

MLB Winter Meetings

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Dallas, Texas, USA

Baltimore Orioles

Manager Brandon Hyde

Press Conference

Q. Is there anything new you can tell us about how your team's going to be looking next year?

BRANDON HYDE: Nothing today. I think that -- I know that Mike and his team are working hard up there in the suite and trying to improve our club. We're all excited about next year. I know Mike is working hard on adding quality people to our team.

Q. (No microphone.)

BRANDON HYDE: Yeah. It's going to be Robbie's first coaching experience. He's been in the Big Leagues for so long, and he's done so many great things. It's been a pleasure to manage him a few years ago. I think Robbie is going to be an excellent coach.

He was already a coach as a player there towards the end of his career. Unbelievable with young players, great perspective of the game, really helped change the culture for us a couple years ago. I'm really excited about adding him.

Q. Did he express an interest in coming back to coach one day?

BRANDON HYDE: I don't remember talking about it with him during that season because he was -- we were playing and trying to get to the playoffs that year. I think, once he retired, we've seen him a couple times a year, and I know he's expressed interest to getting into coaching. We talked a little bit about that.

Then this off-season, we talked a lot.

Q. A lot of coaching changes this off-season. A couple guys promoted, bringing in some new faces, some new voices. Did you feel like after the season ended, you did need some new blood coming into the organization?

BRANDON HYDE: I think you're always looking to improve, whether that's roster-wise or coaching staff-wise.



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I think there's some guys that were on our staff that are getting some great opportunities. So I'm excited for them.

It's part of the business. It's part of the game. There's coaching changes. Sometimes guys move and change organizations, but the guys that were on our staff that went to different organizations, they did an amazing job for us. I'm really excited for them and their families and the new jobs that they have.

Q. Can you expect Felix Bautista to be your Opening Day closer next year? Do you feel like you can give him the same kind of workload as he's had in the past?

BRANDON HYDE: I think we're going to have to wait and see with all that. Felix, when he threw it there at the end of the year sometime in October was the end of his rehab, he was throwing the ball extremely well.

He's coming off a Tommy John, so he hasn't pitched in a real game in over a year. There's going to be -- we're going to handle it a little bit differently. I think we're going to be very, very careful with him early on, seeing what his stuff looks like in Spring Training. I'm expecting him to look like Felix again.

But knowing kind of what he's been through the last year plus and want to try to keep him as healthy as possible for this next year, we're going to be communicating constantly with him. And probably, especially early on, be really conservative with him.

Q. What about Buck coming in next year?

BRANDON HYDE: I'm excited to add Buck to the staff. He's had a lot of success in the Triple-A with a lot of players on our roster now. He's very well liked. He's got great energy. He's going to do a little bit of everything. He's going to help out in a lot of different ways, help to manage with the infielders, being an extra set of eyes and ears on our coaching staff.

First year in the Big Leagues, I know it's going to be -- it's an incredible experience to break in and be on a Major League staff. He's earned it. He's done a great job in Triple-A.

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Q. The way that the offense performed last season, especially in the second half, a lot of the questions that we asked were about the offense and the way the second half went. Do you expect any changes to the offensive philosophy from the coaches to your hitters going into next season?

BRANDON HYDE: I think we're going to have some meetings on that going forward a little bit. We're getting the hitting coaches together. We scored a ton of runs, especially the first half, and a lot of that came from homers and slug. We had some guys with their walk total that's were down from the normal years. I think you're going to see that go back up.

We still believe in creating runs with our speed and contact, but also we have the ability to hit a home run. If you look at our lineup, it's not a ton of experience in there, and I think that as guys get -- year after year, I think they're going to continue to improve.

We also were injury plagued a little bit the second half as well. Losing Westburg and Mateo, with his run scoring ability, those two guys -- losing those two guys, right-handed bats, lost some versatility on the team. But also Westy was arguably our best RBI guy in the first half and the ability to hit the ball to all fields. Hopefully he can stay a little more healthy next year.

Q. (No microphone.)

BRANDON HYDE: We talked about that the last couple years because so many guys made their debuts. What's normal is for guys to struggle a little bit early, go back down to Triple-A, get a little reset and understand what Major League life is like. You saw what Cowser did last year. He's only going to be better next year. Sometimes adversity is not a terrible thing, and you've got to learn how to deal with it and understand how hard this game is and how good Major League pitching is, adjustments you have to make.

Once guys get a little bit of a taste and have the ability to make adjustments, they're going to improve.

Q. We asked you about this as the season ended. Has anything stood out to you about Adley and maybe why?

BRANDON HYDE: Adley, you still have to remember, it's still early on in his career. That was the first offensive adversity that he's had. I look for Adley to have a big year next year. Adley got off to a good start. I think Adley is in a great place right now physically and mentally. I think he's

going to come into camp really, really driven.

We've had conversations this off-season. He's got a great plan in place for being ready in Spring Training like he always is. Last year he was very disappointed in the second half. It's tough. I think he's going to be better for it.

Q. Between the end of last season and now, you've had more time to reflect. Do you feel like there's some things you take away that you and your coaching staff did well, and there's some stuff that maybe you wish you would have done differently?

BRANDON HYDE: I wish we would have done a little better in the postseason. We had a tough time scoring runs those two games.

I just want us to continue to keep hitting in the postseason, continue to get our young players better, continue to add pieces that's going to help our team.

I like the direction we're going in. We've had two successful years, and I think we're still in a really, really good place organizationally to have that continue. I just want to see that continue.

Q. After those two disappointing postseasons, do you feel any added pressure this year?

BRANDON HYDE: No. I feel like you always put pressure on yourself. Very disappointed in how the season ended, just like I was the year before. Whenever you don't reach your goal, it's disappointing.

The pressure is more the internal of trying to take the next step and carry this group into a deeper run into the postseason.

Q. David Rubenstein said that he'd like to see the effort speeded up to get to a World Series. Has that message gone down to your level?

BRANDON HYDE: I think there's 30 teams trying to get there, and only one team is there at the end of the year. I think we're doing everything we can to try to be in that position.

Postseasons have not gone well the last two years. Hoping it goes well -- hoping we can get a chance to get there again next year. We have a long way to go still. I'm looking forward to taking the journey there with this group again. But our division is only getting tougher, and there's a lot of things that can still happen.

Q. The first winter under the new ownership group,

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does anything feel meaningfully different right now than it did this time a year ago? For like your experience.

BRANDON HYDE: I just feel like there's -- when the new ownership group came on to start the year last year, there definitely was a little bit of a kick start. You saw when put David's face up on the Jumbotron at Camden Yards, the big applause by the crowd, and you felt that. I'm still continuing to feel that.

There's a breath of fresh air a little bit of everybody's uplifted. These guys have been incredible to us and very uplifting and really invested in our team and want to know what's going on. It's been extremely positive so far.

Q. (No microphone.) What players do you think might benefit?

BRANDON HYDE: All of the players offensively. I think what doesn't get talked about is our left-handed hitters and the left-handed power that some of our guys have to all fields and the ability to drive the ball out the other way and really to do everything right on a pitch and to drive it into the left center and to not get rewarded, I thought you saw a lot of guys were disappointed the last couple years.

As our offense continues to grow, we're still trying to use the whole field, our lefties have the ability to drive the ball from pole to pole. I think now, even though they're moving in a little bit there in the gap, I think it's going to be more rewarding for them.

Q. Do you think -- the guy who seems to be the most disappointed recently has been Ryan Mountcastle. Do you think you'll see a rejuvenated Mountcastle because of this?

BRANDON HYDE: I talked to Mouny yesterday. He's in a great place. He's really excited about next year. I think Mouny's got the ability to really hit. I don't think he is even -- I don't think he's reached his potential at all. I think he's got the ability to really be a force offensively, and he's shown signs of that over his first few years.

Maybe moving the wall in a little bit will rejuvenate him a little bit. I look for a big year out of Mouny.

Q. The rotation, Mike said yesterday that he's pretty happy of the amount of options you guys do have for the starting rotation. How would you assess the way it looks like right now before you head into winter?

BRANDON HYDE: We lost Grayson second half last year too. It was a good first half, a rough second half. A lot of

things went into losing in the second half. Losing Grayson was one of those.

I'm excited about him. I talked to him yesterday also. He's ready to go. He feels awesome. Dean Kremer took a huge step last year, huge step forward, adding the split finger, really being a solid, solid Major League starter, but seeing him improve even more than that.

Zach Eflin was a huge pickup for us at the deadline, was incredible for us down the stretch. Brings so much professionalism and personality to our team. Love having him. I'm excited about him next year.

You talk about guys like Albert Suarez and Cade Povich, what Albert did for us last year, and what Cade could be. And Cade is showing signs of being a really good left-handed starter in this league.

I know we're not done. It's only day two or day three of the Winter Meetings. A lot of off-season left. I know Mike is trying to improve that part of our team, but really like the guys we have in place right now.

Q. In your first five years, you didn't have a traditional ace, a 200-inning type of guy. You had that this past year with Burnes and had that luxury. Would it be difficult for you and for the team to not have a pitcher like that? Even though you do have the depth and you do like your guys, if you don't have that force on top, would it be difficult for you?

BRANDON HYDE: There's 30 teams that would love to have it, but there's only so many of those guys out there. If you don't have that true No. 1 type of guy, you have guys that can improve also.

I think Grayson's got No. 1 stuff. Grayson could be that guy. Next year he takes that next step forward -- I look for him to take a big step forward next year.

We need to pick up the pieces. Those 33 awesome starts that Burnes gave us and what he brought to our team and continue to see what happens here with the rest of the off-season with what we bring in.

Q. Where is Grayson at with his injury right now?

BRANDON HYDE: He's full go.

Q. We were talking to Mike yesterday about Mateo. Do you see him playing a lot more outfield and being more of a super utility guy in 2025?

BRANDON HYDE: That was something we talked about



with him in Spring Training, that that was a possibility of last year. He was all for it.

With Jackson kind of having a rough start a little bit early, Jorge was playing a little bit more second base. We optioned Jackson down last year. We'll see what happens this year. Losing Jorge last year was a huge loss for us, just the versatility and the ability to score runs and the speed on the bases. Our stolen base numbers went way down.

We weren't as exciting on the bases. He brings that different element we didn't have. Losing that really cost us, as well as the versatility defensively. I could see Jorge doing a number of different things for us next year.

Q. Is it your plan or your hope that Jackson Holliday is your starting second baseman on Opening Day and you can let him go and play him almost every day?

BRANDON HYDE: Yeah, I'm not writing it in. I'm definitely keeping the options open. Talked to him yesterday as well. He feels great. He loves the swing adjustments he made. He's in a great place physically, and he's really excited to go in Spring Training.

He's going to get every opportunity to get as many at-bats as possible. Love the defensive work he's done also. He made huge strides defensively there for us. Tough in your first year changing position, 20 years old, trying to hit in the Big Leagues. I thought he handled everything extremely well last year, and he's just going to benefit from that.

Q. I know nothing's official yet, but how much would you miss having both Santander and McCann around?

BRANDON HYDE: Nothing official yet, but if we didn't have Santander, very soft spot for me, somebody I care about a lot. He's gone through a lot for the last six years. Watch a guy grow from this young player with a lot of tools to put himself in this position. So proud of him honestly. Put himself in this position to get to free agency, to get a big deal, to have people -- there's a lot of teams that would love to have Anthony Santander. To put himself in that position, very, very proud of him.

James McCann brought a lot of leadership for our team last year, a team that didn't have a ton of guys with a lot of experience. A ten-year vet, a guy that showed a lot of toughness. There's the famous hit by pitch and be able to stay in the game. He showed what kind of person and player and teammate he is. He brought a lot to the table the last two years.

Q. Are you going to need some younger players to

step up into those leadership roles? If you do lose one of these guys, Burnes is a lead-by-example type of guy, Santander with the good vibes, and McCann a true leader, like you just said. Do you need some of these younger players to step up into those roles?

BRANDON HYDE: We'll see what the roster looks like. It's still really early. We'll see if we bring in other veteran pieces or we don't. If we don't, I do feel like some of our young guys are ready for that. Definitely talented enough, and I think that those last two successful years regular season-wise and two disappointing postseasons, they're ready to take that next step.

There are definitely guys in that room that have big time leadership capabilities.

Q. When it comes to Gunnar, we ask you about him all the time. He had an MVP caliber season that in most other years he might have won the award if it weren't for somebody like Aaron Judge and Bobby Witt this year. Does it excite you when you look back to the start of his career that he still has more room to grow, that he can get better from what he already was this past year?

BRANDON HYDE: It's pretty scary obviously. He's so driven right now. The competitiveness, how badly he wants to be great, how badly he wants to be an awesome leader on a championship team, those are the things that impress me so much about him, and those are the ways he can grow just because he's so young.

There's other things he's going to be able to do as he goes on, just from experience, to be able to carry guys along with him. Those are the guys I'm going to look to see him really grow in the next couple of years.

Q. In your experience, is that the common thread between truly great players, the drive to not just be good, not to be great, but to truly be one of the best players to ever play the game?

BRANDON HYDE: Yeah, they're just made a little bit differently. There's no satisfaction. You see when he doesn't do something well, there's a little bit of emotion behind it. Because he doesn't think he should ever make a mistake. That's what drives him the most. That's why he is such a good player.

Q. You leaned heavily on Danny Coulombe and Jacob Webb the past two years. Will it be challenging to find other guys to fill those roles? Do you like the way your bullpen is shaping up right now?



BRANDON HYDE: One of the things we've done the last few years is find bullpen pieces and pitched out of the bullpen. Losing Felix last year and kind of having a tough year for us on the injury front, he's done a pretty good job out of the pen.

Love both those guys. Those were two big losses for us last year. Talk about a second half, not having those two guys was a huge part of that sixth, seventh inning, two guys that were able to get both sides out. That cost us. That hurt us.

But we've done a really good job, and Mike's done a great job in the front office of finding bullpen pieces to help us.

Q. When A.J. was here earlier, I was asking him about the value that Tyler Holton brought, and A.J. talked about how he filled every role in their bullpen. He basically pitched in every inning. Do you have anybody on your staff that could pitch that way? Are there really any other pitchers in baseball who can?

BRANDON HYDE: To pitch in every inning?

Q. Be comfortable to come in in any role, in any situation, and not just be locked into one role.

BRANDON HYDE: Yeah, I'm sure there is. A.J. kind of ran out of starters. That's why Tyler had to kind of open a few games, and they were very creative in how they used him. I think if you don't have five guys in your rotation, you need to be creative. Detroit and A.J. did a great job of that in the last month, two months of the season.

Yeah, I think that the strike throwing ability, I think you have to have the ability to get both sides out. Maybe Danny Coulombe five years ago would be that type of guy. You have to be durable also. Yeah, it's very valuable to have guys that can be versatile like that.

Q. Is it mentality as well as physical ability? The mentality, to be willing to go out and do it?

BRANDON HYDE: Yeah, that's definitely -- when you're in the bullpen, I think it's a little bit easier when you kind of know your role and you know when the manager is normally going to use you. I think when you're in a situation where -- like in a playoff type of game or in a game where you don't have a true starter and all hands are on deck, the ability to get up, get ready quick, it's not easy to find, but this guy's about there.

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