

MLB Winter Meetings

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Atlanta Braves

Brian Snitker

Press Conference



2024 BASEBALL WINTER MEETINGS DALLAS

Q. How difficult is it to lose Travis?

BRIAN SNITKER: It's always going to be difficult when you lose somebody of Travis's pedigree and what he brings to your team. It's more about the guy. He's a great player. Has been for a long time.

I'm happy for him that he's back home and the situation that he got in.

Kind of secretly hoping that we would maybe get him back.

Q. Did you have any inkling going into offseason because you have spoken so much about the catching component and what it's meant to you guys (indiscernible) and Travis, did you know that might happen?

BRIAN SNITKER: No, not until after the season was over. I can speculate on the roster things and all that. I mean, I'm not honestly privy to a lot of going on and things like that, but it was just things that happen.

I think it's things that you do, there are decisions or things that you do I think in putting your club together and the things that go on that aren't real popular all the time.

I know a lot of people come to me, they're big Travis fans. I'm a big Travis fan. But, you know, then the coaching moves that we did, I think it's just something that you do every now and then. You assess things. I don't see anything or any move that we made that we're not going to overcome or we're going to be a really, really good club again. That's kind of the way I look at it.

Q. Is he still there?

BRIAN SNITKER: Yeah.

Q. He's still there. The game preparation (indiscernible)?

BRIAN SNITKER: Absolutely. We got Kranny, and Erick

had a lot to do with it when he took -- picked up for Kranny. We still have really good minds in there. We are an analytics team and the guys that we have there, we have Eddie Perez, who was one of the best catchers of his generation.

I think the game planning is going to go on. These guys know the league. All these guys. Murph now had two years in the National League. Our pitchers, like Chris has been in the National League. It's not going to be anything that these guys aren't going to have experienced and probably have a lot more input.

Q. From a leadership standpoint Travis was a respected guy in the room. How do you overcome that? You probably have your veterans --

BRIAN SNITKER: They asked me that when we lost Freddie and Dansby and all that. I don't worry about that. That room is full of leader-type guys, the make-up guys that play. I think those leaders lead by example, and those guys how they come to work every day, how they prepare, the energy with which they play, that's probably the last thing I worry about is credibility and the so-called leadership in the room.

Q. You look into your rotation for next year. You have three guys going to camp and for opening day. Do you feel like you have enough internal pieces and maybe the confidence of Alex to go and get an army?

BRIAN SNITKER: We're second week of December or whatever. I'm not worried about that either. We're still going to go to camp, and we'll probably get seven guys at least stretched out and ready to go because we're going to use them again. This thing is going to be shuffled around. We're going to need a lot of guys just like we did last year.

I got every confidence in the world that when we start, we get -- more than likely I was just telling somebody that probably there will be some guys that aren't even in our camp the first couple of weeks of March that are going to end up being big contributors.

Q. Alex mentioned wanting to see what Grant Holmes (indiscernible) how much confidence does it inspire

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this past year and that?

BRIAN SNITKER: A lot because you don't know. What he did for us was really, really good. How he took on the responsibility and took advantage of the opportunities that he had. So I'm very happy for him, what he brings, and the versatility that he has.

If he's not starting and he can be a length guy, he has been a bridge guy. We've used him in all the different roles last year. His stuff plays and the experience and all, it's just I'm really -- I have a lot of confidence in him.

Q. Did Joe take you by surprise?

BRIAN SNITKER: I saw Joe when he got back from the surgery. He's in there rehabbing. I was thinking, man, from what it sounded like they had to do, I was amazed that he was able to do what he did at the end of the year.

That's as big of probably a loss right now as anything that we sustained, quite honestly, because that guy came and was who we thought he was when we got him. Then he had another one that had a Spring Training, and then regular work and just kind of continued to get better and better. That's a big loss.

Q. Do you think Pierce can slide up and fill in around that?

BRIAN SNITKER: Absolutely. Pierce has. Pierce has been in high-leverage roles. He's been a high-leverage guy since we got him. I think Pierce is still a guy that's learning about his stuff, the pitch mix, things like that.

The ability to spin the ball like he has is really big. So, yeah, I think he can definitely step in and take an even advanced role.

Q. I remember that last -- the last week in Miami you put Daysbel (indiscernible) that spot and he gets out of it. How ready is he to stick in the Big League level with that stuff?

BRIAN SNITKER: Again, there's another one that the stuff plays. Like Daysbel, when he first came up, then we lost him with the injury, then when he came back, it's good to know that you got a guy like that that has had some experience, and he's been in high-leverage situations, and he's another one. I got a lot of confidence in him.

Q. As much as you would like to probably get Acuna and (indiscernible) back as fast as possible, does part of you go I'm glad we're being kind of cautious with him?

BRIAN SNITKER: I think we've learned over time that you have to do that, and I think as we go in, they'll end up and they'll check the boxes. Our medical team is as good as there is in the game.

When they're ready, we'll put them if back in there, and it will be great when we get them.

Q. Said that last day of the season before the game and after the game you were talking about you're looking forward to what Michael Harris can do. How big can that be just to help bridge a gap while you're fixing your outfield?

BRIAN SNITKER: I think it could be huge. I think Michael is ready to do that. I think these last couple of years he's probably learning his body and the grind that that Major League season is. I'm sure he'll -- as they go in and what they end up doing is adjusting their workouts in in the offseason.

We see what the guy can do. I mean, he's a special talent. We can keep him on the field for 150-plus games, he's got a chance are of being a really, really good, strong middle of the back guy, middle of the lineup back guy.

Q. I don't know what you can say about it if it's not official, but let's just say there was a powerful left-handed hitter who joined the division in New York. How would that kind of impact things?

BRIAN SNITKER: Not at all with us. I don't think. Our goal is still going to be the same thing. It's going to be to win the division. I've just kind of been numb to things like that. I don't really care who signs who, what teams put together, things like that because we still have to play for six months.

Yeah, it doesn't do anything for us.

Q. It's been one of the toughest divisions now for years. You figure it's going to be the same next year?

BRIAN SNITKER: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, because you look at all those teams in our division. They just continue to keep getting better, as we do. We're all working to get better. It's a very strong division, which I don't have any doubt that it's going to be again.

You look at -- I look at the Nationals, the young guys that they finished the year with, they have some really good players. They're going to continue to improve. So it's not going to be easy.

Q. Did you talk to Chris at all after -- since that bullpen and --

BRIAN SNITKER: Yeah, I've talked to him a couple of times. He feels great. I'm happy that he was rewarded for the season that he had. Yeah, but I know he'll -- again, having a normal offseason is going to be huge for him again this year coming in. What we went through last year and what he went through finishing the whole year, I know it didn't end like he wanted too, but just what he could accomplish was huge.

Q. You were saying about (indiscernible) San Diego and you were talking about how excited you were to get back to camp next year. When you had a day or week to reflect on everything that team did, what were your thoughts?

BRIAN SNITKER: Just how we persevered through everything we were dealt. All the tough hands we were dealt. The players that we lost. How within continued to compete, which has been the mantra of this team for a long time.

I don't think these guys have ever been a club that has that "woe is me" attitude. They just keep fighting and keep playing. It doesn't affect them. I mean, they continue to -- because these guys like to play. They like to work. They're consistent in all that.

I did. I told a lot of people, I sat there between games of that double-header and had no clue what was going to happen. Honestly that was probably my most miserable drive to the ballpark that Monday morning when the day the season was over. We had played a double-header, and that was about as stressful a situation I think as I've ever been in. I was more relaxed in Game 6 of the World Series.

But I'm proud of the organization and the guys. We told them that. The fact that we got in and gave ourselves a chance, and I was. I kind of felt like we could have won. We should have. Not should have. We didn't do enough, honestly. But it felt like we had a chance to win those games or should have won the games.

Q. When you were driving that morning, did you know there was a possibility for Sale to pitch Game 2?

BRIAN SNITKER: A little bit. I didn't because I didn't know until we got there honestly. I was hoping. I still held out hope that he was going to wake up and get to the ballpark and go down there and throw a few and think, okay, I can do that. And he couldn't.

Q. He's the type of guy even though he won the Cy Young, do you think he's not going to lack motivation to come back next year to win?

BRIAN SNITKER: No, like I said, he's a ballplayer. He's a competitor. I think -- I don't think by any stretch that he's like, well, I have accomplished everything I need to accomplish now. I think he's just driven to succeed and driven to be great.

Q. The way it ended really bothered him.

BRIAN SNITKER: He wanted to pitch. That hurt him that he couldn't finish because he kept trying. I mean, literally -- I mean, the night before that Sunday afternoon or 3:00 game that we played, I was coming in and wasn't 100% sure that he wasn't going to be able to go.

Q. Do you think the destiny of the franchise changed when you didn't re-sign Freddie Freeman?

BRIAN SNITKER: No. No, I think that's part of the game. I think that's part of the game. We didn't sign him. We didn't sign Dansby. That's just -- that's just what we deal with.

Q. You don't know what's going to happen with (indiscernible) and Charlie, but do you feel good -- as good or better about this rotation knowing what Lopez can do and what Sale can do and what --

BRIAN SNITKER: And what Schwellenbach can do. I still feel good with our rotation. We're a long way from March whatever that we open the season. Something will happen. We'll find somebody. Something will happen where it's going to be good. Somebody is going to come along or Alex is going to make a move or we're going -- like I said, somebody is going to jump the fence like Schwellenbach did and do big things for us.

Yeah, I feel good about our club.

Q. How nice is that Tromp got three years with those guys to kind of --

BRIAN SNITKER: I think it was great. He's been in on all the game planning. You forget, he caught Chris a lot early on when Murph went down.

It just kind of fell that his day to catch, and I know Chris was very complimentary about him after he won the Cy young and talked about him. I like having him there. Drake is developing a lot. Just continuing to get better.

Would we like to have Travis back? Yeah, we would love



to have Travis back. It doesn't work that way all the time.

Q. It's a guessing game on Murphy, but do you think the fact that he went so hard may have been -- played a part in -- there was always some type of hesitation when you are coming back from an injury?

BRIAN SNITKER: Maybe that, and I think just think missing that much time early coming out of Spring Training -- I remember it took Mike over a year before. He missed a lot of that time early, and it took him a while to get back going. I feel -- I don't know. I feel really good about Murph this year.

I think coming in knowing he's the guy, he's going to take the lion's share of the work, and I think that's going to be good for him to know that. I'm sure he's going to be excited to get that thing going, and I think having, again -- I think it's hard.

It's just hard in this sport to -- when we see at the late signing pitchers and guys that are hurt in Spring Training and miss all the reps and everything and how it's hard for them to catch up. I mean, Spring Training I've learned over my time that it might be too long, but we need every bit of it. Especially with the pitchers.

We bring players along slow in that just for the long haul. Especially in our situation. Our guys play every day. I feel really good about Murph this year.

Q. For you guys the catching has been a two-man job the last few years, but how could it help, what you are saying with Murphy knows that he's going to be on that card?

BRIAN SNITKER: He's a guy that can do that. He's a big, strong man. He wants to catch a lot. He's going to need to.

I feel really good with whoever we have as our number two guy, but he's going to be the number one. We've had that tandem for a long time now, but he's a guy that's going to -- he's going to have to play the majority of the games. We saw what he's capable of two years ago, the first half, and hopefully -- I got a really -- like I said, I keep saying it, I got a good feeling about what we're going to get out of him this year.

Q. What impressed you about Tim Hyers either from as a player or --

BRIAN SNITKER: I've been impressed with him for a long time. I've known him. I managed against him when he was right out of high school. Then I've talked to him. I've

talked to a lot of players, coaches, managers, guys that have been around him. It's been really, really impressive.

I think he's going to -- it's kind of like the guy didn't do anything wrong, nothing. I think his -- I used to think it was kind of cliché, but I think maybe the new voice thing, there's something to that with guys.

I'm really excited about Tim and what he's going to bring.

Q. I'm doing some quick math, but this will be your 49th professional season.

BRIAN SNITKER: Yeah.

Q. How cool might it be to get to 50?

BRIAN SNITKER: I don't have to do that. It's just kind of like I think -- I felt I've been in it so long. When I got this job, I didn't need to be a Big League manager to validate my career. It happened. I'm glad it did. It's been a really cool thing to experience for the last ten years, but I don't have to get to 50. It would be a really neat number to achieve.

I feel great. That's the thing. I still feel really good, and I think too being with these young guys and the energy they have and you're outside and you stay active and it's pretty good. I think it's good for me.

Q. You've been in the game so long. What's it like to see the free agent deals go to what they've been the last couple of years with Soto and unfathomable?

BRIAN SNITKER: I'm kind of numb to it. I've seen the teams do all that. You know what, we still have to play all those games. I'm happy for the individuals that are rewarded for what they've done. It's great. We're in a great business. Big game for these guys.

But it doesn't bother me. I just, like I say, once that season starts and so many things can happen, good, bad, indifferent, whatever. We still all have to play the games.

Q. Speaking of Freddie, since you guys were out of it and you are watching, I'm sure at the end, were you happy for what he did?

BRIAN SNITKER: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

Q. (Indiscernible) went through --

BRIAN SNITKER: I remember he was there, and I saw his son take his first steps that day when they were in Atlanta, which was pretty cool, and everything that they had to go

through with a child is unbelievable. How he just is one of them guys that willed themselves to play and was there in the playoffs. So I'm really happy for him.

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