

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Saturday, October 19, 2024

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

Los Angeles Dodgers

Manager Dave Roberts

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Ahead of the game yesterday we talked about that sense of urgency you were looking to go into these. When you look at Game 6, now back at home, a bullpen game, how is that the approach of not having to get to a Game 7 and feeling like tomorrow is a true must-win for this team?

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, it is going to be a bullpen game. Similar to what we did in Game 2 with the expectation of better execution. How we use the guys, I'm not sure yet. A lot of it is dictated on how they construct the lineup.

But it's an all-hands-on-deck situation and that's how I'll look at it tomorrow. And with the pen, there's only so much you can push each guy. So it's kind of just depending on where they're at as far as kind of hitter, pitch count, all that stuff.

Q. Is that the balancing act with managing a seven-game series, just having to want to go all in for Game 6 but also have to be ready for a Game 7 potentially?

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, and I do feel that as our focus is still on Game 6, whatever it takes, we're very well equipped to prevent runs for a potential two games.

Q. Is Ohtani available to pitch either of the next two nights?

DAVE ROBERTS: He is not. Thanks for asking.

Q. Since day one in this job, you've been good at identifying leverage in games and essentially hammering their best guys with your best guys. I'm just curious, though, thinking about this series, what you have learned about that sort of strategy in a seven-game series, thinking to -- I think like Morrow pitching seven times in 2017, and just the cost of exposing your guys over and over and how maybe



you've evolved on that?

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, I have evolved. I think that in any one particular moment, I think that, as it starts initially, speaking to the relievers, there's a trust tree, guys you feel in the highest of leverage.

And each moment you feel that that's always the best option, and -- for fear that if you go somewhere else or with another player and it doesn't work out, you didn't deploy your best option in that moment.

And that's kind of the inner struggle that I think any manager has, and I've lived it. I think for me, experience, having gone down that road, having some successes but also some failures. I think I've learned from that. Again, it's not easy.

It's always good when your choice works out, whether it's the process is right or the trust in a certain player is right. And when it doesn't work out, you've got to sort of reassess and reevaluate if the process was right.

I think that's probably my biggest takeaway. We have two games here, potentially two games here, and I feel that to prevent runs, we're in a very good spot. I don't think we've exposed our high-leverage guys at all. And that's part of kind of the learning curve for me over history.

Q. Have you talked to Freddie yet today? Is there a decision about him tomorrow yet?

DAVE ROBERTS: I haven't talked to him yet. He's in the training room. I mentioned last night I do think the swing is compromised because of the ankle and he's grinding. As I sit here, I'm expecting him in there. But until he's not -- if it's costly for him or us we'll certainly pivot.

Q. When you say the pitching plan being similar to Game 2, does that mean trying to get bulk innings from, whether it's Knack or someone else early in the game to bridge to your higher leverage guys later? Or could you be more aggressive with those guys earlier than last time?



DAVE ROBERTS: I think we can be a little bit more aggressive.

Q. How do you weigh in the fact that you -- obviously if you win tomorrow the series is over -- but you might have two games, how do you balance that?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think doing everything we can to win tomorrow, I just don't think there's much cost given that we have an off day today -- where the pen is at, where the starters are at -- would bleed into the next day. I just don't think there would be much cost, how I kind of managed tomorrow.

Q. Do you have an opener yet?

DAVE ROBERTS: We don't. The guys will be out there shortly. They're going to go through their catch play. I really don't know. Not sure, no.

Q. Of your three to four, maybe five highest leverage guys, how many of those guys are you comfortable going four outs, maybe even five outs with?

DAVE ROBERTS: A few of them. A few of them. Given where we're at today with the off day and talking about tomorrow, I think a few of them, for sure, yeah.

They'll do whatever is asked of them, for sure. But obviously the game situation certainly matters. If it's victory formation, we'll do whatever it takes.

Q. You mentioned about Shohei's base running last night. Did you talk to him about it?

DAVE ROBERTS: Dino Ebel talked to him.

Q. How did that go?

DAVE ROBERTS: I didn't follow up. It won't happen again.

Q. Another evolution question for you. How has your confidence in winning bullpen games changed over the years?

DAVE ROBERTS: You know what, I feel that -- I think I've always felt that a bullpen game gives you a really good chance to prevent runs. There's a cost afterward. You're talking about regular-season games typically.

The win/loss, the offense scoring matters too. But I think in a vacuum, bullpen games give you a chance, in a vacuum, to prevent runs, certainly. I still stand by that.

Q. If we had told you in Spring Training that you had been running a bullpen to run the World Series?

DAVE ROBERTS: I would have taken the other side on that one.

Q. To put it bluntly, with Freddie, has it gotten to the point where you feel, as noble as his effort is, that he's hurting the team by being in there?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think that one component, if you're looking at the results of the last handful of at-bats, you could argue that point. But I could also argue that him doing whatever he can to be on the field and to post, I think, speaks loudly in that clubhouse.

So then the decision is, you know, net-sum, what makes the most sense to win tomorrow. And that's the decision we'll make together. But I'm not going to compromise his health or certainly winning a game tomorrow if he's not mentally and/or physically ready to go.

Q. To follow up on the pitching points, obviously you want to win tomorrow. But if you are deploying all your leverage guys tomorrow, are you guys in a spot where you have enough pitching coverage for a potential Game 7?

DAVE ROBERTS: Absolutely, we do. We do. That's part of kind of the math when you're in a minus game. The last game, that's part of the math, too. Yes, we're covered with preventing runs, absolutely.

Q. And pitch hitting for Will yesterday, was that just matchups --

DAVE ROBERTS: No, he took a foul tip or a bat to the hand, back of the hand on one of the plays. And I didn't learn about this until he was in the hole last night. He just gave me a heads-up.

For me, at that point in time, I just felt that just to kind of give Gavin a chance at Stanek to take a look at him and get Austin in there to catch.

Q. Was it his throwing or catching hand?

DAVE ROBERTS: Catching hand.

Q. So that was a concern?

DAVE ROBERTS: We looked at it. Tests were negative. So I'm expecting -- he's here today. I don't know if he's going to hit on the field. But my expectation is he'll be in there tomorrow.

Q. What are you seeing out of Teoscar in this series?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think Teoscar is missing fastballs. That's the number one culprit. I think they're just bullying him with the heater. So mid-line, top zone, I think Manaea is going to do the same thing tomorrow.

So I think if you can't hit the fastball and move it forward, you just expose yourself up to cheat, to get to spin and that's the main thing.

Q. With Freddie, how much are you going to weigh in the fact there's a left-hander on the mound tomorrow?

DAVE ROBERTS: That's part of the math. That's part of the math, certainly. I'm just going to go talk to him, just check in where he's at, but I'm not going to make a decision today, I don't think we need to. And then we'll just kind of come in tomorrow and see where he's at. But knowing the arm who is starting, certainly that's part of it.

Q. I have to imagine that also goes into with Gavin Lux and him being out there tomorrow. But just in general, how is he doing with that hip flexor?

DAVE ROBERTS: Gavin is doing better each day. I don't think we risked anything by giving him an at-bat yesterday. He's not 100 percent. But with today being off, tomorrow not starting, I think we're getting into a good spot. So hopefully we're out of the woods with Gavin, but not 100 percent, but getting better.

Q. In this series why do you think whoever gets the lead, they don't give it up but they blow the other team out? Is it the bullpen or what's going on?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think that's part of it. I think that leverage relievers are leverage relievers for a reason. And typically -- certainly I think across baseball managers are being more aggressive once they catch a lead and going with those guys, and it's just hard to get back into a game or tack on.

When you're seeing other arms, I think it just kind of exposes other teams' pens, and I think we've done a really good job.

But I will say what Brent Honeywell did for us yesterday -- I don't think he's thrown this many pitches in a big league game -- was huge. Yeah, they tacked on, but what he did for us is going to really help us going forward, for sure.

Q. Relievers this whole postseason have pitched more innings than the starters. Do you think it will ever

revert back to where it was one day or it will always stay this way?

DAVE ROBERTS: I hope somewhere in the middle -- more towards a starter going longer. I don't think there's a manager that would say that they want to their starter to face 19 or 20 hitters in a game. But once the game is happening in real time, you've just got to weigh which option is better.

But I think, absolutely, I'd love to have John Smoltz or Greg Maddux go seven shutout or throw a one-hitter or two-hitter in a World Series game. That would be great.

Q. In the last week or so, Kiké's talked a lot about how he uses visualization and that's why he's been sort of successful. Wondering if you use that. And just thinking back to these last two games, your three pennants have all been clinched on the road. What would it mean to clinch something here?

DAVE ROBERTS: I visualize, I do. I have quiet time. I do visualize seeing good things happen.

What it would mean to be here would be awesome. I think it would be great for our fans. It would be great for our players. And so obviously we know what that means.

It's always fun to clinch, but to be able to do it at home is something really special.

Q. And just to clear up, too, you talked about all hands being on deck. I know we've talked a lot about Yamamoto as a specific plan. Is he available in relief?

DAVE ROBERTS: He's not one of the hands. So that's fair, very fair question.

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