

MLB Winter Meetings

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Colorado Rockies

Manager Warren Schaeffer

Press Conference



Q. A lot of turnover at first base so far this off-season. Where do you kind of see the position? A lot of time still before Spring Training, but where do you see it right now?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: We've got Crim coming in to battle for that job. I feel like guys are going to come out here in competition for that spot. Just like a lot of spots in the diamond and the pitching, we're going to have a lot of competition.

Q. To follow up on that, do you think finding first base for you and the front office is something you'll explore during the off-season?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think so. I think we can't put a roof on anything we're trying to do right now. I think that's absolutely a possibility.

Q. I think coming into Spring Training, there's, like you said, going to be a lot of competition for almost every spot on the field. How do you approach that, especially as a new manager working with players, trying to get the best out of guys so they can be ready to play once the season starts?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think it's a really good thing to have competition. I think it's something we want to embrace, and the players will love the ability to come into Spring Training and fight for a job.

As a coaching staff, I think that's easy to facilitate. It's not difficult. The players kind of take care of that themselves.

Q. Are there specific positions that you can identify -- we just talked about first base -- that are going to be particularly competitive that you see kind of being up in the air right now?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Other than probably shortstop and catcher, I think there's going to be competitions all over the diamond. Center field, Doyle's out there, pretty locked down. Other than that, there's going to be

competition.

Q. On the flip side of things, do you think there might not be enough competition in the starting rotation? How do you kind of address what you see out of the starting five?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think that there's going to be competition there too. I don't see why there wouldn't be. Freeland is going to lead the group, no doubt about it. Behind that, we're going to have a whole bunch of competition. Feltner is going to be involved. Dollander is going to be involved. Tanner Gordon is going to be involved. McCade Brown. Then I'm sure we're going to make additions in that area in the off-season.

Q. I know Feltner was a big question mark last year just with the injuries, and there was big expectations for him coming into the year. Have you had conversations with him? How is he recovering? How does he feel going into next year?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I talk to Felt often. He's doing well. He's doing everything he can to get his body right for next year, and he's doing well.

Q. You mentioned last summer, with Feltner, one of the things you wanted once he gets healthier is just to get stronger, physically a bit stronger. Is that something you guys have had discussions about?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think that's an easy one because he wants to get stronger. He's in the process of doing that right now. He knows that's something that he needs to do, and that's going to keep him healthy. Yes, it's a constant conversation.

Q. Have you made any strides on your staff yet, filling in your staff?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Yes, we're making strides behind closed doors. There's been a lot of time spent on staff the last ten days or so. It's starting to shape up.



Q. Can you tell us anything yet?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: No.

Q. There have been so many personnel additions in the past few weeks. I would love to know what kind of conversations you guys are having?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: With Paul and J.B.?

Q. Yeah.

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Great conversations. Just getting to know each other. I just met them in person last night. I talked to J.B. on the phone once and Paul a bunch of times on the phone since then.

It's been great getting to know them. They're both brilliant. They both have a wealth of knowledge and backgrounds that they can pull from. Yet they want to hear what you have to say, and it's clearly a collaborative effort. It seems like it's going to be a fun group to work with.

Q. There's a lot of inexperience on this roster. How important is it to get in some experienced players even if you are building, to kind of have some leadership in the daily life?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think it's extremely important to surround young guys with strong veterans, being veterans in their prime. It's very important to do that.

Q. Is that something you discuss a lot with Paul and with Josh?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think we're all in agreeance on that.

Q. Paul's been out of the game for about a decade now despite his previous vast experience within the game. Does being -- do you think being out of the game and going to a different professional sports league brings this fresh perspective coming back? And what can he bring from that?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Absolutely. I think it's a fresh perspective. He's super excited to be back in it. He's been in it at one time, which offers a vast knowledge. But getting away from the game and seeing it from a football angle, maybe he's bringing something -- well, he's definitely bringing something that other people don't have. So you know he's going to be invested completely in what he's doing. I think that experience will help him.

Q. Do you think having -- like for you guys

specifically, the Rockies, your home field is different. The your environment is different. Is there something about going with a different type of -- like somebody with a different background now that is worth trying, I guess, for lack of a better phrase. Like thinking outside the box and changing the way you guys think.

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Sure. I think in that position it's important to be a creative thinker, and that is definitely what Paul is. I guess no matter what your background is in sports, thinking creatively on how to attack something and how to conquer Coors Field is the most important thing.

Q. What are you guys specifically thinking about this year to tackle Coors Field in a different way?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think there's a lot of things that that question brings up. Offensively identity, what we want to do, we want to put the ball in play a ton and use our outfield, run the bases, put pressure, constant pressure on the opposing pitcher who never wants to be in Coors Field to begin with.

But we can't let our foot off the gas. That's a big thing that we're focusing on. We need to fill up the strike zone on the pitching side. We need to attack the zone early. Strike one is huge. Those are just a couple things that -- you can't get behind in Coors Field specifically because free base runners historically not very good in that yard.

Q. You talked to us a lot last season about the idea of the kind of offense that you'd like to build. You just touched on it a moment ago. The two new hires in the front office, Josh and Paul, do you think you're all kind of on the same page in terms of how you want to build an offense going forward?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Yes. That was one of the first clear things -- talking to Paul on the phone, that was very, very clear. We share that vision, putting the ball in play. We both agree and J.B. agrees that extremely high strikeout rates, unless you're doing extreme damage along with that, really doesn't play in Coors because it's going to be exacerbated on the road with the bigger shapes coming at you.

Yeah, we're all pretty lock step in that.

Q. When you talk about those things also, you're looking for speed, you're looking for content, you're using that outfield. Do you maybe look at a different type of player rather than -- I've seen a lot of really big guys with long swings. How important is it to find guys that maybe fit a different physical profile?



WARREN SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I think any physical profile would play. It doesn't have to be one specific one. I think it's the skills you bring to the table. But the skills that you're talking about is absolutely what I believe in, exactly what I just said in terms of guys that put the ball in play. Not only just put the ball in play, but put it in play hard. You strike a fine balance there and run the bases well.

Q. One of the things that Josh talked about last week when we met with him was maxing out the players that you've got on the roster.

WARREN SCHAEFFER: A hundred percent.

Q. How does that go into some of the plans you mentioned for changing Spring Training and really that off-season regimen to get to that place maybe?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: It's constant coaching. The idea is that the development doesn't stop when you get to the Big Leagues. I'm a huge proponent of that. The staff that we're assembling right now is going to be integral in putting that into play. It's easy to get player buy-in in terms of getting better because they all want to get better.

It's just we need to be more organized with it and deliberate with our after action reports in terms of keeping, holding these guys accountable. It all goes into that, but that's fun. That's fun. When you get a good group of guys and a staff that wants to do that, it can be exhilarating.

Q. Josh Byrnes has a lot of experience with the Dodgers of players getting better at the Major League level with L.A. Have you had any conversations with him about that and specific plans going forward?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I have not, but I look forward to it because I'm going to be talking to him a lot. I just have known him for one night.

Q. What do you feel about the bullpen? I know you've had some young, hard-throwing guys, and at times looked like their strength last year.

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I feel like the bullpen is one of our biggest strengths. I think it's strong. You've got Jimmy Herget, who had a great year. Seth Halvorsen coming back, Victor Vodnik. We bring in Bernardino, left-hander, which is a huge pickup for us. We struggled with the left-hander in the pen last year.

I know I'm missing guys, but our bullpen is very strong. Jaden Hill.

Q. Any updates on Seth Halvorsen since he missed

some time at the end of last year?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: No, I talked to him last week, and he says he's feeling great. That's all I got.

Q. What is the (no microphone)?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I talked to Kris last week as well, and he's progressing with his exercises. Still on the road to recovery.

Q. With that, you've always got season planning. Do you plan with him, or you kind of have to plan knowing he may not be there?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think you've got to plan a couple different ways for that for sure.

Q. Because you were interim manager last year, so this is your first shot to kind of implement your game plan and your vision, if you will, from the off-season into Spring Training and through the season. How excited are you about that opportunity to really build your own team?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I mean, I'm through the roof about it. This is something you look forward to for a long time. The process that we're in right now, building a staff, that is something that I've been wanting to do for a very, very long time. Getting a bunch of guys on the same page, pulling the same way, looking to develop of the same mindset, these players.

I think it's huge, and that carries over to the players. We try to create a new culture in Spring Training of what the Rockies look like moving forward. It's a fresh start. With Paul coming in, with J.B. coming in, it just feels so fresh and new and exciting. It feels like we just have a solid, good road ahead of us.

Q. What's the player feedback so far from the guys you've spoken to that you'll be back full-time?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: About me? Players were excited, I think, in general. I have good relationships with a lot of them, most of them. It was just good to talk to them on the phone after that happened.

Q. To piggy-back on that, you guys have made some moves over the last few weeks which were not huge but fairly dynamic. Toglia is no longer here. Bernabel is no longer here, Romo. You guys have made some fairly decisive decisions. Do you like the organization is making some hard, fast decisions early on?



WARREN SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I do. I like the establishment of a direction that we're going. I think that initially did that. Yeah, I mean, Paul's got a different process than what we were previously used to. It's a good process. It's something that we can all get behind.

Q. Tovar last year there were a lot of injuries. What does he need to do to take that next step to become a star in this game?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: First of all, you always trust Tovy. Tovy is a fantastic baseball player. The one thing -- and I know he would tell you this as well -- that he needs to do on a consistent basis better is control the strike zone. When he does that, he's a dang good player, and he's always solid on the defensive side of the ball. He'll take a step this year for sure.

Q. How much do you feel he's established himself in a leadership role?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think every year a little more and a little more. Tovy's not the type of guy that's going to rah-rah you to death and to blow a teammate up or something like that. He's a guy that leads by example, and you need those guys, like Chuck was. Chuck was always a lead by example guy.

Tovy at his youth and how young he is, to be able to lead like that is special. Every year that goes by, he will get better and better at the leadership position.

Q. What would you like to see from Chase Dollander going forward? The splits were extreme, Coors, on the road he showed great moments but got beat up a lot. What would you like to see mindset-wise or otherwise in the off-season and Spring Training to take his next step?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: First of all, I'd like to see Chase -- and I know he's doing this -- to learn from last year. Just a good observation about why those splits were big, why it didn't go his way as much as it did.

Also, I'm looking forward to seeing him work with our new pitching department. I think it's going to be huge for him to get some new eyes on him, to get some good collaboration in that area with him.

There's just some things that he needs to evaluate, and he's going to be fine. Chase Dollander's stuff is nasty. He's going to be a really, really good pitcher in this league. He knows it. It's just a matter of adjusting.

Q. As you embark on February, who's closest to

making the jump to the Big Leagues of the guys that are either Double-A or Triple-A from a year ago?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think that's something we're going to have to evaluate further coming down the road here. We've been focused on staff a lot right now. But those young guys, that's something we've got to talk about and look further into at the moment.

Q. I know there's a pretty good understanding this is a rebuild. It could take some time. There's a good possibility this takes some time to get to a place where this team is going back to the playoffs. From your perspective in 2026, how do you evaluate success? If it ends up not being the playoffs, what is something you look at to say this is a successful step forward?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I look at the process every day. I look at the daily process. Are we getting better every single day? That's something that is legitimate that we can do in every area.

There are so many areas that we can get better. Obviously with the season we had last year, there's a ton of areas that we can get better at. It's just a matter of being able to track them and stick to them, set the standard, and how closely are we following the standard? How much are we living up to the standard on a daily basis as a staff, as a group of players, and as a team.

It's a daily process. What Paul and J.B. and myself are is extremely process oriented. There's no putting a number on anything or stuff like that.

Q. Speaking of last year, what can you take from the end of last season and just becoming interim manager and now the full-time manager, what can you take from that year?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: What did I learn from last year?

Q. Yeah. What can you take into this year to change or do the same, or what did you learn about yourself as a manager?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Right. I think the amount of lessons were innumerable of what I learned last year. Just the intricacies of a Big League clubhouse. I managed for ten years beforehand, but the Big League clubhouse is a little different in what you have to deal with.

I learned that I would love to have more conversations on a daily basis with players. I think that that's a big strength of mine. I need to utilize it more often, develop leaders behind closed doors.



Then just things on the field that you learn from and actions that happen on the field. I'm always trying to learn. If things go wrong, I want to learn from them immediately. If things go right, I still want to look at it and learn from it.

Q. Hunter Goodman had a breakout season of course. Other than doing it again for the second year in a row, what more would you like to see out of him next season?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I'd like for Goody to take a step forward in his leadership qualities. That's a clear-cut one, and that's something that he and I communicate about on a regular basis. Other than that, I'm sure Goody could tell you he could get better in a whole slough of things.

But he had a really, really good season that I'm proud of him from last year. At this point everybody is looking towards him as a leader just because of what he's done on the field. Now he just needs to take that next step and hold some guys accountable.

Q. Following up on that, you did this quite a bit the second half last year. Could he be your full-time DH when he's not behind the plate?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Yeah, that's something we're going to talk about big time, because I personally think that's a yes, that he can. We pushed him last year at the end. We tried to get him through that knee injury, had a little bit going on there. I think there was something else, hamstring was barking. So we wanted to keep him healthy.

I do believe that he's got the makeup and the physical toughness and ability and durability to be able to do that. We'll see where that goes, but I think that's maybe the initial plan.

Q. Brenton Doyle from last year at the end of the year, what do you carry into the off-season? What does he need to do?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: I think that Doyle his second half was much better last year. He's got some runway to start the season off, carry it into the off-season and begin just like he did last year in terms of the adjustments he made in his spring.

BD can always get better in everything, in his base running, in his base stealing. He'll tell you that. There's things that he wants to -- he can push the envelope on moving forward. But his defense is always solid. It's just a matter of offensive consistency with BD. I think with each

passing moment it becomes more of a reality.

Q. Can you share with us a little bit -- I know it's early, but your relationship with Paul. I believe you told us he didn't go out and interview a bunch of the managerial candidates. He thought, once he talked to you, that you were the fit. Can you talk to us a little bit about the relationship you guys are starting to build?

WARREN SCHAEFFER: Yeah, it's a good one. For me, it's just like any other relationship. Just like I get to know all you guys, you learn who the person is. And then we have a common goal that we're trying to work towards. It's just strike the balance between talking and listening and legitimately listening. And Paul does that very, very well. Then you add JB to the group, and it's a good group to get to know, and I really look forward to getting to know them intimately.

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