROBIN VENTURA: I've seen the show. Yeah, they were.

**Q. The 1999 team obviously had its fair share of pretty big personalities. How would you describe maybe the collection of men in that locker room that season?**

ROBIN VENTURA: You know, I had just come over from the White Sox, we were very young. And this was a very

veteran, professional group that was fun. I mean, they were very funny guys, were very loose but knew how to play and have fun doing that.

And I don't think we had the problems that they probably had in '86, but I think we kind of came up to the line -- what do you think? Did we have problems? We didn't have "problem" problems, but we just had guys that had fun and would just leave it out on the field.

EDGARDO ALFONZO: Yeah, pretty much.

ROBIN VENTURA: Not too many off the field, but on the field.

EDGARDO ALFONZO: Yeah, I think it was a great, great group of guys, veteran guys. Like Robin said, we always tried to help each other up.

And back to the question about managers, I think Bobby was a good guy to have around that year, you know.

**Q. What do you remember from Edgardo's years in the postseason and the possibility of having a Subway Series again?**

EDGARDO ALFONZO: What I remember about Robin?

ROBIN VENTURA: Is that what he said? I wanted to make sure.

EDGARDO ALFONZO: Yeah, I won't let it happen. (Laughter).

I remember when I was playing third base they tell me they had a chance to sign Robin Ventura for the Mets. If the guy can play second base, I say, wow, why not? If he can make a better team.

When Robbie came off he changed the whole infield. He changed up the whole lineup, the whole team. And for that time, I think it's great to see him play day in, day out. I always watched him through the TV because we don't have an interleague then -- when you came --

ROBIN VENTURA: We never played you.

EDGARDO ALFONZO: We never played. That's right.

ROBIN VENTURA: There was interleague, but we didn't play.

EDGARDO ALFONZO: When I see Robin play every day, it really surprised me the way he act every day.



ROBIN VENTURA: Fonzie, you asked about the playoffs, right? I thought he was going to hit a homer every time he came up. I mean, you just expected really good things out of him.

It wasn't like you put pressure on him. You wouldn't have known if he was 0-for-5 or 6-for-6. He was just consistent. And you couldn't tell what he did in the game, which is even better.

Very humble guy, big "team" guy. But just super consistent and just hit balls hard. He played great defense. We had Mike that you knew our goal was to get a lot of people on base and hopefully he's coming up or hopefully he's (Alfonzo) coming up. That's what you really wanted.

**Q. We've asked the current players and Mendy a lot about what it would mean to have the Subway Series. For you guys, what kind of resonates with you about what that moment was like for the city?**

ROBIN VENTURA: It was crazy. It really was. The best parts of it, you don't have to travel. You get to sleep in your bed every night.

And it is crazy. And I think both fan bases would like to see it. I think they really would.

I think the rest of the country likes it, too. I think it's a good story line. But, yeah, the city goes crazy. It is.

It's hard to get tickets. There's a lot of problems that come into it for players that everybody wants to go to it because you're in New York City for both ends of the games.

**Q. There have been a couple of legacy swings and moments for the Mets whether it's Francisco at the end of the regular season, Pete and Francisco in the playoffs. When you're watching those live or on highlights what's going through your mind for somebody who had a legacy swing 25 years ago and is that something you can --**

ROBIN VENTURA: Run around the bases.

**Q. Is that something that you can tell in the moment that it will stick with you the rest of your life?**

ROBIN VENTURA: When they're doing it right now, I don't think they realize it. That's not what I was thinking. I'm glad we won, but it wasn't like you're going back to the locker room thinking, I just made a -- I just hit a statement home run. You don't know that it's going to stick with you for that long.

For me, hopefully somebody does something else, or Francisco hits another one or Pete hits another one, Vientos hits another one. You just hope they keep having something like that that that won't be the one, it will be a better one. That would be my wish for them.

**Q. You look back at the beginning of this decade when Steve Cohen takes over as the owner, what's your impression of the progression of the franchise this decade?**

EDGARDO ALFONZO: I will say this, I think he's a true Mets fan and he knows what the fans liked. And he tried to put everything, what as a fan looked to the organization. And I think he's been doing a great job with this organization.

I think he said he would like the team going to the playoffs the first three years. I think he's doing it. So something that will happen next year has happened this year. And I think it's the job he's been doing so far.

In terms of bringing people, old timers to let the fans come and see them, whatever the favorite player was, I think is great for the Mets organization, for the fans, for everybody.

**Q. (Not in English).**

EDGARDO ALFONZO: What I feel about the postseason, I remember in 1998, there was a playoff game.

ROBIN VENTURA: '99.

EDGARDO ALFONZO: '99, that's something that you work for -- something that you work for during the season to get to the playoffs. And that's something and you want it so bad.

And then seeing this team with Mendoza doing it, I feel so proud. I feel so proud that Carlos is doing it, especially in New York. This is a tough market to do it. And he's been handling that pretty well.

So even though he was in the Yankee side, but he gets to know what New York is all about. I think he's doing a great job so far.

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