

# MLB Winter Meetings

Monday, December 8, 2025

Orlando, Florida, USA

**Texas Rangers**

**Manager Skip Schumaker**

Press Conference



**Q. What did you think of the -- or what do you think of the Brandon Nimmo acquisition?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: Obviously Marcus was a big part of the organization, and I had some really good conversations with him early on. Obviously it was super early. But the trade that happened, it went down and it happened pretty quickly, honesty.

And really excited to have Brandon here. Obviously Marcus was, again, a big part of this World Series run and turnaround that happened in this organization, and was excited to potentially work with him and this core group.

But also really excited about the new acquisition in Brandon. And what we needed was outfield production obviously, and Brandon is definitely going to provide that. Left-handed hitter, all the things that we're looking for. I think he's going to provide some leadership in that clubhouse.

Had some really good conversations with him lately. So he's excited. We're excited. I think he's going to be really helpful especially at the top of the order.

**Q. During these conversations, were you actually able to ask a question or was it limited to just one?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: With.

**Q. With Brandon, because he can talk for a while.**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: (Chuckles.) Yeah, he definitely has a lot, but I will tell you that it's all good. He's very intentional. He has a lot of substance behind whatever topic we're talking about. Again, he's very intentional. You can tell with his relationships, whether it's with coaches, front office, teammates, getting to know him.

He's really driven and feels like he has something to prove every single year and definitely feels like he has something to prove this year after the trade. But you have to understand how -- it was a lot for him. He grew up in an

organization. It's the only one he knew as a 17-year-old kid, to now, where his family grew up, and to make a change was not an easy decision. But very grateful that he made it and part of what we're trying to do here.

**Q. Did the clubhouse need a Brandon Nimmo personality in it?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: Not having been in the clubhouse a ton, I can't really answer that question. I know they've won with that crew before. They just haven't in the last couple of years. So I don't know.

I think there's a couple of things that are needed for us to win. I think he's definitely a big part of that equation. But as far as like the clubhouse dynamic and all that, I can't really answer that because I wasn't obviously in there to give you that clear-cut answer. But I do know that he's definitely a positive part of the clubhouse culture that we're trying to create.

**Q. You get Nimmo. You're hoping to have Carter healthy all year. What have you thought about how you align that outfield?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: There's been conversation with the front office and our coaching staff. I can't tell you exactly what it's going to look like. There's definitely been conversation with Wyatt in center field. There's definitely been conversation with Nimmo on both corners. Obviously Carter can play an elite center field.

So we're trying to figure all of that out right now and trying to keep guys healthy on the field every day as well. I think Wyatt can play all three outfield positions, and I think he can win a Gold Glove in all three outfield positions. I think he's that elite.

I also think Carter is a Gold Glove center fielder. Do I think he can play the corners? Absolutely. I know that Brandon's played a lot of left field. We've talked about him playing in right field as well. He's open to both.

But trying to get these guys healthy, on the field and

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productive for 150-plus is the most ideal situation for us. Trying to figure out how we can do that with Carter is a big thing for us. And I don't know if everyone has the answers right now to keep him healthy the entire year, but I know he's absolutely trying to do everything he can this offseason to prove that he is that guy that can hit righties and lefties and an everyday player and back to where he was in 2023.

**Q. What is your early evaluation of the second base situation to this point?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: I think there's a couple of guys that are going to do whatever they can to take a hold of that position in Spring Training and try to win it and not look back.

I think having conversations with Josh Smith, he is motivated to show that he's not only just a first half guy but he's a second half really productive player as well, and doing what he can this offseason to get his body in a place where it can sustain 162 games.

And I also think there's a mental aspect to it as well. I don't think it's always physical with these guys when there are these kind of second half funks or couple of late-season funks.

I think there's some guys -- I'm not saying this is Josh at all -- but some guys do want to chase that number at the end. They're trying to have a really successful season and they're counting down the at-bats or the innings pitched or whatever it is. I think that is normal for a younger player to start chasing things that they shouldn't chase, that they weren't chasing at the beginning of the year. And I think they were just playing baseball and trying to figure out how to win games. So sometimes that can creep into a younger guy's mind as well.

But going back to your previous question, I think Smith is in the mix, obviously. I think he's going to have a really good shot at it. I think Duran is going to have a shot at it. Freeman is going to have a shot at it. So we have internal options, there's no doubt.

Now, is it a platoon? Is it an everyday situation? I don't know really what it looks like yet. But I do think we have a lot of options there. It's going to be fun to see in spring how they come in in the offseason and who really is hungry for that position and doesn't want to let it go.

**Q. With Josh, you mentioned the second half fall-offs he's had. Is there anything to having a full-time position at second base versus being a utility guy the whole year. Do you think that makes an impact in how**

**a guy carries it through the games?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: Potentially. You've seen some really good players do it -- Jake Cronenworth, Brendan Donovan, and Tommy Edman, (indiscernible). I think there's guys he can look to to see there's been some really successful winning baseball players that are flexible and can play all over the place and also keep their body healthy and be super productive.

I think Josh Smith is definitely in that mold of I can play everywhere, I can put together a really good at-bat. I'm not a defensive liability anywhere.

Is there something to playing one position every day? I'm sure, I'm sure that's easy to know I'm playing one position and I'm going to hit somewhere in the order around this slot, and here we go, plug and play type of thing. But that's not everybody. Those are unicorns.

So I think he has that ability, but I also think he has the ability to play all over the place and still be super productive.

**Q. Back to Evan, do you just have to rip the Band-Aid off and let him play every day? Or is it something you'd be selective, like it's lefties for him?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: My opinion, in this league, you earn your stripes. So I think you have to give them opportunity to earn your stripes. So I think there's elite lefties, ace type of lefties in the league that are challenging for lefties and righties. And then there's some lefties that we feel really comfortable letting them hit against, whether it's a starter or middle reliever.

But I think you earn your at-bats in this league. Nothing's given, and I think he understands that, and I think he's out there to prove that he can play against lefties. But, again, you have to give him a little bit of an opportunity to do that to produce.

And I think Brandon is a very good example. Like, he's been really good against lefties the last few years because he's worked on it and he has had runway and he's hit them at a high clip, on-base and slug and everything else.

So I think that's where Evan wants to get to and become, but at the end of the day it's going to be up to him if he can do it or not.

**Q. Gambling has become such a big topic in the league for obvious reasons. As a manager, do you feel like you play any role in making sure nothing like that infiltrates your clubhouse?**



SKIP SCHUMAKER: I think we have that discussion every single Spring Training. Somebody reads about the pros and cons of it. I know it's more prevalent in today's game. You see it on the billboards all over the place, inside stadiums. But it's always a conversation in Spring Training.

**Q. What's your theory on center field in terms of is it a harder position to play on the body if you're trying to keep somebody healthy? Is it easier to track fly balls, what's your theory about what you want at that position and what challenges it presents?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: I think nowadays you see the profile has changed a little bit. It used to be kind of the fast little guy that's patrolling the outfield. Now you look up and you're seeing some big old boys roaming center field. In our division, for example, a guy in center field in Seattle that's pretty big boy that can cover some ground. I think Wyatt can be that guy.

It's typically one of your best athletes. It's a leadership position. And I think -- I've always thought that left field was the toughest ball to read off of that. I played all three, but I also wasn't elite at any of those three, so I can't give you like this hard take on what everyone else thinks.

But talking to people around the league, the way the ball spins and dives, everything, left field is really challenging.

Does the guy have speed? Does he have leadership qualities? And I think that is kind of what I'm really looking for. And I think if you give either Evan or Wyatt or whoever takes that position over the everyday kind of role, I think they'll really grow into it. And I think you'll see Gold Glove votes with either one of those guys.

**Q. What conversations with Josh Jung, where he stands after two rough years following his All-Star season, what's his outlook heading into next season?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: I want him to come in hungry and I want him to try to win a position. That's literally the goal of the majority of our guys. And I think Albert Pujols said that after winning an MVP when he came into Spring Training. If a guy like that says that, I think our guys can say it as well.

I feel he has some things on the offensive side that he is working on and is going to continue to work on with J.D. We're working on it at Globe Life right now. He's been all around working with our hitting coaches and trying to figure out back to that 2023 version again.

He's a big, physical kid that should be hitting for some slug. And I think the message really is that I want him to be feared once again. I want him to be in the box. He's a third baseman on a team that's positioned to go to the playoffs and make a run at this thing. And he should be feared whenever he gets in the box. And how do you create that mindset from the opposing dugout once again?

I think he's working on those type of things. I don't want him to be something that he's not. I want him to be the version that he was in 2023 and not try to tinker too much and try to be this player that he just isn't.

**Q. Along those lines you saw Jake Burger (indiscernible) '24, at his best. You saw him arguably not at his best. What did you see this year that stood out for you through why he struggled? And what kind of conversations have you potentially had with him? I think you have a strong relationship with him?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: I do. Jake is one of my favorite human beings, not just players, but just an unbelievable person. And he was really, really good for us in Miami. I think he wanted to get off on such a strong, fast start to justify the trade, that I think it worked against him.

And then he's fighting and trying to get four hits every single game, and becoming somebody that he wasn't, which I think he was trying to play catch-up the majority of the year, then he got hurt, then came back maybe a little too early. And here you go on a kind of rougher year for his standards.

We have a lot of guys that are motivated this offseason because of what happened last year. And Jake is one of them. So a lot of these guys are hitting -- you're going to hear this probably from everybody: The cliché, best shape of my life; feel so great going into Spring Training.

I think there's a lot of our guys that are probably going to say that because they're super motivated from what happened last year, especially on the offensive side. And Jake will tell you that he's not happy with what happened last year. He had a wrist surgery, he had oblique issues, some hamstring, quad, something that happened as well.

So he had a rough -- he's a tough, tough kid. Tried to play through a lot of this thing to try to play catch-up and I think it caught up to him for the majority of the year. But I'm looking forward to a big year with Jake.

**Q. Anything he said in your conversations with him that stuck out? I'm assuming you guys have talked since the end of the season.**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: Yeah.

**Q. Anything that sticks out?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: Like I said, he's already hitting -- and that was after wrist surgery. So he had to take some time off. And when you are injured you have time to reflect on things that happened. Like I said a little earlier, he was doing too much too early to justify some stuff.

And I think if he can just go out and be himself and just play baseball, I think he's going to be just fine. He's a smart kid, hard worker. He's a guy you don't have to worry about and babysit at all. He's a pro. And I think he's looking to get back to having another big year for himself and for us.

**Q. Obviously you've been in the manager's chair before. What do you consider the most important part of that job? And maybe how does that answer shape or change from your experience?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: It always comes back to relationships. That's what this job is is building the relationships and getting the buy-in and the trust from your player and your coaching staff. Not just because he's sitting right here, but I got to learn from some really good guys that I got to sit next to before taking the job, with Ollie (phonetic) and Andy Green and realizing that the relationships are the most important part of this thing and trying to get the best version of the player every single day.

That is the job. The Xs and the Os are the Xs and Os. We're going to mess up quite a bit, unfortunately. And then also good players, they cover your mistakes when you have good players.

When you make the mistake and Corey Seager hits a three-run home run, thank God I messed up on the bullpen move, but he covered me. Stuff like that will happen.

But you can lose the clubhouse quickly. And they don't want to hear any BS. They want to know the truth. I think if you sugar coat anything, you're done.

So in this seat, it gets hot sometimes. But the last thing they want is anything sugar coated. They're big leaguers for a reason. They want to know the truth. So you have to give it to them.

But I also think you can be -- I'm an intense personality in general, but I think you have to be positive as much as you can throughout this season because they're going to get hit on a lot of negative the whole year. So as intense as I can be, also as positive as I can be, I think is always the goal.

**Q. Earlier this offseason you said you wanted to make the lineup less predictable. Looking at what you have now what gives you confidence that says you can achieve that this Spring Training?**

SKIP SCHUMAKER: I think there's different ways that the game will tell you to win the game that day. So if you are predictable where it's just home run and slug or nothing, you're in trouble. You're going to have these peaks and valleys. The last thing we want to have is these peaks and valleys.

We want to have guys that can play the small game. We want guys that can slug. And I think we're achieving that with some of the offseason moves that we're doing and trying to continue to do to build a complete offseason roster and not just one type of win type of roster.

And I think the coaching staff is buying in on that as well, the new guys that we've brought in believe in that. And I think that's a big deal. But if you get the buy in from your leaders on that roster, I think that's when it goes a long way. So far we're trying to acquire the best guys that can achieve that for the 2026 season.

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