

MLB Winter Meetings

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Seattle Mariners

Manager Dan Wilson

Press Conference

Q. Pretty good trade over the weekend, obviously bringing in a reliever with a lot of upside. Any time you can touch 100 from the left side, you've got to be pretty excited. What have you learned about Ferrer?

DAN WILSON: Obviously it's always hard losing someone like Harry who's come through the organization, a catcher. Obviously excited for him and his opportunity, but to get Ferrer is big for us. A big arm, a guy that has, like you said, a ton of upside. I think the thing for him that's exciting is he's got some back end of the game, the high leverage situation experiences, and that will help too.

When you look at the year that Gabe had, outstanding season for Gabe. To have another lefty that can spell him as well and kind of add to that arsenal down there, especially late in the game, is huge. So I think that was a great play and really excited to see how our bullpen is now shaping up.

Q. How much did you feel you were missing that -- especially post trade deadline into the postseason, missing that extra power lefty presence in the bullpen?

DAN WILSON: I think the way our bullpen threw all season long, I thought our bullpen was really tough. I think at times having another lefty is always helpful. Like I said, Gabe had to shoulder a lot, all the way through the season, and he was able to do that and do it well.

This, I think, does set us up really well. There's teams that really stack the lineup with lefties, especially against our right-handed starters. And to be able to kind of thwart that at different times in the game is going to be huge. So I think adding Ferrer is a big step in that right direction.

Q. Given the workload that Muñoz and Gabe and Bazardo, having Matt come back fully healthy and adding Ferrer and some other pieces, it seems like it sets up a little bit better for you.

DAN WILSON: Yeah. I think the way our starters typically get you five, six innings pretty consistently, to have 7, 8,



and 9 with the guys that you're talking about and the power that you're talking about is huge. It does set you up for shortening the game a bit.

I'm really, really excited with the way things have shaped up, and this trade was big for that.

Q. You mentioned you're excited for Harry's opportunity. (No microphone). He wasn't going to play a lot if he was Cal's backup. You liked the kid. You've known him forever. As tough as it is losing him, you probably want him to have success.

DAN WILSON: We all love the kid. I talked to him on the phone and kind of getting traded at a similar time to when I was traded in my career. Get a little bit of Big League time and you get traded.

I think for him there is a great opportunity for him in Washington. Again, he's kind of a guy that's been from the East Coast. He's a little bit more familiar out there. I'm excited for him. There is some familiarity with some of the players, as he mentioned to me. He's not going into a blind situation for him.

A chance to play is what every player wants. I think Harry in Washington will be able to get that opportunity.

Q. Do you have any thoughts on backups? I'm sure you know some catchers around the game if you need to bring in another backup.

DAN WILSON: That will definitely be a priority as we go forward here. Obviously Garver does such a great job for us last year, and the two of those guys together worked very well. So we'll see how it goes this off-season.

But certainly the way Cal developed last year, the amount that he caught, it's a role that is going to be pretty unique in terms of that. But I'm excited to see where we land with it.

Q. Speaking of Cal, this is probably the first time -- we'll ask you I'm sure again in Spring Training. Given how much played last year and given the season he

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had last year, how do you see at this stage of the off-season what his balance might look like?

DAN WILSON: It's a good question. I was amazed -- as I've told him, like I kept waiting for that moment where it looked physically like he was starting to drag, and it really never came from what I could see. He just was able to sustain himself so well. I think his training and the work that he puts into it is really what helps him be able to handle the load.

Having said that, I think we'll continue to watch. I think going into next year -- again, using the DH role is helpful for sure -- but hopefully getting him more off days from time to time than he had last year. He is one year older. So you start to weigh a lot of those different things.

But what he meant to our club, it's tough to give him those days off, but you know in the long run you've got to do that.

Q. Did you talk to Josh a lot in the recruitment to try to get him to come back? Did you talk to him at all? How excited were you when they finally got that done?

DAN WILSON: I had talked to him during the season and just let him understand how much I wanted him to come back to this club, and I think everybody wanted him to come back. What he brought to our club when he came -- the leadership, the intensity, all the stuff that he brought -- I think everybody really responded to that and responded to that well, whether it was coaches, players, whatever it was.

Getting him back was huge. Just to see the response not only from players and coaches, but also for the people in Seattle. He's a guy that had that immediate impact, and the fans really took to him. Seeing his smile, seeing his joy when he came to Seattle for the signing, I think it's a great match and one that I think is going to really, really pay dividends for us going forward.

He's an incredible player, an incredible leader, and we're looking forward to having him for a lot more years.

Q. What's the feeling for you now, maybe even compared to this time last year -- you've got a full year under your belt, the ALS title, make the team playoff run, bring back the majority of your roster -- what is the feeling both in terms of where you guys are at and expectations kind of going forward for this group?

DAN WILSON: I think in some ways it's similar. We do have a similar team. There's still work to be done and a goal out there that we want to get to and get to badly. From that standpoint, I think things are the same. Obviously having a little bit more experience in the role is

helpful.

But this is the time of year where you really start to look forward to '26 and what's ahead and how we want to approach it. We have staff calls, and we meet with players. Really starting to put our energy in that direction. I think a lot of it feels the same. We've got a similar club.

Offensively we've done some great stuff. On the mound we've done some great stuff, and we need to continue that and know that we're coming at this from a different expectation level.

In a lot of ways we've raised the floor for our club. I think we're all excited about that, what that means, and bringing that consistency and that energy from day one all the way through the season.

Q. What was the reflection process like for you, going back and looking at everything you guys had achieved this season, but also coming oh so close to finally breaking through. Have you had maybe some time to kind of sit back and think about all the things that went right and maybe a little bit of what went wrong?

DAN WILSON: I think that is this time of year also. This is what you do. You're trying to look ahead for '26 based on a lot of what went on in '25. I think when you look at -- a lot of the things we did were very positive, and that's exciting to know. Especially when we hopefully will have a lot of the same guys back and knowing what to expect from each other and the preparation that went into it -- all the things, all the routines -- all the things that guys do to get ready for the season.

Not that you just roll it back again, but you can continue to work that way and continue to improve on those processes as well. That's what we're doing this time of year is looking at how we can improve and how we can get better. We did come up a little short. It was very abrupt, and there was a sting to it for sure.

At the same time, we know now a lot more about what it takes to get there and how hard it is. That inspires all of us, I think, to work harder and continue to find that consistency to get there.

Q. How difficult was it for you to see some of your coaches leave for another place? I know you were really tight with Tony and some of those guys and Andy McKay?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, it's really tough. I think one of the things we pride ourselves on here in our organization is the people that we have. We get close. And, of course, you



work together. In baseball you become very tight. So to lose coaches is hard, it's difficult. You're excited for them too. They've got bigger and better opportunities elsewhere, and so you're excited for them and the game is rewarding them.

It's also difficult in a way. The folks that we've hired behind them, I think is exciting. I think we've got three guys that will bring some new energy, new innovation, new ideas, new thoughts. That's what we're looking forward to. We will continue to work hard.

Our staff, I can't say enough. And you guys know throughout the year just how good of a job they do day in and day out to prepare our guys. I'm excited to bring these new guys into the fold. We've got the experience on our staff to take them in and really, again, to get our guys ready on a daily basis to play.

Q. What do you think Cole and Ben learned from their first season? They're going to be guys you may look to to have to play important minutes this year. They had tough spots, both of them. What did you think they took away from this?

DAN WILSON: I talked to both of those guys in the off-season already and really praised the work that they did. It's not easy coming up as a young player like that and contributing the way in which they did.

When you look at the job that Ben did at third base, the way he swung the bat, some of his at-bats that he just grinded out and gave us some really tough at-bats.

Then Cole coming up, being comfortable. The defense that he played, the power that he showed, some of the consistencies he showed from the left side, all of that was -- you don't see that very often.

I think that lends itself to just how strong the organization is. You can trace that back to all the departments, whether it's scouting and player development, all the way through. These guys are getting prepared in the right way and they're getting prepared so that, when they get here, they can contribute almost immediately.

When you see Ben doing what he did immediately and Cole doing what he did and even Harry to some degree when he came up at the end of the year, these guys making an impact. I'm looking forward to seeing Ben and Cole as they continue to develop as people, as players, and see where they're at in Spring Training and get ready for them to get ready for the season.

Q. With Ben in particular just getting thrust into that

job just two weeks into the season, what did you learn about him and his work ethic? And then obviously the defense, that really stood out. I guess what impressed you most about what he was able to do?

DAN WILSON: I think the thing that impresses me most about Ben is where he's at mentally. He's very strong. He has a really good idea and a good plan for where he's going. Even in talking to him in the off-season here, he's already got his plan in place for where he wants to be and the workouts he wants to pursue.

He's a kid that has a very clear vision of where he wants to go. The work he put in, it's not a hard headedness. It's not a stubbornness. It's a plan. But he's also willing to listen and be coached. He is a coach's dream. The defense he showed obviously was phenomenal. Perry has just praised him up-and-down and has worked with him and really developed into a great third baseman.

So it's been fun to watch that. I think he gained some confidence from that. The bat is definitely something that is coming. His right field approach has been outstanding. With a year of experience and a year of aging, I think it will really help him to get to where he wants to get to with the bat too.

Q. We've heard a lot about Colt Emerson in the last couple of years. Obviously his kind of prospect star has continued to rise. Just the little bit you've been around him -- we saw him in early October for the scrimmages too. What were your impressions, takeaways from him?

DAN WILSON: I think with Colt, a lot has been said about his physical ability, which is warranted for sure. Great physical tools he has. I think he also has those intangibles, a guy that just wants to win.

I think with a lot of the guys on our club, in that clubhouse, that's what drives them is winning. When you've got that up and down your organization, you're in a really good spot. Again, give a lot of credit to everybody in the organization that has helped to foster that. Colt is one of those guys that wants to win and he wants to compete. So that's something that really drives him.

When someone is in that space, it's tough to deny.

Q. He's 20 years old. Are you going to Spring Training with an open mind about letting him showcase what he can do?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, of course. I think Spring Training this year with the WBC and the impact it will have on our



club will be an opportunity for guys to show what they can do. He's certainly one of them that will get some playing time, as he did last year. So it will be -- yeah, it will be fun to watch. You can see where he's at.

Q. How much is there continued player development -- more so with Ben and Colt, knowing that player development is not linear, they will continue to get better, how much is that baked into how you guys are approaching roster construction in the off-season knowing you'd like to get at least one more bat, but also knowing you have these guys here that are continuing to develop?

DAN WILSON: Yeah. I think it's definitely something that we don't stop. I think our guys understand that. Even some of our veteran guys understand that. I think, when you have the Edgar Martinizes and the Kevin Seitzers or the Bobby Magallaneses that are leading the charge on the hitting side, there's always something to learn. The more you play this game, the more you're in this game, the more you realize there's so much to learn.

Our guys will continue to develop. That is a big part of it. The work they're putting in now will pay dividends at the end of the line here in Spring Training and at the end of the season. I think it's important that they're working on the right stuff, and they know that.

I think as we continue to build our roster for the future, those are all the things that we think about and talk about. It's important that these guys are in a good spot when they get to the Big Leagues so that they can impact quickly. That's what they've been able to do.

Q. We know that Cal is playing in the WBC. How many other guys are you anticipating that are going to play in the WBC? I would assume your center fielder probably wants to play.

DAN WILSON: Yeah. I think there's quite a demand for some of our guys, and I think it's a great honor to know that these guys are sought after in that way. And it's an honor for those guys to be able to support their country and play for their country and represent them in the WBC.

I have not been through that process before, but from what I understand, it's awesome. It's competitive. It's a great experience. However many guys it ends up being, we will certainly be excited for them and the opportunity that they have. I know we'll probably be missing some players and we'll be missing some coaches as well that will be going to represent some countries.

As far as numbers are concerned, it's hard to know at this

point, but we'll know here shortly. Again, I think it's a great experience for them.

Q. You're going to audition a catcher, I guess, with Cal being gone. Will you have a lot of opportunities for catchers to get playing time then?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, no doubt. Certainly with Harry now on his departure, there will be some spaces to fill there during that WBC stretch. Again, opportunities for young guys, opportunities for players to make an impact, I think is always a good thing, especially in Spring Training. There's going to be some of those in part because of the WBC.

Q. Are you checking in with the guys? Are you going to see any of them, calling them? I know Cal is up in Seattle.

DAN WILSON: Yeah, he's up in Seattle. Saw Naylz when he was in town for the signing. A couple of guys down here I've had a chance to visit in Florida. It's always a nice time of year to meet up with guys. It's different perspective this time of year.

And being able to reflect on last year and learn some things and talk about what we're going to do differently in '26, it's always good to get together with guys. We'll look for opportunities to do that throughout the off-season.

Q. Have you had a chance to give some thought into how you're going to develop the protocols that you'll use in dealing with the new balls and strikes system?

DAN WILSON: Yeah. A lot of guys have used it already in Triple-A and kind of in some ways perfected those protocols in some ways. It's something as a coaching staff, as we get a little closer to Spring Training we'll discuss and talk about. It's going to obviously be a different phenomenon from baseball, but not out of the blue since a lot of guys have dealt with it. We did deal with it in Spring Training last year as well.

I think it will definitely change things a little bit, but I think we'll be ready for it when the time comes.

Q. As a former catcher, is this yet another thing that managers are going to be leaning heavily on guys behind the plate? I mean, on the pitching side of it.

DAN WILSON: Yeah, I think our experience last year is our catchers have a really good idea of the strike zone. Not only behind the plate, but also at the plate. A lot of the challenges they look to when they're hitting, they're upheld, or whatever it is that -- however it goes.

I think obviously it's going to be -- it's kind of a wait and see kind of thing, who's good at it, who isn't good at it. Those kinds of things will shake themselves out pretty quickly.

It will certainly create a different challenge for us, but this is a good way to go at it, I think, in terms of using technology to help the game. I think the challenge system is the right next step.

Q. Not Randy, right? I think he was 0 for 6.

DAN WILSON: Hey, some guys are -- we'll see who's good at it and who's not.

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