

NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Sunday, October 20, 2024

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

Los Angeles Dodgers

Kiké Hernández

Pregame 6 Press Conference

Q. I just looked this up, you've played in 17 potential clinch games in your career. Can you just kind of go through what goes through your mind in games like this and just how special it is to be in this position?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: Well, I think, for me, I come into the ballpark in October with the same mentality, and it's win today. And we're in a really good spot today to secure a spot to clinch the pennant and go to the World Series, which is exactly where we want to go.

That's been the goal from day one. The mentality is win today and we have an opportunity to do something that -- at least been a part of three World Series teams and I've never been able to clinch at home.

In 2020 we were wearing white when we clinched the pennant. But we weren't at home; we were in Texas. Just come in ready to go and do whatever it takes to win today.

Q. What do you guys need to do against Manaea that maybe didn't happen in Game 2?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: Score.

Q. Is there anything about his approach that kind of gave us guys some trouble in the last game?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: He pitched really well. That was our first time seeing him with his new arm angle. And they jumped on us early. And I'm sure as a pitcher, the mentality is a little different when you have a six-run lead than when it's a 0-0 game or close game.

And kind of the same for the lineup. I feel like that day, we were trying to score a lot of runs with just one swing instead of doing the same thing we've done throughout this postseason, which is do your part and pass the baton and keep the line moving. And we're hoping for a different outcome tonight.



Q. When you were drafted, you were a really good shortstop. Now you're a guy that a team can plug in all over the place on the field and get really good defense. Can you talk about how hard that is to do and how much pride you take in doing that?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: I mean, damn, I got drafted. I wasn't expecting to hear that today, but that was a long time ago.

It's not easy. It's not easy to do. I take a lot of pride in my defense and my versatility because it's not the same to say that you play a lot of different positions or to just do it in a way where if you're getting plugged in in a different spot on a daily basis you're not losing any defensive value. And that's what I take the most pride in.

And I think we can all agree that I've kind of been doing it for a long time now. And it's just part of who I am.

Here I am, 11th season in the big leagues and doing the same role as I've been doing since 2014. And it still takes a lot of hard work. Sometimes it becomes a little easier than other times. But if you don't put in the work and you don't put in the dedication -- the game's going to get a little fast for you if you're playing in a different position that you haven't played for in a while. And it just takes a lot of really hard work.

Q. What is special about being able to clinch a series in front of your hometown fans?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: You kind of answered it by asking the question. Just to be able to do it in front of our home crowd is everything. They come in, they show up for us year in, year out on a daily basis. We lead baseball in attendance yearly.

I can say that our fan base travels as good as any fan base in all of baseball. Anywhere we go, there's a huge section of blue in the stands. And to be able to do it at home kind of means everything to us because we get to celebrate with them.

Yeah, the NLDS was pretty special to clinch at home. So



we're hoping to do the same tonight.

Q. I know this year you all have prioritized just spending time with this team and amongst each other. How does that prove to be beneficial, especially coming off of how you guys did lose in New York, wanting to reset the tone back here in Los Angeles?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: I mean, it's all about unity. Something that stood out for us in 2020 when we were able to win it all was the unity that we had because we had no choice but to be together. We were stuck in a hotel for a month in Texas.

If we were a family going into Spring Training, we left the World Series as almost blood brothers.

I think part of the chemistry, part of the unity that we have in that locker room was what allowed us to come back from a 2-1 deficit against the Padres in the NLDS.

Yeah, not only do we want it for us as individuals, but we want it for each other. And when you're part of a team and when you're part of a series like this one, where it's going to take each and every individual in that locker room to be able to not only win today but to win a series, it's enormous. And I think the chemistry and the unity in that locker room is as good as any team I've ever been a part of.

Q. I see you goofing around with your teammates a lot. What's Ohtani been like from your point of view, perspective?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: As far as what?

Q. Goofing around or like as a teammate.

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: He's been great. He's got a lot bigger personality than what any of us expected. He likes to joke around a lot. He likes to have a good time.

He has this childish energy to him which is great. I think that allows him to disconnect from the fact that there's this huge pressure on his shoulders because that's what comes with not only being the greatest player in the game but potentially, possibly, be the best ever.

He's been a joy to watch. I think Kersh said this a couple days ago, and I say the same thing: I love being his teammate. I love watching how he goes about his business, putting an MVP season together while rehabbing Tommy John surgery, that's borderline mind-blowing.

I think my favorite part about Shohei is that we can be on a

bus ride to San Diego and the bus ride, it looks like a party bus. Or we could be on a flight where there's music blasting throughout the plane, and he's just sitting in his chair reading comics. And that's just Sho. He's amazing.

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