

# MLB Winter Meetings

Monday, December 9, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

**St. Louis Cardinals**

**Manager Oliver Marmol**

Press Conference

**Q. We have obviously heard a lot about what the direction is going to look like. What does that look like practically for you? How does that affect you?**

OLIVER MARMOL: There's been a lot of just communication and collaboration with everything, from the hiring of (indiscernible) to the coordinator position and going through some of the questionnaires and just understanding just the infrastructure for how all of this will go down. It's been really smooth. I would say that with just everybody involved. They've done a really nice job with the entire staff based on their Lane of expertise. It's been good.

**Q. How does it change your off-season when maybe you don't know who your third baseman is going to be, maybe you don't know who your closer is going to be?**

OLIVER MARMOL: You just continue to operate honestly as if they're going to be there until they're not. Those guys are doing a really nice job of that. Speaking to Nolan, he's in a good spot, man. He's doing what he does best because he's working hard to make sure he has a good season.

So you just continue to operate that way. I'll tell you this, this off-season has been good with -- you look at the two hires in Jon Jay and Brownie. Those two guys have done an incredible job within the short amount of time that they've been here and their communication with our players.

You look at Brownie, spending time with Gorman in Arizona, flying down to Jupiter and spending time with Jordan over the last week and Siani and some of those other guys. Some of the adjustments with Victor Scott. He's been able to hit with Nolan Arenado as well out in Arizona. And then Jon Jay going down to Jupiter and spending time with Walker and Vic. It's been awesome. We've seen it.

There's a lot of buy-in right now as to the direction we're heading with this.



## 2024 BASEBALL WINTER MEETINGS DALLAS

**Q. You've had -- since you've been manager, the bottom line metric for judging the Cardinals, talking about how you want to win the World Series, how does that change this year? How should this team be judged? What metric are you going to use if it's not win/loss and it's not where it is in October, what are you going to use?**

OLIVER MARMOL: I would say the mindset is still winning baseball. Like you talk to any of our players, have a conversation with Donovan and Winn and those guys, they're hungry to win.

What I'm excited about is there's going to be runway for some of these guys. I think some of the pressure is going to be lifted off their shoulders in understanding, man, whether this week goes well for you or doesn't, you're going to be in there. And knowing that they have a longer runway than they're used to having, I think may lead to more production, to be quite honest with you. So I'm excited about that.

**Q. Is there anything -- that sounds like almost hindsight. Is that the metric where you know what works for future years of success. Am I misunderstanding that?**

OLIVER MARMOL: Meaning?

**Q. They get the runway to find out what they're capable of. Is that something you appreciate the next season or down the road?**

OLIVER MARMOL: Yeah, if I were to sit here and ask you what is Herrera, I think we would all have varying responses. That's the whole point of it. At the end of this year, we'll know what we have in Herrera, in, gosh, Walker, Newport -- you go down the list, just get them at-bats, let them pitch, let them play. And there's more clarity as to what we have on our hands rather than guessing. So that's a big part of how we'll measure this as well.

**Q. So what's a successful year look like?**

OLIVER MARMOL: For me it's still winning baseball. Like

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our guys -- we're going to continue to instill that. That's what we've always done. We've got expectations. That part doesn't change for me.

I can tell you in speaking to our guys, it doesn't change for them. They're not going into this year just looking at development. Sure, our approach will signal towards that more than anything as far as when we talk about runway and letting guys play, but the mentality remains the same in wanting to compete and contribute.

**Q. We talk about the recent trades, the common misconception is the Cardinals are resetting, but they're not lowering the expectations. (Indiscernible).**

OLIVER MARMOL: The amount of young guys that we have. When you look at our catching situation with Contreras going over to playing some first and DH'ing. You have two young catchers. You have a combination of Burtleson and Contreras at first. You have Donny, Gorman, Noot, Vic, Siani, Walker, Mason -- you have a ton of young dudes. So it's the right time in allowing them to have that runway to figure out what you have.

There is the other side of it, of understanding what the long term looks like based on what you have in the Minor Leagues and how the infrastructure is being set up in order to produce more guys that can help at the Big League level.

So when you look at puffing up that staff down there and adding more and just collaborating to the degree we have, that's helpful. (Collaborating). I think it's the right time to do it.

**Q. How involved are you with the (indiscernible) addition of the coordinator staff.**

OLIVER MARMOL: Yes. So Mo and Heim and that whole group, they've both been really exclusive. You look at -- I sat in and had a lot of one-on-one interviews for the GM position, which was awesome to be a part of, just understanding the higher value in that position and being able to put in my two cents.

Also, when you look at the coordinator position, they've done a nice job -- for the field coordinator, me and Descalso are looking at those. You have Stubby and Descalso looking at the infielders. Jon Jay is looking at the outfield coordinator positions. You have Poguey and others looking at the catching coordinator position. Just including the big league staff and having their hand in or just a say, a seat at the table in what they value in hiring that next group that's going to be extremely valuable in developing the players that are going to help us get to the

next level.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

OLIVER MARMOL: I don't know if it's unusual or not because I've only done it here, but I would say it's awesome to include everybody and be able to voice and be able to hear other people's ideas and evaluation on a candidate and then get to the bottom of who's going to be the best for this position.

I think it's being done really well right now.

**Q. How would you characterize your view right now, where you guys stand with Nolan Gorman and just what you want to see out of him this year, what you guys are trying to find out? What's your message to him right now?**

OLIVER MARMOL: I think he's in a really good spot. Brownie was able to spend some time with him and just candidly speak to what he feels hasn't gone well.

Here's what I like about Brownie. He's able to speak different languages in the sense of like if someone is highly -- like, he's able to speak to that. If someone is more off of feel, he's able to speak to the swing and has a really, really good understanding of the swing. If someone just wants to talk biomechanics, he can do that.

He's been able to relate to a variety of our guys based on how they like taking in information. So he's done a really nice job with Gorman in understanding, like, his gather leads to a lot of success or lack of success, and being able to speak to that has been amazing.

So there's been a lot of buy-in from the Walkers and the Gormans with what they're working on right now, and that leads to overall confidence.

I am more excited than ever in what we'll see out of our young guys based on that, yeah.

**Q. I know you talked about some uncertainty. Where do you feel like (indiscernible) right now defensively? Is that still up in the air?**

OLIVER MARMOL: It is. It's hard to speak to that definitively based on -- we don't know what our roster is going to look like in a few months. Once we get past some of this, we'll have a better understanding. Right now he's ready to do whatever he's asked to do, and he's in a good head space to be able to do that.

**Q. (No microphone.)**



OLIVER MARMOL: He feels comfortable at multiple positions, third, second. He came up as a third baseman. He's obviously done a nice job at second turning it into a double play. He'll do whatever he's asked to do, and he's in a good spot mentally to be able to do it.

**Q. When you all look at creating runway for guys, how does that work with your pitching staff? There's a lot of incumbent guys, there's a lot of returning guys on that staff. Relatively young bullpen, especially on the right side, for you. What does that look like?**

OLIVER MARMOL: It allows for a little more flexibility in a pitcher working on something and not having to -- Fernandez did a good job with this last year. He's in a tough spot. He was having to make adjustments in the moment in high leverage situations, and he did a really nice job of that. That's not the norm. Some guys aren't able to do that, and he did it really well.

When you look at what Dusty and his staff has done with our pitching, I feel like there's been a lot of adjustments on the fly at the highest level that have gone our way. You look at Libby, you look at what some of those guys have done, it's been productive. We're going to continue to do that.

**Q. Roycroft, Riley (indiscernible)?**

OLIVER MARMOL: Yeah, and you have high end arms with both of those guys with some real stuff. We're going to have to work through some highs and some lows. We're okay with but what could come out of Roycroft and Riley reach their potential is a big deal. It really is.

**Q. A lot have said the Major League is not a place for development. Do you almost have to change the thinking on that now?**

OLIVER MARMOL: It's changed. Guys are getting up there younger and younger, and there's a ton of development. You look at our staff -- and I give our staff a lot of credit. It's a lot of guys that spent time in the Minor Leagues that value development. It's in their DNA to do exactly that, to teach. You look at Bobby, you look at Stubby, there's a track record for doing those things.

So development takes place at the Big League level, and there's sure to be a lot of it moving forward.

**Q. With Willson at first base, what were those talks like moving him to first base?**

OLIVER MARMOL: They were awesome. They really

were, man. Almost like a little bit of a relief. At the end of the day, Willson wants to be healthy, and he wants to be in the lineup as much as possible. If that means not catching because he's exposed to potentially more injury and his legs and as he continues year in and year out, then he's on board.

He was excited about it. His exact words were at one point I want to win a Gold Glove at first base, and I'm going to work extremely hard to get as close to that as possible.

But he's excited about being in the lineup every day, and that's what we want for him as well. It's a combination of working with Stubby, and he's got to work with José Oquendo starting here in a week or two down in Jupiter.

Listen, man, I love José. He does an incredible job teaching and progressing somebody that hasn't played a position to feeling comfortable in a game. He does that as good as anybody. So I think we have the right people in place to get Willson comfortable.

**Q. Will Mason in Jupiter be part of learning first base?**

OLIVER MARMOL: I'm not sure what you mean by that.

**Q. Well, Willson is working on first base along with Oquendo in Jupiter. Will Mason be part of that group?**

OLIVER MARMOL: Yes.

**Q. Willson is adjusting to first base and Mason essentially is because they can start working in the off-season.**

OLIVER MARMOL: No doubt. There's a small group down there that will all work. Brownie will pop in from time to time. Jay is obviously down there, and he'll do a lot of the work effectively. Stubby will pop down for a couple of weeks at a time as well. I think we have the right pieces in play to make sure the guys are ready.

**Q. Did you say that he'd already started working with Stubby down there, Willson?**

OLIVER MARMOL: He has not, no.

**Q. Ten months ago, I think it was the Winter Meetings, we talked about the importance of getting experience and how that was something that guys came to you, wanted in the clubhouse. Carpenter eventually came, Sonny Gray, Kyle Gibson. You all talked about the value of that experience. Is that still there in this team? Not the experience, but the value of it? And you're looking to guys like Contreras and Sonny?**

OLIVER MARMOL: Yes. I mean, you just said it. I think, when you can sense the transition years of needing that in order to culturally instill certain things and be able to reiterate certain messages coming from the players and not just the staff. Last year was an important year to bridge that for some of those guys, and they did an incredible job of doing exactly that. You could go down the list. They were phenomenal with that. Carpenter did a really nice job with that.

And it allows exposure to what that looks like in order for them to now carry it on, and do it in their own way. Mason is his own guy. Jordan is his own guy. Sonny does things a certain way. So they will add their twist to what it's supposed to look like, but bridging that last year was important.

**Q. That's part of having the experience, can it aid development for the young guys? We're talking about coaching, we're talking about what role --**

OLIVER MARMOL: Yeah, a good example would be Pallante and Libby. They gleaned so much from a Lance Lynn and a Gibby, and a Sonny -- like, you needed that. Now he's in a much better place mentally how to handle failure, and he's in a better spot to attack this year even with those guys not in the clubhouse. There's benefit from that for sure.

**Q. What's the conversation been with Nolan in that regard? Obviously we all know they may be with you, they may not.**

OLIVER MARMOL: Positive. Nolan right now is operating in a space of I'm here and I'm working toward getting myself ready as a player to have a productive year, and he still does a good job of connecting with all the young guys. So until that's not the case, if that's what comes out of this, he's going to operate the way he's operating right now until he no longer has to.

**Q. Does he see the Cardinals in that way?**

OLIVER MARMOL: He always has. If there's a time where that's not the case, then it's a part of the business. But until that happens, he is investing in the Cardinals. Even Brownie is spending time with him. Those conversations were like very, very productive.

And him being able to say here's what happened last year personally, but also as a team, here's what I'd like to see more of, just the interaction and the back-and-forth and getting the kind of recap from Brownie, it's been productive. It really has.

**Q. Would you like to have him stick around?**

OLIVER MARMOL: You know what my answer is, yeah.

**Q. It sounds like what you're describing there, you can see the benefits.**

OLIVER MARMOL: Yeah, but there's big picture in all of this. We'll see how it plays out.

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