

MLB World Series: Dodgers vs Blue Jays

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Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

John Schneider

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. Thinking about Trey over this past year, what was your interaction with him during spring training? Was he even someone that was -- I don't know if he was officially in big league camp, but what were your earliest interactions with him?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Officially was not in big league camp. I think it was one of those, Hey, nice to meet you, kid. Welcome to the organization. It wasn't very extensive, I can tell you that. But a lot more extensive since he's been here. He's been on quite the journey, quite the ascension of the levels, if you will. But getting to know him a little bit here in the past month or so, confident guy, pretty adaptable, pretty aware of what's going on around him.

Q. Yesterday, you said were you working through the decision on Bo whether at second base, shortstop. What did you see from him yesterday that made the decision clear in your head?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Just kind of how he was moving around and his comfort level with it. He was pretty open with me about just, Hey, I can do this if need be, both with -- in terms of kind of taking little bit of the physicality of the game off of him and looking at what Gimi is doing at short too. So it was kind of a back-and-forth, just to, you know, play second at first, and him being open to it with me was kind of all I needed to hear. I've seen him do it, albeit minor leagues, a few years ago -- or a number of years ago. But as long as he was moving around fine and physically felt okay, you felt good about putting him there.

Q. Ty France is on the roster. Loperfido came off. How do you envision using Ty France?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think it's a bat off the bench, probably, just looking at the lefties in their bullpen and how we think going into this series our best way to help generate some runs. Ty has been working his tail off in



between, and I think looks pretty damn good hitting. I know you guys all haven't seen that in real time. Even when we acquired Ty, he's a professional hitter, so it was kind of easy based on the number of lefties that they're going to have in their bullpen as well.

Q. What was the point that he got kind of fully healthy from the oblique?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It was probably two weeks after it happened. Maybe 10 days, two weeks. He didn't miss much. I think he took maybe, like, four or five days off of swinging from the initial injury. So he's been getting after it for a while.

Q. What did you like about the one-two punch of Yesavage today and then Gausman tomorrow?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think kind of, for one, how they have been pitching and how they can handle right- and left-handed hitters. This is a really, really good lineup we're going against, especially at the top of the order, obviously. It's stuff that can hopefully combat that and suppress some damage.

So you're looking at matchups and you're looking at how often a team has seen Trey, which in this case is not, which I like, we like, that part of it too, and the rest and the recovery factor for everyone else.

But it's a similar arsenal, but their pitches do very, very different things from different angles. So try to get out of the gate quickly with those two.

Q. Do you have any pregame superstitions, rituals, that have kind of worked for you so far throughout the playoffs that you're going to take into the World Series now?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, absolutely. It starts with the route that I take in to the field. I've been walking quite a bit, which is -- I drove a lot last year because of our record. I didn't want to be seen too much.

So it's an easy walk for me. Plus my wife and kids have -- you know, she keeps the car in the afternoon. So same

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route. Coffee in the morning, same time. A few more that are a little bit more intricate at the field in terms of what color what, what right/left you're putting on first, what watch I'm wearing. I got a lot. I'm out there.

Q. Hopefully got the candle.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Candle too, yeah.

Q. As far as Bo goes, what goes into that calculation between preferring a compromised Bo at second base to a compromised George in the outfield?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think just talking to both of them and seeing kind of where they both are. Perfect world, I think what George has done from the DH spot obviously speaks for itself, both performance, comfort, all that kind of stuff. No one feels a hundred percent right now. That's just where we are. We always joke that no one really cares if you don't feel a hundred percent.

But I think just trying to play the game how we've always played it. If you want to take someone out at a certain point, who is that going to be, for what reason, and just trying to keep everyone in the best possible spot to have success.

Q. As far as Bo goes, he told us that he came to you and said, Hey, I'll play second base. What was that conversation like?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Kind of just like that. I think once he felt like he was getting pretty close, especially swinging the bat, that's when he kind of said, Hey, I want a part of this. He's seeing how Andrés is playing at short too. For him to do that says a lot about him. I think Bo has obviously been a big part of our team. He's been a big part of our year this year with the production and playing every day. But for him to kind of say that and kind of take a step back while he's watching us play, just say, Hey, I'm willing to do whatever it takes, even though he's been the shortstop here for six years. That says a lot about him.

So it made it that much easier, I think, and knowing that he was feeling that much better physically to kind of tackle anything. So the conversation was pretty direct and pretty honest. Bo's been that way this entire year, more so than I've ever seen him, which is awesome.

Q. Is there anything you take out of what you did against the Yankees this year facing the Dodgers? They had a fairly formidable pitching staff that you beat the hell out of here in the ALDS, and now you're facing the Dodgers, who have been pretty formidable. Is there anything that's comparable in how you scout

and what you do against the two teams?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: A little bit, maybe. I feel like we've been facing good pitching all year, for whatever reason. Whether it's NL West coming in here, NL East, AL East, AL Central, I think that we do a really good job of preparing accordingly. So these big-name guys, big-time stuff, similar to the Yankees, yeah, for sure. Similar to a lot of teams that we faced.

So to me and the coaches kind of every game is a -- there's seven one-game series, basically, is how we're looking at it. So every night is going to be a different way to go about it. I think that we have the roster and personnel flexibility to do that differently every night. Contact is kind of how we're built, putting the ball in play, making pitchers work. I feel like we did a really good job of that against the Yankees' top guys, and we're going to have to do it against these guys.

I think what you saw against the Yankees was some extra slug, you know, and if that happens, great. But I think that each one of these guys is going to be a different task every single night.

Q. Just to follow up on the contact, how do your analytics translate to you guys doing contact when that's such an antithesis of what's going on between analytics and slugging around the rest of baseball?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think we kind of looked at it -- you know, when you look at our every day players, Bo, Vlad, George, Kirby, right? Guys that have been here for a while, they all can hit, they all hit for a relatively high average, for the most part, and they all have really good bat-to-ball skills.

So I think when you look at that, we kind of leaned into it a little bit. I think we're hitting .296 in the postseason as a team, and I think the rest of the league is around .220, .218, something like that.

When we hired Pop and Lou, we kind of said we wanted to be a very diversified offense and know which club to take out of your bag in any situation. So we knew we had guys that made contact, we surrounded those guys with guys that do make contact, the bottom of the order, the glue guys, the Ernies, the Myles, the Izzys, whoever it may be. So I think we can give pitching staffs different looks, and being able to score in multiple ways is big for us, not waiting around for a three-run homer. If that happens, great. That's kind of, you know, icing on the cake, if you will.

But I think that we have kind of zigged where the industry



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has zagged a little bit to where putting the ball in play is pretty important.

Q. What are some of your standout World Series memories as a kid watching this event and how much do you remember about the '92, '93 Blue Jays?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, that one stands out. For a guy growing up in the Northeast in New Jersey and Joe Carter against the Phils, that stands out to me, for sure. Every World Series stands out to me. This is the first time I'm here doing this, but you're always watching. It's just the mountaintop of your sport and your profession.

So going back to, like, the Rangers and the Cardinals, those crazy games. You feel like there's always some crazy ones. But so many jump into my mind, really. They kind of all get jumbled up a little bit. But I think when you have walk-off hits, 2001 Arizona-New York, that stands out, walk-off homer stands out. It seems like there's always a moment in any one of these games. It's pretty cool to be a part of.

Q. Bo has been out for a month and a half. It seems difficult to then get dropped into a World Series game. What have you done to try to get him up to game speed, you know, when he's up to bat and were there certain defensive boxes that you needed to see him check, like turning a double play from the other side of the field?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: The offensive part, it's been kind of a slow drip, even since when the DS started. We had a lot of live pitchers back here throwing, and he's been hitting for a couple weeks off live pitching, so you feel good about that.

Bo is, I think, one of the most talented hitters, like hitters in the game in terms of bat to ball, in terms of having the knack to drive guys in, hitting pitches that not everyone can hit. So that part, you feel good about. And then talking to him with where his timing was, you go, okay, I think he's ready. Is it hard to do? Hell yeah. I mean, this is not easy. I think if there's anyone that can do it, it's him. You can probably drag him off vacation this off-season and say, Go get a hit, and he's probably the guy to do it. So that was part of it.

The defensive part, again, it's been kind of a slow build-up to this. If he wasn't comfortable, we wouldn't put him on the roster. I think just with who he is in the organization, I trust him. I trust his feedback that he's giving me too. So there is a couple checkmarks between base running and defense, and he hit 'em, so here we go.

Q. We talked to Bo about how he views you as a

manager evolving since he played for you in the minor leagues. How do you self-evaluate the difference between Schneids the manager today at the World Series and New Hampshire, Vancouver, Lansing, and so on?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: This is going to sound funny. I think I'm closer to Schneids in the minor leagues right now than I've ever been. This job is hard. This job takes reps, it takes messing up, it takes having success to get to where you are. I went into this year kind of just saying to myself, I'm going to be the authentic version of myself, and I'm going to let it rip.

I think one of my biggest strengths is communicating with players and staff. When you start this job you're trying to please everybody, right. I mean, I always say that everyone's answering to someone, unless you're Edward Rogers. So you're trying to appease a lot of people. And I think I got caught up in that a little bit. So right now I feel like Schneids, the dude that grew up with these guys riding the buses and just kind of being one of them. At the same time, understanding that there's a certain expectation that I bring to the field every day from these guys. They get it. But I feel like I've evolved a ton in just three years on this job.

Q. That was sort of where I was going as well. When Bo talked to us, he said that he feels like this year you've shown greater trust in everybody across the board. Do you feel that way as well?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, and I've always felt that way. I think that when you get so immersed in how hard this game can be, and trying to do the right thing, and trying to objectively match up, you lose sight of people sometimes. I've been guilty of that. At the end of the day, the one sign I have in my office, you guys have seen it, is the man in the arena. Like who do you want in the arena. Numbers are tools, and they're definitely helpful. But when you talk to the guys and you make time to kind of see where they're at mentally, I think it goes a long way. And again, I've said it this entire year, this entire postseason: I trust every single guy on my team without a question. Sometimes things work, sometimes they don't. But I trust every single one of 'em. I think the more they feel that, the more free they can go out and play.

Q. You said when you got hired that this was the job that you've been working your entire career for. And now that you sit here now, how much more difficult has it been than you anticipated? You talked about you now versus you then, but back then you thought you had a handle on it. How does that guy look now?



JOHN SCHNEIDER: That guy a couple years ago looks different than what I thought he would look like, if that makes sense. This is where -- you know, one organization, 24 years. So when I say you want to manage, yeah, you want to manage a team you're working for in the minor leagues. To have it come to fruition is amazing. What comes with it, honestly, I probably wasn't ready for all in realtime, whether it was interim, first year. So I think the guy right now is the guy that everyone has been waiting for, myself included, to be honest with you. I don't want that to sound, you know, selfish or conceited or anything, it's just me being real.

So it's been fun. It's been horrible at times. I mean, I got gray beard, gray hair, I'm losing hair. But it's exactly where I wanted to be. I think you have to just go through it. So happy that people have stuck with me, players, front office, staff, you guys. But just happy that you get a chance to kind of learn in realtime.

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