

MLB World Series: Dodgers vs Blue Jays

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

Toronto Blue Jays

Kevin Gausman

Pregame 5 Press Conference

Q. We just heard Chris almost welling up when he talked about being best friends with Max Scherzer. I know he's in the bullpen now, Bassitt, but it feels like this whole rotation, this whole pitching staff, this whole team has this really unique closeness and bond. Obviously, we're talking about best friends, that's a different thing, but over your four years here, how has that developed, and what have you seen change to get the team to the point where it is now as far as that clubhouse is working?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, honestly, I think the first word that comes to mind is respect. I think we all have a level of respect for each other and what each guy has been through to get to the point where we're at now. Obviously, Max is at a different level than everybody else if you look at the accolades and whatnot. But, honestly, just a lot of veteran pitchers. We've had some young guys kind of sprinkled in there the last couple years, but really it's kind of been the old guys. We kind of take pride in being able to go out against some of these young guys and pitch better than 'em.

So I think we just kind of relish the opportunity to go out and continue to kind of go against the grain of everybody thinking maybe these guys don't have it anymore or whatnot. So really since I've been here, the starting rotation has been really close. We all watch each other work, we watch each other's bullpens, and I think that adds to that respect.

Q. When we got here to L.A., nobody knew where this series was going to wind up, whether it was going to go back. What does it mean to you to be able to get the ball, pitching again in a World Series game in Toronto potentially with a chance to wrap it up?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, it's exciting. Rogers Centre is going to be fun. It's going to be electric. It's going to be



everything that it has been for the last month and probably more. We're excited to get back there. Obviously, we're really good at home, so we feel confident playing in front of our own team. The fans there have been awesome, especially lately. They bring the energy, they pick us up when we need it. So yeah, obviously, coming here was the goal to get back to Toronto.

Q. You've talked many times about when you were a free agent and considering options and about how much research you put into it and what made you decide upon Toronto. Now it's taken a little while to get to this point, but what really attracted you to the team in terms of the direction you felt it was headed at the time?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: I mean, I've said it before, but after the 2021 season, I believe they had the best offense in baseball. So being a starting pitcher that's -- you know, you like that. So looking at that, it was kind of a, all right, that might be fun to pitch for them. I've played in the AL East the majority of my career, so I know what Toronto's like on the visiting side. Unfortunately, I've been a part of 2016, Edwin ending our season, and I've seen that fan base at its highest level, that I know of, and now even more so.

So it's exciting to be a part of this, the first World Series in 32 years. It's more exciting that we're going back to Toronto and able to play in front of our home fans.

Q. You've been around for the facility build-up this organization's had, both north and south of the border. What do you think the impact will be on this playoff run, regardless of outcome, with regard to the organization further kind of planting its flag and becoming even more of a destination for players and otherwise?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I think you really got to look at our head honchos for turning Rogers Centre into what I always thought was a great place to play, but now as a fan, I mean, you come to watch a game there -- I don't know how many different bars we have in there. There's live music everywhere you can go, great food options. I mean, it's kind of turned into a big party, so it's a lot of fun.

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But on the other side, when I first signed here, I saw the talent, and everybody talked about the talent. We've always had the talent since I've been here. So it's nice to kind of get to a point where that talent is kind of matured into being one of the last two teams. So that's really exciting. I hope free agents can kind of open their eyes a little bit at the fact that, I mean, if you're watching this series and you watch the games in Toronto, I mean, why wouldn't you want to play there. The fan base is incredible, they love their athletes.

If you're looking at our spring training complex, I think we have the best one in baseball. Really our new clubhouse in Toronto is, you know, I don't know if there's many above it. So there's a lot to like, and now we're in that conversation of being one of the best two teams.

Q. After being one of the few splitter pitchers for the first half of your career, why do you think so many people in the last few years are sort of following you in developing that pitch?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Well, I mean, I don't know if I necessarily would say they're following me. There's a lot of guys way before me that had really good splits. But I think -- honestly, I think there's so many good pitches in today's game. There's so many good sweepers and sliders and cutters. I think the split is almost kind of a just a little bit different of an animal. You can recognize the spin, and you can still have a pretty ugly swing on it if the metrics are right.

So it's kind of one of the few pitches I thoroughly believe a hitter can know it's coming and still get out. I've always felt like the changeup is the best pitch in the game, because it looks like a fastball, and anything that looks like a fastball and isn't is really good. So I think that's why the split has kind of made a turn to -- you're seeing a lot more guys do it. I'm happy to see a lot more starters do it, because it was always kind of more of a reliever pitch. So to me it's exciting to see guys like Yamamoto throw it a lot.

It's a hard pitch to control, and sometimes you don't need to, but it definitely helps if you can. I just, I mean, it's definitely my kind of bread and butter and the reason why I'm here, to be honest. So I'm definitely pro split.

Q. Do you think during the World Series how different your life and career would be if you hadn't been at Grand Canyon that day and run into Chris Brown?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: What's that?

Q. Do you think how different your pitching and your

career would be if you hadn't been working out at Grand Canyon that day and run into Chris Brown?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, yeah, for sure. I mean, everybody's career here is unique in their own right. I've had definitely my ups and downs over the course of my career. But I've always believed in myself and really believed in that pitch, and it's only got better the more I've thrown it.

Q. Speaking of everyone's career being different, I wanted to ask you about Nathan Lukes. You were a first-round pick. You were in the big leagues at 22. He was a guy who really grinded and didn't get a lot of opportunities. This is his first full season in the Major Leagues at 30. And there he was yesterday as the leadoff man in a World Series game, and maybe again in Game 7. I see you're starting to smile. What does that mean when someone like that who's been through that can get there.

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, it's cool. It's a testament to him and his belief in himself. I know he thought about not playing any more, and now, like you said, he's leading off in the World Series for a team and an organization that hasn't been here in a long time. So pretty cool for him.

Q. What does it mean that all these guys who, you know, not much was expected from this year, whether it's him or whether it's Ernie or Barger, have sort of banded together to form this offense that has taken you guys this far? It's almost like an overlooked crew beyond the big guys.

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I think, honestly, if you watch like the last second half of last year, I feel like all those guys kind of made huge adjustments. And kind of going into the off-season it was, you know, we can maybe rely on this guy to really take a big jump. Some guys have more than others, but, man, everybody has contributed this year, and it's been a different guy every game. So that's what's been most fun for me to watch is, yeah, we have the big-name guys, but it's those other guys that are really kind of setting the table for those guys and coming up with big hits and playing out of position. It's just been a lot of fun to be a part of.

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