

# NL Championship Series: Mets vs Dodgers

Sunday, October 20, 2024

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

## Los Angeles Dodgers

## Manager Dave Roberts

### Pregame 6 Press Conference

**Q. Can you just take us into the decision to go with Michael Kopech for the start with this one tonight?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I think we just all felt that it's a part of a lineup that we like Michael. He's started games before. And just feel that it's the best chance to put up a zero in the first inning and then move forward.

**Q. How important, when you look at the approach for this game, does it feel like, yes, you could go to Game 7, but does it feel like it needs to be done today?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, I think so. I think that's the best way to approach tonight's game.

I think, overall, we're playing good baseball. I think outside of two bad innings it's been really good.

So I think seeing Manaea a handful of days ago bodes well for us, and we've just got to go out there and take good at-bats. And it's going to be a pen day, so we're going to deploy a lot of different guys tonight.

**Q. What ultimately went into not having Freddie in there today?**

DAVE ROBERTS: He just kind of ultimately he just felt, we felt, that giving him another day is best for him. Potentially having him late for an at-bat but the defense -- he took batting practice yesterday. Felt fine. But just doesn't feel like himself. So we just felt that potentially another day would help.

**Q. And Manaea's reverse splits (indiscernible). Was there any thought to having Lux at second today?**

DAVE ROBERTS: No, Gavin's still not even -- I think, it's reverse, but I think you have to also appreciate the left-handers that do face Manaea. And Gavin hasn't faced a lot of lefties, number one. And number two, he isn't 100



percent.

If we can buy him another day, I think it's beneficial. But he's available, and I do expect him in the game today, though.

**Q. Obviously you guys were planning to have bullpen games this series. Was Kopech somebody you looked at coming into this that was an option to open? Or is this something that over the last couple of days and coming out of Game 2 became more of an idea for you guys?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I think kind of given our options today, we felt that Kopech was the best option. So I think, to your first question, was it a thought, you know, a week ago? Probably not.

**Q. How willing are you going to be to push some guys for multiple innings today to try to get the coverage you need versus balancing if there's a game tomorrow what that might mean?**

DAVE ROBERTS: That's something that we're all going to have to wait and see how the game plays out, and that will dictate that. But that's something that certainly has to be in my mind as well, for sure.

**Q. Andy Pages sort of introduced himself to the national stage the other day with his bat, but how about that arm and how it neutralizes the running game?**

DAVE ROBERTS: He's done a great job being able to get his first taste of postseason baseball, playing a big role. The bat, certainly, as you mentioned. But the defense, he's been really good out there defensively and the arm strength, the accuracy has saved a couple of runs actually.

So it's been a deterrent to score runs from third base on a potential sac fly. But he's done a great job. It's been good, and excited to have him in there tonight as well.

**Q. After how Ohtani looked against Manaea last time, how easy or not easy is it to make an adjustment to a**



## **funky kind of delivery?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I think it's not easy. I do think that Shohei will make that adjustment. I think that pitching in the day, ball coming out of center field, might have had something to do with it too, kind of, like, off the hitter's eye. The night game, I think, will be beneficial.

And also just the familiarity because it's a funky look. But I think also Manaea made some really good pitches down and away with the fastball to Shohei. But if he makes a mistake, Sho will be ready to hit it.

**Q. Obviously you guys have had success against Manaea in years past. What is it about him right now that's so different? Is it just the arm slot? Does he attack you guys in a different way? What did you see the other day from him?**

DAVE ROBERTS: It's a slot. I think the slot -- you can have the same pitch mix but the characteristics are different. It's more sweepy, which makes it tougher on the right-hand hitter coming in to you, versus more kind of 2 to 7 on the breaking ball. The fastball kind of has a little bit more rise than where it's traditionally three-quarters.

It's just a different look, that the more familiar you get with it, the better you have a chance. But he's kind of reinvented himself, which is very unique, especially in the middle of the season.

**Q. To deal with that funky slot, did any hitters face him on the Trajekt pitching machine?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Yes, absolutely.

**Q. Was Shohei one of those?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I hope so. (Chuckling).

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