

MLB Winter Meetings

Monday, December 9, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

San Francisco Giants

Bob Melvin

Press Conference

Q. Probably took a little longer than typical to complete out your coaching staff, but now that it's done, what do you think about it?

BOB MELVIN: I'm very happy with our coaching staff. You know, it's nice to be able to reward within the system too and Tiny, I mean, I've gotten so many texts and calls about him.

Not only that, from players, from people in the system. Pat Burrell is ecstatic. Former Giant. That was kind of an easy one.

Then Oscar Bernard, who I had in San Diego, I really enjoyed him there too. He has a great way about him too. He was deciding whether it was going three or two in the hitting department because we kind of cut it to two in the pitching department, but a lot goes on in those cages. A lot of Spanish speakers in there too. Just ended up being -- kind of falling in our lap. We're really happy with how the staff came together.

Like I said, promoting from within. One of the remaining guys, I think there's a cohesiveness to the staff that's going to be really good.

Q. The trend is to go bigger. You guys backfill for J.P. Why was that that made J.P. the choice for you?

BOB MELVIN: With Brian last year, J.P. was kind of jumped over. It might have been kind of his turn. He's very well-versed in analytics as well. A lot of our guys and a lot of our younger guys really speak that language, whether it's grips, whether it's spin, whether it's a lot of the biomechanics stuff that he covers really well, and getting to know him last year it seemed like had the respect of all our pitchers and just felt like it was his time.

Q. You're not going to add -- you're going to go down to two there?

BOB MELVIN: Yeah, and Garvin is basically a pitching coach as well even though he's in the bullpen. He did a



2024 BASEBALL WINTER MEETINGS DALLAS

great job with those guys. Sometimes the message the more guys you have, sometimes the message might not be as succinct. Not saying that that was the case last year, but we're comfortable with the two-man pitching group.

Q. At the end of the season there's been a lot of transition with baseball ops. What's your take on everything that's happened?

BOB MELVIN: In baseball ops?

Q. Yeah. You're working for a completely different organization.

BOB MELVIN: It's certainly a little different now. There are also some guys that remain that we're confident in. Pike Goldschmidt we brought in, who I was with in Oakland, kind of doing Schwartz's role, and Schwartz gets to do something a little different too. There's typically some turnover there.

Kind of the bones of it is still there, and it's something that we value -- continue to value.

Q. What about the (indiscernible) taking over the whole thing?

BOB MELVIN: It's pretty amazing, and it's been so well received. Just spending time with him and listening to his baseball acumen and just talking a minute ago, there are certain guys that are just very commonsense smart and everything that comes out of their mouth just sounds like, yeah, that's well said and makes a lot of sense.

It's been great to not only have that, but for the organization as well to have an icon like that running the Giants. I think it's received across the board everywhere.

Q. When this offseason began, what was your expectation of just how aggressive Buster and Buster's group would be at improving this team?

BOB MELVIN: Well, I mean, Buster is a winner. He wants to win. It's why he is here. We'll see where it goes from here, but a lot of the conversations about the types of players that we talk about all fit really well. There's a lot of

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

offseason left. Obviously here at the Winter Meetings is when a lot of stuff happens, but from the very beginning it was about not scaling back. It was how are we going to improve this team?

I think we'll be well on our way to improving the team.

Q. Buster had talked about being pretty high on the middle of the spike (indiscernible) him having a down year last year. What bounceback from him (indiscernible) especially as the year went on even with his struggles?

BOB MELVIN: Everybody is going to have to at some point in time go through some struggles. It's how you handle it. I think he handled it beautifully. He went down there, and he worked on the things we asked him to.

It's very rare you find guys that throw 99 and have a wipe-out slider and you know hitters are not comfortable in the box. It's how you kind of process and move forward when you have some struggles. Sometimes it can end up being good for you and making you better. We're excited about having him back. We'll see what roles look like. He's been a closer. He's been an All-Star. His stuff hasn't gone away. There's a lot to like about him.

Q. Buster talked about (indiscernible) called Tyler to let him know he is probably the second baseman next year. How do you anticipate (indiscernible) last year you moved him all around, especially in Spring Training. He'll have a full season to focus at second base.

BOB MELVIN: If indeed that's where he is playing, yeah. I think as we saw last year once he was given the opportunity to play every day, it looked a lot different.

For younger players that are used to playing every day in the Minor Leagues, there's power, there's speed. There's a lot to love about Tyler Fitzgerald. Once he actually he was, okay, here's what you are going to do, this is the position that you are going to concentrate on. You don't have to work half the day in the outfield, half the day in the infield, which is tough for a younger player. I think he saw the talent level start to rise.

Look, he'll do anything. I've talked to him as well. He'll do anything, but it's always nice to know that potentially there's a spot that you can just prepare for, and confidence-wise we saw what that did for him last year.

Q. What was it like to see Snell sign with the Dodgers, and what kind of hole do you think that leaves in the rotation?

BOB MELVIN: Well, it leaves a hole, but there's always going to be turnover. Look, he was going to go somewhere. At this point in time of his career, he wants to win. So it's not a surprise.

Obviously our division, the Dodgers, world champions, that much tougher. It's also fun to play teams like that. He's going to make them better. I wish him the best except for against us.

It probably would have been a long shot for him to come back here, especially how well he performed last year, and obviously the Dodgers got it done pretty quickly, and they really wanted him.

Q. When you saw the Soto news last night, what was your reaction?

BOB MELVIN: Wow. We knew it was going to be a lot of money and a lot of years based on what he has accomplished in his career and how young he is still, but it's phenomenal. I mean, for him, I'm happy for him. I got to know him pretty well in San Diego. This was a year that he was setting himself up for this type of deal. I don't know that anybody could have really predicted what the number would be, but if anybody is going to get money like that, it's going to be Juan. He's one of the premiere players in the game.

Q. Were you surprised at the number?

BOB MELVIN: Maybe a little bit, but I say that every Winter Meetings it seems like. They're not going to pay him if they don't -- can't pay him.

Q. Your relationship going back to (indiscernible) some characteristics, traits that stuck out in the time that you have been around him?

BOB MELVIN: I think his first year -- I can't remember what year it was there, but it's having to deal with a Major League coaching staff. There's always a point person that has to deal with a Major League coaching staff. I know from my conversations with Cox, he's been invaluable there for those guys. There's always a point guy that is in charge of the advance stuff and the analytic work.

When we lose a guy like Michael Schwartze and you're able to replace him with a guy like Pike, you feel that much better, and I also have some experience with him. It's a great sign for us. It's a really good sign for them.

Q. A big deal in San Francisco when?

Alyssa Nakken got hired. What kind of conversations are you having with her about what her future will look like?

BOB MELVIN: We had a role for her. We weren't sure what the analytic department was going to look like. We weren't sure who was going to be on the point for the Major League staff to give us the type of information, but for her to get a role like this, I mean, that really sets up for the next job in her career to be whatever she wants to do.

It's been front office. It's player development now. It's coaching Major League coaching staff. This is a huge step for her and a really big job. I'm really happy for her. Obviously we hate losing her, and she's meant so much to the Giants and San Francisco, the city in general. Ground-breaking, trailblazer, all those type of things. This is a really good move for her.

Q. (Question regarding Sugano.)

BOB MELVIN: Look, he's a fit for anybody's bullpen, so we'll see where things go. We have discussions about everybody, but, I mean, you see the success that the Japanese players have now and how instrumental they are in the Big Leagues. It seems like with every team now.

There's no doubt he's going to have some success. We'll see where he goes. He'll help any team that has the opportunity to sign him.

Q. (Question regarding Jung Hoo Lee.)

BOB MELVIN: Jung Hoo is good to go. He's ready. He'll come to Spring Training, and there will be no restrictions on him.

Q. What does it mean to you that he came back to your lineup?

BOB MELVIN: It's huge for us. You saw what he meant to us early in the season, for a guy that hasn't played in the Big Leagues at Spring Training and just a guy that was leading off for us. He can hit anywhere in the lineup. You saw him play maybe even a better center field than maybe we envisioned.

Going down early in the season, as the season goes along, you kind of realize at some point in time we're missing a key player for us. So to be able to get him back is almost like another free agent signing or just bringing in a big player because he wasn't with us that long, but he has the ability to be an All-Star.

Q. (Indiscernible) strength at shortstop.

BOB MELVIN: We'll see where that goes. Can't really comment on those type of things at this point.

Q. Assuming that you don't have a need there anymore, what would you identify as the next thing that this roster really needs?

BOB MELVIN: Well, look, I think we're kicking the tires on everything. We've had conversations with whether it's another reliever, whether it's another starter, whether it's another bat. I think those are probably the three areas that we're targeting. Where the bat is, we'll see.

DH spots open potentially right now too. With LaMonte, he can DH, play first base. Could be a first baseman. Then you're always looking to add pitching, but we really do -- we have a lot of good, young pitching in our organization. We'll see where it goes with that.

We're comfortable obviously at the top with Webby and Robbie and Jordan, and then we have a whole host of -- Harri and Birdsong and Roupp and guys like -- some of the guys that we didn't even see last year with Carson Seymour and Whisenhunt.

We have a lot of depth in our organization as far as starting pitching goes. So whether or not that's the biggest need, I'm not sure, but I do know that just talks amongst the front office now, there isn't an area that we're not trying to identify what would be the best area for us. So it could be anywhere.

Q. Who would be your DH?

BOB MELVIN: I think that's one we're going to move around. I don't think we're going to bring in a set DH. Now, we could, but I think that's one we want to be able to give some guys some days off too. Whether it's a Chapman, LaMonte can DH, or he can play first. Ramos played a lot. I think we would probably like to be able to move the DH spot around as opposed to kind of pigeonhole one guy.

Q. What's your outlook on Wilmer Flores?

BOB MELVIN: Wilmer is another guy. Look, I'm excited that he's excited right now about where he is physically. And we saw last year that that was not the same guy. So, you know, you talk about adding a hitter and so forth.

I mean, Wilmer would be almost like -- vintage Wilmer would be almost like adding another guy as well. He was not healthy enough to be himself last year after the year before where he was an absolute terrific performer offensively. He can play some first base too.

So it's exciting to know that he is fully healthy and where we can have Wilmer as well. When you talk about another bat, it could be as simple as that if Wilmer is Wilmer.

Q. Have you checked in with him this offseason?

BOB MELVIN: He feels good. He's excited.

Q. What are your expectations for Robbie after Tommy John surgery?

BOB MELVIN: I think Robbie will be a lot more comfortable this year. When you come back as late as he did and had two surgeries, to really expect him to be that guy that he was was probably a little bit much to ask.

But a full offseason now going into the season, mentally, Robbie Ray, who he was before, we saw spurts where the velo was there and we saw spurts where the breaking ball was there. I think giving him a full season after kind of coming back what he came off of, we're expecting big things out of Robbie. I know he's pretty excited too.

Q. Jordan, he talked about the need to be better prepared himself physically. Have you checked in with him at all?

BOB MELVIN: I haven't this offseason yet. I know he's in San Francisco right now. I will at some point in time.

I think it was a big learning experience for him because it started out really good. The velo was there right away. There were times we felt like he was as good as anybody we had out there, and the velo dropped off a little bit. His body wasn't recovering quite as well.

Obviously had to put him in the bullpen after that, but I think for him that was a big learning experience how to prepare for a full season. I think he's up for the task this year.

Q. Do you guys find (indiscernible)?

BOB MELVIN: Their spending? I don't know that anybody is going to keep up with their spending, but they're the world champions, and they seem -- they're getting better too. I don't know that it's all about spending. It's just about us putting a cohesive group, team, together.

I think by the time this offseason is over, I feel like we're going to have a really good team. It's more really just about us worrying about ourselves and being the team that we expect to be as worried more about other teams.

Q. Buster talked about Kyle and having belief in him. What are you hoping to see?

BOB MELVIN: Taking the next step. Both are really talented guys. I never thought we would see Hayden Birdsong last year really at the Big League level. He did, but for him to perform how he did, and I think for him the biggest step was he went through a really difficult period at the Big Leagues.

First time he's probably been knocked around like that before. Command wasn't as good. Then he recovered from it and pitched really good again towards the end. I think confidence-wise going home after a season like that he feels good about himself.

High-end stuff. Same thing with Harri. Harri pitched through some times where maybe he could have taken a start off or whatever, but he wouldn't do it. He had the one injury that happened with his ankle or whatever it was that I think affected him for a while.

But, again, sometimes a step back or sometimes not having a perfect season can make you better going forward knowing what you have to do, and I think Harri learned a lot about himself last year, and I expect him to -- look, this was a couple of years ago. He was probably the top left-handed pitcher in baseball as far as prospect goes, and I don't think anything has changed in our mind.

Q. You say you only worry about yourselves, but you see them win the division every year except for one, and then now the World Series. How do you cope with kind of knowing that -- or thinking they're going to do it again?

BOB MELVIN: I don't know about that, where a lot of times it's the team that wins the World Series isn't the one that's always forecast to win it. Now, they did, but they also went through some issues last year too, losing a lot of starting pitchers, and they probably did it a little bit differently last year than they expected to.

Look, they're a challenge. They're going to be a challenge. They have some of the best players in the game. They have a high payroll. They're adding guys like Blake and Michael Conforto just signed with them too and so forth. They're going to be a challenge.

Once we start playing them, then we worry a little bit more so about them, but it's a really good team for a reason. They put together very well, but you have to like the competition part of it, and you have to look forward to hopefully beating a team like that.

Q. Is it similar to when you were in San Diego, they were doing the same thing and winning --

BOB MELVIN: Yeah, that year I think we only -- I'm not sure. Maybe we won one series against them the entire year, and then we ended up beating them in the postseason.

So that was a big deal for San Diego then. It was a big deal for the team, the city, everything. That's always what the Dodgers bring to the table is that kind of a challenge. It's a huge challenge. It's going to be that way again this year.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports