

MLB World Series: Dodgers vs Blue Jays

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

Toronto Blue Jays

John Schneider

Pregame 5 Press Conference



watch him. It's been really fun after a tough year last year for him and us. The production is the production, but I think kind of how he goes about his day to day with everyone in there is just as important.

Q. With Vladdy, how do you view the idea of protection with him? Like, is it guys ahead of him in the order getting on base so that they can't walk him, or is it guys behind him to create that threat of damage?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think it's both. You try to build a lineup to where guys will be on base for certain guys, and then what is their offensive profile like, is it contact, is it damage. I think Vlad is going to be pitched how Vlad is going to be pitched no matter who is in front or behind him. Guys have done a good job of getting on for him.

So that's kind of how we view it. I think if it's Nate hitting in front of him or if it's Bo hitting, whoever is hitting in front of him, I think they understand that they're probably going to get something to hit because he's standing on deck. It is important who is behind him too. So we have seen the bat being taken out of his hands, so you got to have guys who can do some stuff behind him.

Q. Couple things. First, with Vladdy, the ability that he's shown throughout the postseason to not chase damage, not try to force the moment, but just be patient, how have you seen that evolve for him, the ability to just kind of hunt the pitch and get it and not try to expand to try and create something?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think that he's always kind of been that kind of hitter, and this postseason has been pretty remarkable in terms of power and strikeouts, you know, lack of strikeouts and not a lack of power. So I think it's a good hitter being in a good rhythm. There's always a fine line with -- I feel like a lot of people think of Vlad and they think of home runs. I think of Vlad and I think of a hitter that hits the ball so hard he's going to hit it out of the ballpark. So when he's at his best, that's what he's doing.

Q. Last time Tommy Edman hit right-handed against Trey as opposed to left-handed. What do you read into that, and how does that maybe change game planing

Q. Just wondering, spinning off the comments from Ernie yesterday pertaining to the fact that the Jays would be the best team in baseball right now, I'm just wondering, do you keep tabs on those kind of comments at this point in the series to make sure no one gets too ahead of themselves, or what do you do?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Adam fills me in on some of these comments, you know. I think, if anything, these guys are saying right now they have earned, and I think that they truly believe it. It's kind of like when Ernie said, I love our chances in the ALCS when we were down 3-2, I think that's what they genuinely believe and I love their confidence.

Q. How is George Springer, and what has he done the last two days to get back on the field?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: George is feeling better. He's hitting the cage today. You guys probably saw him running outside. He hit off the machine, velocity, and we're kind of just seeing how he responds from that. So I think better than he expected to feel, better than we expected him to feel, which is saying a lot. Just trying to juggle right now how he's going to feel in about 30 minutes after doing that stuff and what's best for him and what's best for the team.

So I think if he's not starting, there's a definite chance, you know, if he can pinch hit, I think he'll be ready to do that. So I'm juggling a lot right now to kind of see how everything unfolds and who else it affects, but George has made some significant progress.

Q. Could you talk about what he means to this team, especially when you miss him in the lineup?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, he's had an unbelievable year, and I think that he has done a phenomenal job of kind of setting the tone for us, not just at the plate, but kind of in the clubhouse, and keeping tabs on guys. It's been fun to

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for him? Because you're obviously assuming he's going to be left-handed, but then he's turning around.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, we actually we weren't sure. I know he's done that before in his career against some righties with kind of similar pitch profile and pitch mix. So we weren't sure what he was going to do. We kind of had a plan A and a plan B. It doesn't change much, but I think it kind of changes where we're positioning everyone because there's not that much batted-ball data that says Tommy Edman versus righties. So you're trying to maneuver that as best you can too.

Q. We've talked so many times about how incredible Blue Jays fans are, but I didn't know if you knew this, and I want to get your take on this. It is so awesome that back in Toronto upwards of 30,000 fans are going to Rogers Centre to watch the games on the big screen and there's the roar of the crowd every time you guys do something awesome. What is your take on how cool that is?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's pretty remarkable. I've seen the videos and it's nice that we have a dome and it's not raining or cold. But I mean, we feel that, we feel that out here in L.A., you know. We understand what it means to the city and the country, and I think it's just remarkable. There's watch parties and then there's watch parties, you know. That was awesome.

We're thrilled that we're going back there to play. We still got to focus on tonight's game, but the fans kind of become a part of you, and you want to kind of do that for them too.

Q. Talking with Bo Bichette last night, he said that he sees Andrés Giménez as a big game player. Would you agree with that? That's part one. And number two, how proud are you of Andrés, knowing everything he's been grinding this year with injuries and the struggles that he's faced?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I couldn't agree more. I mean, I say it about Gimi. To me, this is the biggest compliment you can give a guy is he's a baseball player. He understands situations of the game, he understands how he can impact it, he's usually always in the right spot defensively, kind of being the quarterback of the team out there. I've been really, really impressed with him and basically everyone, how invested and locked in they are to every at-bat and what that at-bat means, what do I need to do right now.

So for Gimi, man, like, when we acquired him, I was thrilled. I've admired him from afar when he was with New York and Cleveland, and I can see why. Then just getting to know him not just as a player, but to know him as a

husband and a father and a friend and a teammate to these guys. He's so well respected. And he has battled. I mean, multiple injuries. And I think it's really cool that he's coming through in big moments right now because he's such a big part of our team.

Q. The at-bat like the one he had yesterday with the RBI, would you say maybe that has been overlooked?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I mean -- well, not for me. I mean, I think people go to Vlad's homer as last night's game, right? But that's a part of the game. It's a big swing. And then those games are usually won kind of in the trenches right there when you get a tough reliever coming in and you got to kind of scratch and claw.

So it was, to me, underrated at-bat, him and Ernie hitting the double off of Ohtani to kind of get that inning going in the right direction.

Q. Last night one of our camera guys saw George moving around in the dugout getting a helmet on. Was he going to run for Bo in the 9th inning if Bo had gotten on?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: There was a scenario, yeah, he was going to run, depending upon kind of how many outs or -- I think Vlad led that inning off with a single. Yeah, he was available to run. But just wanted to make sure it was the right time and did I want it take Bo out, how important was that run. But, yeah, he was ready to go.

Q. I know that he's not going to start tonight, but I want to ask you about Nate. You're a career minor leaguer as a player. He was headed that way, right? For him to be 30 and in his first full season in the Major Leagues finally this year, to be leading off a World Series game last night, like, what does that say about the route he's taken and all the roadblocks along the way that he's been able to overcome?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's kind of fitting for our team. I couldn't be happier for him, really. That's a guy that was contemplating retiring a couple years ago and has battled injuries and would probably have played every day on our team last year if he was healthy. So for him to stick with it and for him to understand that he's a Major League player and believe that until he got his chance is phenomenal.

He's like so many of our guys, where you just trust the human. I'm sure there's some anxiousness and anxiety and excitement that goes into all these games, but they do a really good job of hiding it. I couldn't be happier for him. I hated when he fouled the ball off his knee in the previous series because it's -- you know, he's waited his whole life to



get here. So it's going to be -- it was going to be tough to take him out that have game, but I'm thrilled for him because he's paid his dues.

Q. Way back when you started against the Yankees, everybody kind of freaked out like, oh, this is only Trey's fourth Major League start, period. Now it seems almost normal in a sense. Like, has he just folded into what you guys do, and is it just, hey, it's his turn, give him the ball, and then get out of the way?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah. I think it probably took him a time through the rotation to kind of feel comfortable and to kind of get acclimated to the Major Leagues and conversations with veteran pitchers and veteran players. But I think we've done a really good job of creating that environment for people to come in, whether it's Trey or guys at the trade deadline or guys coming up from the minor leagues. So he's been awesome. He's really kind of fit in, and I think very quickly earned the respect of everyone on the team.

Q. Does it seem like he's a little less wide-eyed from that afternoon he went out to face the Yankees to now?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I didn't think he was very wide-eyed then. I didn't think he was very wide-eyed in his Major League debut, albeit at a minor league stadium. But I think that he's gotten better with kind of the flow of everything, the prep, the adjustments you have to make. He's been impressive with whether it's talking to you guys or out there on the mound competing. He's got a very good head space.

Q. When you guys moved Bassitt to the pen, what was that conversation like with him, and how have you seen him embrace that role?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I mean, the initial one kind of was -- you know, we leave him off the DS roster, that was kind of more physical, right? He was coming off an injury. Chris is so great. I mean, the conversation was easy. It was, You're going to pitch out of the pen because we know you can be flexible. And he said, I don't care if you start me, I don't care if you close me, I don't care where you pitch me, I just want to pitch.

So he's really gone up in the circle of trust, if you will. His first outing was kind of nondescript. We were down against Seattle. But I think he's earned the right to be in any spot. It's not easy to do, but I think at this stage of the season, man, you just trust people. Chris has been one of our best pitchers for three years. We trust that the routine that is different won't affect him and he's throwing the ball extremely well.

Q. Max said a few days ago that Chris was a big recruiter of him to come here. How much has Bassitt been a part of the fabric of this team, and how has that helped him translate into the role you asked him to do even this fall? Just because he's so all into you guys.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, it was such a unique off-season for us last year for us, kind of knowing where we were going to be. Certain people, certain players, certain everything, right? I think conversations that we had with Chris were very, very important, they were productive, and I think kind of getting everyone going in the same direction. That probably helped him explain to Max what was going on here.

But, yeah, Chris has been a voice on this team for the entire time he's been here. He continues to be one even though he's in the bullpen. But our team is kind of -- they're very similar, they're very selfless, they don't care if it's one guy one night or another guy another night. But Chris really exemplifies that. He'll do anything for the guys.

Q. Why do you think in the last year or so we have seen such a revival of use of splitters?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think going back a few years, I think certain people thought they couldn't throw it, they couldn't actually get their fingers wide enough. I think, like anything, pitch design has changed, and I think guys have figured out different ways to grip it. Like, Gaus's is different than Trey's, Trey's is different than Seranthony's, Yariel's is different than -- they all hold it a little bit differently.

So I think pitchers have just gotten to the point where they understand that pitch works against certain swing types that are pretty prevalent in the league, and they figured out ways to kind of manipulate to get the same action.

Q. I know Max kind of puts his headphones on around this time, Shane's chatty as usual. What is Trey like for these kind of two hours before a start?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: He's pretty boring. He's usually playing cards with the guys. But I think once he kind of meets with Pete and the catchers -- he's just very boring. He's very calm. I mean, you guys probably see him in between innings, kind of takes a deep breath, kind of tries to stay present with where he's at. He's pretty boring, I guess, is the best way to say it. Kind of just goes about his routine. He'll talk to guys. He won't bite their head off if they're trying to ask him a question or something like that. He's just pretty steady.

Q. Have you thought about, given this ride for Trey,

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that his next regular season start could be like the fourth day of the season against, I don't know who you guys play, but what that is going to be like after all of this kind of build, build, build for him, and then he's just going to be starting regular season games.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, it's going to be a big letdown. I've been saying that the regular season's going to be boring for me now, you know what I mean? Yeah, it's wild. Just to throw a guy in where we did, and to have bigger and bigger games every time he pitches has been pretty wild. So we'll think about that next year, but want him to stay focused on what he's doing.

Q. Davis Schneider and Ernie Clement said that Scherzer is helping them out, like in the dugout, and also they like his competitiveness and also like fighting spirit. What kind of impact on Scherzer's presence have on the team?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It goes a long way, because he's been here quite a bit in this stage. Max talks to everyone: Position players, pitchers, me, Pete, Donnie, DeMarlo. In his words, Max always says, I've navigated these land mines a lot and I know what to expect. I've stepped on land mines, and I've avoided them. So I think that whatever situation may pop up in these games he's very, very open to talking about it with everyone. And it's just a calming presence to have for our younger players. I think him and George really come into play here where they have been in these moments, and no matter if you're down two games to none or down three games to none, how things can change, and just stay focused on what you're doing.

Q. There's been a lot of attention paid to the ability of your hitters to avoid strikeouts, and of course this comes at a time in the industry where the last few years has been a lot of talk about ways to get more balls in play in general. From your perspective how much intention was there to craft that style of offense for your team and how much influence do you think that can have given the amount of success that you've had?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, we tried to thread the needle a little bit with that going from last year to this year. Like understanding that our main guys make a lot of contact. Bo, Vlad, Kirky, George, there's guys with different profiles. So we leaned into it a little bit. And I think at the same time you don't want to just, I always call it like just playing ping pong. I think last year was pretty similar in terms of contact rate, maybe a little bit lower, but last year we talked about kind of doing a little bit more damage and what kind of quality of contact are we going to have. So threading

the needle I think and Pop and Lou and Hunter have been instrumental in it. It's kind of like we say all the time, What club do you take out of your bag. I think last year we had a lot of guys just hanging out with like a 7-iron the entire time. So when to use that, when to use a driver, and knowing that they can make contact is kind of a little safety net for 'em. So in terms of how baseball goes forward, to me pitching is so good these days with the stuff and the velo, everything, you have to be able to put the ball in play, you have to put pressure on the defense and the pitcher. So I like that we can do it in a variety of ways.

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