

# NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Friday, October 18, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Citi Field

## New York Mets

### Manager Carlos Mendoza

#### Pregame 5 Press Conference

**Q. What made you go with McNeil today?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Trying to give a different look to our lineup, an extra lefty there today. I decided to go that way.

**Q. Given the state of Nimmo, are you sure that Nimmo defensively is better than Winker defensively in left?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yes.

**Q. You said trying to give a different look, why the switch, with Vientos bumping him down a spot?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, because they've only got one lefty out of the pen, I don't want to give them an easy lane to shoot a lefty whenever they need to. And then with some of the lefties that are in the lineup, just kind of protect some of the righties as well. So trying to space those guys as much as possible and not give them an easy line.

**Q. Obviously Ohtani's been trouble. What kind of problem has Muncy been for you guys?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: You mentioned Ohtani. Forgot about Mookie Betts. But, yeah, all of them.

I think we know how good Muncy controls the strike zone, but it's been really impressive watching him doing it in pressure situations or with traffic. He's not going to give in. He's got a pretty good knowledge of the strike zone. And it doesn't matter the situation, he's going to stick to it.

And he's going to force you in the zone and we're going to have to execute. And we haven't been able to do that. We've gotten behind in counts. Obviously the walks.

But he's an elite hitter as well. They have him hitting in the bottom of the lineup. That's pretty impressive. That's what makes that team a really good team.



But it comes down to us executing in the zone because they're not going to chase, especially Muncy.

**Q. What has surprised you, impressed you, stood out the most maybe about Mark Vientos' season, considering where he started and how productive he's been in the playoffs?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: I think he's a hitter and a player that's maturing. He keeps getting better and better. We saw it during the regular season, and then now in the playoffs, when there's a lot at stake.

And his ability to slow the game down, have control of the situation, just calm, you don't see panic at all. He continues to get better. It's been very, very impressive.

I'm proud of him, because it wasn't easy. I said it the whole year. Went to Triple-A and then got back up here, got sent back down again and ran with it.

And he's hitting in the middle of the lineup. He's hitting second. He's hitting third. That's a special player here.

**Q. When you brought him up for the three games and then again when you brought him up for good, what was it in the reports that you and David and the front office saw from Syracuse that made you bring him up?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: I think it was just his attitude, the work ethic and how much he was working before games. We knew the power was real. It was just more, like, the defense side of things and how much is he working. Is he into the things that he needed to be doing?

And that was basically what it was. The way he handled the adversity. Is he going to go down there and pout? No, the report, talking to Dicky Scott, the Triple-A manager, and some of our coordinators, they're, like, this guy has a really good attitude, continues to work really hard. He continues to ask questions. You've got to give him credit because it wasn't easy for him.

**Q. In that vein, the way Vientos responded to the early -- if you want to call it demotion or not -- making the**



**team out of Spring Training and the way he handled that and got back up here and the attitude he had, do you guys hope that that sort of is an example to other young players that you have coming out? He's not the first young player who had to wait a while to get his opportunity, but you have other guys on their way up. And do you hope that sort of sets the example that you guys are looking for for other prospects in the organization?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Hundred percent. Hundred percent. That's a great story there, that you're going to have to continue to fight. It's not always going to go your way. There's a lot of things that they have no control and they've got to continue to work. They've got to continue to stay positive.

And this is a perfect story, perfect example for all the guys. We've seen it with Luisangel Acuña. He struggled all year, struggled the whole year, didn't get the call-up right away in September. The second week of September he gets a call and now he's on the active roster. A lot of things could change.

We could use those examples for years to come, that baseball, you never know. You can't predict it. You're one phone call away or an injury away. You just never know. You've got to be ready and make that decision a little bit easier on us when we're looking down and see what's next, who is next, who do we have available there. They've got to make sure that they put themselves in the conversation.

So great story here, and obviously something good for the organization moving forward.

**Q. When you look at what your team has been through in the last month, with all of the travel and all of the pressurized games, when you get to this point, with everything they've been through, do you have any concerns at all about the ability to stay focused in the moment? Or is it just the DNA of a Major League ball player that allows him to shut all the outside possibilities off?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: I'm not worried about it. And the character of this team and the individuals there is impressive.

I could sense it today. I walk in the hitters meeting today, and we know where we're at, back's against the wall. The attitude. People smiling.

That's who we are. There's no tomorrow for us. But we've been in this situation before. So nothing new.

And the quality of the people, we're not talking about just the quality of players, but just the makeup and the way they show up every day and here we are. But that's a special group there.

**Q. What would you read into an individual that might concern you if that particular player maybe isn't where you'd like him to be under the circumstances?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: I think developing the relationships throughout the year and having conversations with them, you know as soon as you see them. You could tell by their face, by their body language, there's a lot that, from my end, I know, okay, this guy is probably down a little bit today. Or you know what? I'm not feeling the energy. Today, that's not the case. And I'm not surprised by it.

But I think it's just getting to know the individuals, getting to know your players and relying on your coaches because our coaching staff, they've got a good feel for our players as well. It's a good thing.

**Q. Two years ago, when you were there and Aaron Judge was a pending free agent, Aaron Boone was pretty vociferous at the end of the playoffs he said he did not want this to be Judge's last game in a Yankee uniform. You're in the same situation with Alonso. What's your feelings, at some point his agency is pending? Whether you win or lose today, it's coming?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: I'm not looking at it that way. Nobody in here is looking at it that way. The way we see it is we've got to go out there and win a baseball game. I'm not seeing it as at this could be Pete Alonso's last game with the New York Mets.

We see it as we have a really good opportunity to continue to play baseball and that's what we'll do. We've got to go out there and get the job done. It hasn't crossed my mind, to be honest with you.

I wasn't the manager when Judge went through it, but as a coach when I was there, that never crossed my mind either. Our job that day was to win that game and let the rest to play out. The same thing here. Our job is to go out there and play, win today, and just continue to let it play out and see what happens.

**Q. Is there any sort of benefit to facing Flaherty two times in a week's span?**

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yes and no. This is a game of adjustments. Yeah, we saw him recently, but he also saw hitters. So he's got a good feel for what we're trying to do. And we're going to have to make some adjustments and

we will make some adjustments.

We'll game plan and all that, but we've got to go out there and execute because, like I said, they're going to be ready to adjust, and we have to be ready to make adjustments when we need to.

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