

MLB World Series: Dodgers vs Blue Jays

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

Ernie Clement

Pregame 7 Press Conference



Q. What are the feelings, emotions ahead of a pivotal Game 7 like this for today?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, it's a good mix of nerves, excitement. I mean, this is what it's all about, so we're ready for the moment.

Q. You guys played really well with Shohei last one. How difficult is it for you guys to face him again in a few days?

ERNIE CLEMENT: It definitely helps that we faced him. Going in there after never facing him is really difficult. He's a really, really good pitcher. We're just going to have to do what we do and grind 'em out and capitalize on any mistakes that he makes.

Q. This postseason of yours, obviously it's not a 162-game sample, but it's also not small. The way you've performed this October, November, what might you take forward from that just from a confidence standpoint and everything else as you continue on in your career?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, it's something I can learn from, every step of this journey is something I can take away and then learn and use it going forward. Any failures, any successes are all learning curves, and yeah, it's a great experience being able to play in the postseason and have some success and have some failures at the same time. So just definitely going to use that going forward.

Q. After that 18-inning loss, I remember IKF saying he had a hard time sleeping at night thinking of all the little plays that didn't work out and made the game go their way. Can you draw anything from that 18-inning loss, which was devastating at the very end, to use that after yesterday's game and bounce back today and just forget about it?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, it's a similar feeling. It really is. At the end of the day, you got to win one baseball game. That's the mindset we've taken the whole postseason and it's really worked for us. So we show up today, we do our jobs, and kind of let everything take care of itself.

Q. How, after this is over, would you like this Blue Jays team to be defined in people's minds?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, I think no matter how tonight goes, this is the most fun I've ever had playing baseball. It's the tightest group I've ever been a part of. So win or lose, we have a lot to be thankful for and a lot to hang our heads on.

I think when we win, it will be a really special -- it will be a special feeling just because of all the ups and downs. You get to play with 30 of your best friends, and I don't think that happens every year. So in a way, you don't want it to end. But we're just going to enjoy it. It's one last game with my favorite team I've ever been a part of. So, yeah, I mean, win or lose, it's been a hell of a year.

Q. In the postseason, why isn't the home field advantage a big advantage? You guys won two in L.A., Dodgers won two here, or your Seattle series. Why is that?

ERNIE CLEMENT: I'm not sure. Sometimes that's just how the cookie crumbles, I guess. But we have the best fan base in baseball and it's going to be really fun to play in front of 'em one last time.

Q. What are the main qualities of this team that allowed it to blend together so well and gave you the faith that you had in it coming out of spring training?

ERNIE CLEMENT: It's just a blend of really, really good human beings. I think that's just what it boils down to. It's a bunch of unselfish guys who have just got really, really close and learned to play for each other. It's really easy to play for the guy next to you when you have a personal relationship with 'em and you're willing to do whatever it takes to have his back. So it's through and through in our clubhouse.



Q. As we just heard from you, this is a group, I know, that you take a lot of pride in and is really close. Does it register for you that the whole discussion, it feels like, around the baseball world about this World Series is just the Dodgers and what they're doing and why they're doing and why this is going to Game 7 as opposed to shining a spotlight on this team? It feels like you're not just the underdog, but in the coverage, it feels like you guys have kind of been ignored even this far into the series?

ERNIE CLEMENT: They have a great team. There's no denying it. They're one of the best teams probably ever put together, and we've taken 'em to seven games, so that's got to say something about us. But we're fine with that. We're fine with kind of flying under the radar. It's happened all year, so it's nothing we're new to. They get a lot of press, rightfully so. Like I said, they're a great team. But, yeah, I would take the guys in our clubhouse any day of the week.

Q. We all know that you and all the guys in the Blue Jays clubhouse, they didn't want to come and play today, but how exciting is it to play in a Game 7 at the World Series?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, it's what you dream of as a kid. I've played in quite a few Game 7s in my backyard over the years, so it's going to be a lot of fun. It's why I play the game. It's everything I've dreamed of. It's a chance to win a World Series. You know, not everybody gets to say that, so we're going to enjoy that.

Q. Did you sleep well last night?

ERNIE CLEMENT: No. God, no. No, I didn't get any sleep. I think I maybe slept an hour or two. And I got here a little extra early. Yeah, I couldn't wait to get to the field today. Just one more day to hang with the boys and give it everything we got. So, yeah, I didn't sleep at all.

Q. Given what you just said before about the closeness of this team, the way you guys play for each other, what wider lessons would you want the team to draw from the way that you guys built that? Is there something that you think is applicable year to year in terms of creating the environment you have?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, 100 percent. And it didn't start this year. It started in years past with great players and great people that have been in this organization who have began a culture. I think moving forward, in spring training is when you got everybody together all through the minor leagues and all staff members. Like, it is truly a culture

that we have built and we're really, really proud of. I think anyone who comes up is going to be just ingrained in the culture that we've created because it's -- like, you see Trey come up. He just got drafted last year, and he's just fit in right away. Guys who have come up from Buffalo all season and done their job to the best of their ability. It's been amazing.

Every single guy who is in our lineup, walks in our clubhouse, is ready to roll. I'm confident that this isn't just going to be this year. It's going to be years to come.

Q. What are the ingredients, the key ingredients, you feel that need to be carried over year to year?

ERNIE CLEMENT: I keep saying the character, the types of people that are brought into this organization. And it's no accident that all the guys at the trade deadline are really, really solid individuals. They're not just good baseball players. I think our front office deserves all the credit in the world for putting together a team of -- and an organization of great people, and I think that will absolutely continue.

Q. I'm wondering what it means to you to be representing Canada's team. I mean, these fans have really never lost hope throughout this postseason run for you guys and for good reason. But, yeah, how do you kind of keep that extra pressure, I guess, in check during a Game 7 like this?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, it's a privilege, I think. I was walking to the stadium today and I got tapped on the shoulder. It was a guy who was like, Hey, I came in from Vancouver. Like, I flew last night to come see this. Like, good luck. Just so kind and just was so much support. He's like, I wouldn't miss this for the world. He had a pillow with him, and I'm like, Dude, like, did you just, like, sleep on the ground last night just so you could watch this game? It was amazing to see. Like, that's just one small example of the incredible support throughout the whole nation of Canada.

Like, I have had zero negative interactions with anyone in this entire country since I've been here, which is just mind-blowing to me. Like, everyone has just been so cool and nice and welcoming and so supportive. So it is truly an honor to play for this country.

Q. I know this is a different hero every night team and everybody contributes across the roster, but George having been here before and Max having started the last World Series Game 7, have there been any -- I don't know how big speechy you guys are, but has there been anything that one of your teammates has

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

said to the group that has really sat with you or that has really shocked you, I can't believe this guy said that, that was awesome, something like that?

ERNIE CLEMENT: There's been a few, I guess, I don't want to say "rah, rah speeches," but what I think is so special about this team is that we don't need any of that. We show up to the ballpark and know what our job is. And every single guy is on the same page. So, apart from a few great George Springer speeches or Chris Bassitt speeches throughout the season, once the playoffs have started, we show up and are ready to roll. It's just a trust thing. We trust that every single guy is ready to do their job, so we don't need any of that.

Q. And I guess this is it, right? You can't afford to think beyond tonight's game, but has the finality of it all hit you yet? Like this is it for baseball this year?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, I mean, I was walking out of the stadium last night and it kind of hit me and I took a second to just kind of look out at the field and kind of try to soak it in. Because, I mean, it's been a special year, no doubt about it. Once we step on that field tonight I think it will be, it will really set in that, hey, this is it, you better leave it all out there. But yeah, it will hit at some point.

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