

# MLB Winter Meetings

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Orlando, Florida, USA

**Los Angeles Dodgers**

**Manager Dave Roberts**

Press Conference



## 2025 BASEBALL WINTER MEETINGS ORLANDO

Coverage Presented By

CohnReznick 

**Q. How has the last month been for you? Just recovering from the World Series and now I have to imagine shifting gears to the 2026 season?**

DAVE ROBERTS: For myself, for the coaches, the players that I've been in contact with, there's been a detachment, and there's been some travel. I've kind of been at some different events, some football games and things like that.

And I think it's encouraged by me in the sense of, it's been two great, long years and what we went through this past season, we had to detach to then come in fresh in February.

So I think right now guys are doing that. We've got some other guys that are dealing with some injuries this season. We've got some other guys that are getting back to -- and Shohei as far as being a regular baseball player and not in rehab mode. All in all, we're in a good spot.

**Q. Which guys are dealing with stuff other than the guys we know?**

DAVE ROBERTS: No, just some of the guys with surgeries that they went there, and just on the mend, Tommy and guys like that.

**Q. Do you have any more details like Tommy, the timetable for him to be back on the field?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Talking to the training staff, feeling like he should be with some limitations once we start Spring Training, but talking to Tommy, he's expecting to be ready at the outset of the season.

**Q. Do you see him as infield/outfield type or is that ankle going to limit him?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I don't think the ankle will limit him. I think that's going to be contingent more on the roster and where guys are at.

**Q. Do you know what the procedure he had was,**

**Tommy's?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I don't specifically. I know that obviously the ankle and it's been something to kind of -- he had such a loose ankle that continued to sort of cause it to give way, and so they kind of tightened it up. It should be fixed, but I don't really know. I don't want to speak to that.

**Q. Especially compared to the last couple (indiscernible), it's been quieter this offseason. Are you expecting you guys to make bigger splashes? Do you feel comfortable if you end up running it back with the same core group? At this stage (indiscernible) looking at where the roster is what you might want to see at this point?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I was actually just talking to Andrew and Gomer recently, and we're very confident with where the roster is right now on the pitching side, the positional player side.

Obviously there's opportunities and potential opportunities to upgrade the roster and we're always kind of looking to do that. But there's really no big splash we feel needs to be made because this team is still focused and there's some talk about a three-peat. So this is a focused team.

**Q. Do you want someone specifically in the bullpen, like maybe add someone that could be a ninth inning option, or do you want the bullpen room (indiscernible), that same feeling of the internal options you have?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I think if you're talking about a place where we could improve, I still feel that last year was an outlier year for Tanner Scott. Not to say that he needs to be a dedicated closer. But I feel that he's going to be much improved next year. There's some things physically that he was dealing with -- some that were talked about, some that weren't.

But, yeah, I think that getting a high-leverage reliever is never a bad thing.

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**Q. What does your confidence in Tanner (indiscernible)?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I think there were just some things he kept under wraps about his body, and I think the transition to LA, and he just kind of -- anything that could go wrong went wrong. I just feel -- he works his tail off. He's too talented. And his track record was nothing like last year. So I just think it was an outlier of a season.

**Q. (Indiscernible) after he came back after the forearm?**

DAVE ROBERTS: There was some stuff that he just, honestly, he never felt right all year. And there were moments where it looked right, he felt okay, but he just never felt comfortable. But he's never going to use that as an excuse, though. To have a regular offseason to kind of prepare for '26, he's going to be on a mission next year.

**Q. Teo's name has come up a little bit as someone who could be on the move. How do you see him fit, and do you think defensively he's still in a good spot in right field or could he possibly shift over to the other side?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Teo certainly fits. He has helped us win two championships. He's one of my favorites. Could he move to left? Potentially.

But I will say from my eye test, the last game in Colorado, the last time we were in Denver, from that point on, his right field defense was at least average. So for me, that was sufficient with the bat potential.

So we'll have conversation, but again I do think that with the versatility potential and how we potentially shape this roster, there's some options. But right now, he's our right fielder.

**Q. Is there some clarity on Yamamoto and Sasaki and the WBC? If they do go, do you guys put more stringent limits on pitches and innings than the tournament rules?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I think there's no more clarity for us. Obviously it's something that they both are excited about potentially. Obviously the country of Japan is excited.

We have to have that conversation. But I would like to think that it's going to be a dialogue as far as restrictions and limitations, in the sense of just trying to give them the opportunity, but also understand they've come off some stuff, some long seasons, and certainly with Yamamoto and looking out for 2026. But right now there's no more

clarity than we had before.

**Q. You recently said on podcast on Amazon you were in favor of a salary cap and a floor. And as a former player yourself would you have been worried of all these talks of salary cap and potentially a floor during your playing days? And how do you think your clubhouse will react to your stance?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Here's the thing, I'm entitled to an opinion, as we all are. And so I think that that's one man's opinion. And fortunately, unfortunately, I don't have a vote.

And, so, I still think the game's in a great spot and everyone's winning. It's the greatest game. And it's a lot of fun. So for me, I'm focused on 2026, but I was asked a question, and I answered it honestly.

But, again, my opinion shouldn't move the needle. So there's people that are going to have those conversations. But for me, I love where the game is at. I love the game of baseball.

As far as your question about the players, the players, each player knows how much I care about them, their well-being. So that would never -- I'm not concerned with that at all.

**Q. As a man, though, not as a baseball player, but you said your offseason has been detached, traveling, how do you feel? People can't say nothing now. You're you. It's a little different. Do you feel different as a human being at this point than last year?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I kind of stopped worrying about what people thought. I really did, because in our world you can't win anyway. People are waiting for you to fall. That's the way it goes. They're waiting for controversy, right?

So I'm happy with what we've accomplished. I'm very secure with who I am as a man. And I'm going to keep trying to do the best I can for as long as I can.

**Q. If there was a salary cap in place, how different do you think it would make things for you guys? Obviously people point to you and the way you guys have spent as more reason why they should have a cap. Do you think it can be an added challenge (indiscernible) feel confident about maintaining the success even in that kind of environment?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Honestly, I think that we have an organization that whatever rules or regulations, constructs are put in front of us, we're going to dominate. And so just give us the rules, let us know the landscape and then I'll

bet on our organization. So that's kind of the way I feel.

Again, I don't make these decisions. So I coach a baseball team, and that's it.

**Q. Every year we talk about just how important the depth of this organization is, especially on the starting pitching side. With guys like Gavin Stone and River Ryan, some of these young players you've had, really stand out in their rookie appearances. How valuable are they going to be this upcoming season? Where are they when it comes to health wise, back from surgery?**

DAVE ROBERTS: It's exciting. I think it's easy to talk about the guys that we have sort of slotted in as far as starters. But guys like River, Gavin -- two years ago Gavin threw the most innings as a pitcher for us two years ago for a championship team. River is very talented.

So now you layer in Wrobo and what he did for us and Emmet Sheehan. So we have guys that are on the come and guys that have done it. I think, again, it just speaks to how well equipped we are for not only this year but beyond.

But I'm excited for River. I'm excited for Gavin because to see your team, teammates celebrate and go through what we went through and not be able to participate, those are things that we're all betting on for that extra hunger to kind of make their impact in 2026.

**Q. You expect Shohei to be used like in a normal rotation starting the season, what ways are you guys going to be creative with him?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I think the thought is to have Shohei being used as a regular starter, but it's not going to be a regular five-man rotation. I just think that -- I don't want to go down the six-man rotation road, but I do feel that giving him six, seven, eight days off to kind of allow him to continue to stay rested and build up, I think that's in our process. But again we have a long way to go but we've got some viable candidates seriously.

**Q. Do you know if Shohei will pitch in the WBC or is he going to --**

DAVE ROBERTS: I don't know. I'm hoping he doesn't. But I don't know. Shohei's -- he's very in tune with his body. But I would say probably the thought is he's probably just going to hit. But I really don't. I haven't talked to Shohei.

**Q. Bigger picture with your roster, how much of a**

**desire do you think there is to get younger on the position player side?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Yes, I think that's absolutely a great thought. It's something that we do think about as an organization. I think that certainly, if you look at our farm system, I think we're certainly top three, and a lot of that is weighted by position players in our system. But I do think that Dalton Rushing, for us to move on from Ben Rortvedt speaks to Dalton's opportunity and what we think of Dalton. I think Andy is just scratching the surface. I think Alex Freeland is a guy that cut his teeth last year that I think is very versatile, can do some things for our club.

And I still feel Will Smith is right where he needs to be. But, yeah, I think that getting younger is something that we're talking about, certainly.

**Q. What role do you envision for Dalton Rushing next season? Do you think he could play any other positions possibly?**

DAVE ROBERTS: We ran him out there a little bit at first base, but Freddie is a guy that wants to be out there every day. But if there's an opportunity to get Freddie off his feet, I can see Dalton playing a little bit of first base to spell Freddie.

I also see with Will Smith last year -- I think last year you saw -- we cut back a little bit on his playing time, and I felt that he stayed strong throughout the entire season. I think there could be some more of that to give Dalton a little bit of runway and some opportunity. I thought he did a great job with the pitching staff. Dalton did. And I think that there's a lot more bat in there that he'll show in 2026.

**Q. To go back to Ohtani and the rotation a little bit. Because of the amount of starting pitching depth you have, do you think it's possible, not necessarily a six-man, maybe a hybrid some spots at the start of the year?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I haven't -- I know our guys are starting to kind of have the conversation as far as early part of the schedule and off days and things like that, which we still have got to get to that point with health.

It's a thought. It's going to be in the conversation. We just have some guys that have earned opportunities to make starts. And if we feel at the end of the day getting Yamamoto, Roki potentially, Emmet, Shohei some extra days rest and there's not a cost, that's the conversation we're going to have. Again, we could have two off days in the first week of the season -- I haven't looked at that -- that could influence it as well.

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**Q. After three straight years leading in IL and still having success, are you looking at any systems or any changes to cut down on the injuries, or it just happens?**

DAVE ROBERTS: It's happenstance. I think that there's -- part of that is also driven by not trying to redline players to make a three-week stint or a 15-day stint on the IL to not be a 60-day.

So I think that there's a lot of IL days, but I think that we're very in tune with how to ultimately get the guys as fresh and as healthy as possible in October. I think we've done a very good job of that.

**Q. With the WBC competition, especially with the Japanese, how delicate of a dynamic is that considering how important that event is over there versus what they're coming off of, what they did last (indiscernible) --**

DAVE ROBERTS: It's very delicate. And I know I don't want to be dismissive of what it means to them representing their country. I know the organization doesn't. But I do think that the conversations need to be had, will be had as far as what each individual is taking on and whatever role that they might be taking on and what potential costs there might be.

And I think that at that point in time, then whatever is going to happen is going to happen. But you can't debate the emotion, what a player might feel of this potential opportunity.

**Q. Mookie Betts back to shortstop next year?**

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, Mookie Betts, back at short. He was right there in that Gold Glove race. And I think the only person that could have felt that he had that in him was Mookie this year. Really proud of Mookie what he did at shortstop. And even the last play in the World Series, he worked on that play a lot to not make that ball go arm side. So on the run, field it, runner bearing down on you, to then throw it on the run and throw a strike to Freddy. That's something just a little snippet of his growth.

**Q. Do you think another year, whole year at that position sort of helps the bat sort of come back now that he doesn't have to worry about shortstop play as much?**

DAVE ROBERTS: I think so. He certainly put a lot of time in at shortstop, a lot of bandwidth, and it certainly worked because he was a lockdown shortstop for us.

He had a tough, tough offensive year. He did. He's human, but it's easy to bet on the bounceback year for Mookie on the offensive side for sure.

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