

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Saturday, October 19, 2024

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

New York Mets

Manager Carlos Mendoza

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Given the way things have played out a little bit, do you have any regrets that you didn't carry the extra reliever for this round?

CARLOS MENDOZA: No, not really, because when you look at the way we used our position player group, pretty much used all of them. So not really because I don't feel like we went to a game feeling short of pitching, as far as like the length goes and things like that.

Q. With Manaea having hit a wall at the end of his last outing, how do you weigh that going into tomorrow? And I think you'll also need some length from him.

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yeah, look, he'll be ready to go. Everybody around this time of the year feels like he hit a wall. It's not only Sean, but pretty much all of those guys that are competing on the field.

We'll watch him closely and we'll be ready and adjust if we need to. But pretty comfortable giving him the ball tomorrow and we'll go from there.

Q. Was today a mandatory workout?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yes.

Q. Why mandatory when I believe the last couple of have been optional?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I don't know if it's mandatory, but everybody wanted to be here today. So I never call it mandatory. It's more optional. BP has always been optional the whole year. And you see day game pretty much everybody is taking BP.

I just felt like the guys felt like they needed to show up today. And, plus, there's a lot of guys in the training room.

Q. What did you see from Francisco Alvarez last night



in terms of his at-bats? I know he's been working on not letting his hips spin out. Was it a mechanical change or did he just get the pitches?

CARLOS MENDOZA: One, he was on time. He got pitches early in the count that he was able to put the barrel on the ball.

I think using the whole field. When you see him driving the ball to right field, going with the pitch, that's a good sign.

I think he's shorter to the ball. He's on time. When he's on time a lot of things will happen, good things will happen. And we saw that yesterday. So calm, on time, short to the ball, using the whole field, that's a good combination.

Q. How much do you see his confidence after a game like that, his confidence grow?

CARLOS MENDOZA: He's a pretty confident player. Even when it's hard for him, that's the one thing, he's going show up with the same attitude. It's a lot of energy and his ability to lead a pitching staff is off the charts for a guy of that age.

So whether he's 0-4 or 1-for-25 or he's 4-for-4, you know what you're getting out of him. That's what makes him such a great player and such a great human being.

Q. You know who's going to be your DH tomorrow?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Yes, Jesse Winker is going to be the DH as far as I know -- as of right now.

Q. It's riding his bat over J.D.'s -- I guess you're trying to right his top bat over J.D.'s body of work?

CARLOS MENDOZA: We don't know who we're facing. We know it's a bullpen game. We've still got to wait and see what we got here. There's a good chance he'll be in the lineup. DH, outfield, we'll see how some of the guys are feeling too.

Q. What did you think of McNeil's at-bats yesterday? And would you consider keeping him in there at second base?



CARLOS MENDOZA: I thought the at-bats were really good especially for a guy that hasn't played for a long time, especially the situational hitting. You've got runners on third base, twice I think it was, and he got the job done with the sac flies.

Even though we're facing a pretty good pitching staff I thought the at-bats were good. On time. Again, this is a guy that, bat-to-ball skills are off the chart. And he's definitely in the conversation for the lineup tomorrow. Again, we've got to wait and see what we're facing.

Q. Back to Winker for a second, what is it about Winker, he's always in the middle of it? He's an aggressive player, aggressive on the base paths. Other teams seem to hate him when he's out there. Is he just a gamer type of player? How do you put your finger -- just seems to be a spark when you have him in the lineup?

CARLOS MENDOZA: He's an intense guy. He's going to show emotions. And I don't see that he's disrespecting the other team because he's usually towards our team. But I could see a guy from the other dugout, he probably is not going to like as much.

But he's a great guy. He's a great human being. He cares. He's a competitor. And he's going to give you good at-bats. Intense guy that wants to win.

Q. This year we're seeing more innings out of the bullpen in the rotation during the postseason. This would be the third time the Dodgers used a bullpen game. Did you ever see it reverting back to where the starters are more emphasized in the postseason or is this the way it's going to be?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I think every year is different. And teams build their teams accordingly, whether it's with starters, bullpen. I mean, but I think the one thing we've seen this year is that guys will get tired.

So the importance of starting pitching is it's there. You need guys that give you length, that give you -- it's hard to ask guys every day for 15, 16 outs. That's hard. And that's the importance of starting pitching.

Again, a lot of different teams are built a lot of different ways. We've got some starters. But then there's teams there that they've got some elite bullpen arms.

Q. Given Freddie Freeman's limited mobility, would you guys consider bunting toward him and making him work defensively?

CARLOS MENDOZA: There's always not only whether he's dealing with something or not, the game will tell you, the personnel. Like, if you've got guys that's part of their game and the situation calls for it, but not necessarily because whether he's moving well or not, I think it's just where you're at in the game and the situation and if we have to do it and if we need to go that way.

But it's not that we've gotta do this because he's not moving well. No, I think the game will tell us.

Q. Given the way you had to manage yesterday, with Stanek and Díaz in particular, what is the challenge then of doing that again tomorrow and then maybe again the next day when there's no room for error, only a handful of bullpen arms available really and you have to win?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Guys will step up. We've done it a whole year. There's going to be guys that are going to be in the game and we're going to ask them to get three outs in high leverage situations. And high leverage in the playoff, especially when you're facing an elimination game, it could be in the third inning.

You're not going to be relying on just two guys. We ask a lot of them. We saw it with Stanek yesterday. We saw it with Díaz. We'll see how the game unfolds tomorrow. But, like I said, a lot of different people are going to get an opportunity to come big for us. And they will.

Q. Do you plan to use Kodai Senga from the bullpen tomorrow?

CARLOS MENDOZA: He'll be available just like he was yesterday. We'll see how the game unfolds, but he's available.

Q. Under what circumstances would you be comfortable using Senga?

CARLOS MENDOZA: Any circumstances. He's a good pitcher. Like I said, guys will step up. And I wouldn't hesitate giving him the ball in the third, in the fourth, in the sixth in the seventh. It depends -- he might be getting the last three innings of the game.

He's on the active roster. There's a reason why. He's a good pitcher. And, like I said, people will step up. Senga is one of them.

Q. Yesterday, for example, I think you were up by eight when Stanek was warming up in the fifth. Was there a lane -- and up comfortably the rest of the way,



mostly comfortably -- was there an opening there for Senga, do you think?

CARLOS MENDOZA: I don't think yesterday was -- every game is different depending on what you got. So you throw Senga there in the middle of the innings and for some reason when he doesn't have it, you don't have much protection behind him. I don't think yesterday was the case.

Every game is different. And it's going to depend who is available.

Q. I was curious what you thought of some of the chippiness yesterday -- Peterson-Muncy at first base, Pages-Alvarez -- not unusual this time of year, of course. What did you think of the flavor?

CARLOS MENDOZA: It just happened in the heat of the moment. The last thing you want to do is try to create something unnecessary on the field.

They're competing. We know everything is do-or-die type deal. And they're competitors. And sometimes players will show their emotions.

But the last thing you want to do is wake up a team. That's not who we are. We're going to continue to play our game and we're not here to try and create anything.

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