

MLB Winter Meetings

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Orlando, Florida, USA

Arizona Diamondbacks

Manager Torey Lovullo

Press Conference

Q. What are these meetings like for you? What is your typical day like?

TOREY LOVULLO: I just report to the war room, listen to what's going, put an ear to the ground, meet some of the people that I haven't met, maybe some new additions, stuff like that, inside of the war room. Just have baseball conversations. I'll do that three or four times a day, check in for about an hour at a time and have different responsibilities.

The Winter Meetings for me are about the things that I have to do and the conversations I want to have. So I have to do certain things, schedule certain things. And I enjoy that part of that, connecting with you guys, connecting with other people.

But then the other things I want to do are just be a part of this amazing team in the front office. I don't have a lot of input, but I like to listen and to be around those guys.

I see them a lot over at Salt River, but I don't see them every day like I'm used to. So it's nice to get reacquainted with them.

Q. Have you started to think about what your team looks like without Ketel?

TOREY LOVULLO: No, I have not. And I know the Ketel question is probably a big one for everybody. But he's a good player, and I'm sure that teams want him and ask about him for every right reason. So on that, I haven't gotten that far. I'm not going to allow myself to because he's a great player.

He's continuing to work hard. I've been in touch with him through the course of the off-season. It's just everything's business as usual for me. I know there are some rumors. I don't really know much about those, but I'm not surprised.

Teams are smart. They want good players on their team. I'm not surprised people are asking about him.



2025 BASEBALL WINTER MEETINGS ORLANDO

Coverage Presented By

CohnReznick 

Q. Do you keep in touch? He texts you certain things when he's working out, you said?

TOREY LOVULLO: Yeah. And he's actually really good at getting back to me. Everybody is. I've asked them to. Because I've gone through this little period of time with the where I send them a text and don't hear from them for four or five days. So not him, everybody.

I think everybody understands, like, when I text you, text me back. I'm not going to want to go over things for an hour. I just want to check in and hear how you're doing, so let me know.

Yeah, I've been texting with probably 75 percent of the guys and had good responses. Some I see at Salt River. Some I'll get on the phone and talk to. Yeah. I just -- I was down in Cabo for Gallen's wedding, so I had a chance to visit with him and others that were there. It was nice to get away from the grind of every day and see him in a different venue.

Q. From what you can gather, how do you think Ketel is handling having his name out there as much as he has this off-season?

TOREY LOVULLO: I'm not going to speculate. I have had conversations with him about it, and he's professional. I think he understands the business part of this game. He's doing okay. He's doing okay. Ketel is just a good human being. He's just a kind-hearted human being.

I think it might have caught him by surprise a little bit, but I think he gets it. I told him just what I told you guys. Teams are smart. They want really good players. He's one of the best in the National League. I understand why teams are making phone calls on him. He gets that.

Q. You talked about end of the year taking maybe a different approach to Spring Training, trying to get guys ramped up a little quicker, more intense. Have you given more thought to that? What's kind of the plan for that?

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TOREY LOVULLO: Yeah. I've thought about it a lot. There's a few things we need to change from day one. It's not making outs on the bases and saying -- beginning of the year and it's okay. Or not picking up the baseball at a fast pace because it's the beginning of the year and it's only error 1.

But they all matter. I don't like making simple mistakes at all during the course of the year, and I want to amplify how important it is on day one to be as ready as possible.

Yeah. I've been talking to a lot of different people about some of the drill packages, maybe some things that I'm going to do a little bit differently. I'm probably going to have a Monday meeting, get in front of the team every Monday and say these are our objectives.

We're going to have 5 weeks of Spring Training, 5 1/2 weeks of Spring Training. This is our objective for this week. By the end of this week, I want to be excellent at this, this, and this. So they know by the week what my thoughts are.

Typically I allow the coaches to do that, but I think if the message is coming from me it will be a little bit more -- a little bit more insightful, a little bit more of a crisp message. That's one of the things I've thought about.

Drill packaging and stuff like that, we're still going over that, talking about that. Believe it or not, I talked to Ronnie a little bit about some of the things that I want to do. She wrote down some things that she thought would help. That's been my starting point so far.

Q. Can you talk about Zac Gallen's baseball IQ?

TOREY LOVULLO: Extremely high baseball IQ and a great teammate. A great human being. He understands every day what he's got to do to get ready for that start day. And then there's just a process and a routine throughout the course of the remaining days that's going to help him get better.

He doesn't have a sit-still gene in his body. He's trying to get better every single day. I have nothing but great things to say about him.

Q. Pitch adjustment when things aren't going well with one or two pitches, how does he do that?

TOREY LOVULLO: Yeah. That's a good question. I think I know from inside out that he gets frustrated because he wants things to always be there for him. So I know that he always battles a little bit of frustration when it's not going well. But he probably gets a little bit more -- a little bit more

inward and starts to resolve it on his own, which is a great trait.

I love when players can step back and say I got this. There's some cues -- catcher's cues, pitching coach cues -- that he likes, but for the most part I think he's internal when he's trying to make these adjustments. Because it's not always there. Every pitcher doesn't always have it when they go out and take the bump. He's great at sitting back and figuring it out on his own. One of his great qualities.

Q. Were you around him on Saturday when those reports were coming out about Chicago?

TOREY LOVULLO: Was I around him on Saturday when the reports were coming out? Yes, probably four feet from him, but I don't think he had any idea what was going on on Saturday. That's just my gut feel.

Q. Was that before or after he actually got married? Must have been after.

TOREY LOVULLO: Yeah, yeah. I think Zac is very dialed in. He's very smart. He's very in control. I'm sure he understood that things were circulating, but I know kind of the human being he is, I know what kind of a partner he is. And he probably pushed it all aside to make it about his wedding day and his wife. I guarantee that.

Without even talking to him, I guarantee that happened.

Q. I want to ask you about roster construction in general, just kind of a general thing. The season is so, so long, so many months, a protracted period of time. Is it difficult to establish a style? What I mean by that, if you lack power, then you go to small ball and manufacture runs to score. If you're a power team, you rely on that. Is the season too long to create a kind of style that the players could rally around, be part of the culture, be part of the identity, and use that as a catalyst toward success?

TOREY LOVULLO: My answer is no, the season is not too long. I have unbelievable coaches built around me. We talk a lot about this. What does our team look like in your eyes? I ask these questions a lot.

Last year we were a team -- '24, we were a team that could put the ball in the seats, and we were going to bang the baseball. That seemed to be a little bit more of what we were going to be capable of doing last year in '25. So we were going to play a little big ball, just get on base, pitch well enough, and score a lot of runs, which we did.

But when we traded some of the people that we did



midseason, you could see that our identity changed a little bit. We got very athletic and very fast, started to pick up the baseball, and I think we started to play more of a small ball brand of baseball, yes.

I manage the team that we have. I'm not going to force a team that's going to put the ball in the seats to bunt and execute. I want them to impact the baseball. I just think you've got to be in tune with the players. Players got to be in tune with you, and the messaging has got to be clear.

I think there's a lot of communication that goes into it. I would just talk to them about this is how we're trending. This is what it looks like in my eyes. Can we get there? I think there's got to be buy-in, and I create that through the communication.

Yeah. Our identity changed. We went from putting the ball in the seats, winning games 10-8, to picking up the baseball, executing, and winning games 5-2. I like that kind of baseball.

Q. I know it's December 9th, but you seem like a guy that's probably thought about the challenge system a little bit. I know it's early. What are your early thoughts on strategies when it comes to the challenge system?

TOREY LOVULLO: Yeah, I like it. I think initially in early 2010-ish, '11, when they started talking about things that were going to change -- I'm a baseball purist. I love baseball. But out of necessity, the times have changed, and I welcome the fact that they're going to go to this system.

Based on some of the questions that I've asked and the conversations that I had with people in player development that are very familiar with it, what I saw in Spring Training, I don't think -- I'm going to try not to allow the pitcher to make the --

Q. I keep hearing that, yeah.

TOREY LOVULLO: They get very emotional. They hit their spot, and they want that inch and a half off the plate. I think that's just what baseball has done over the course of the time. They hit their spot, the glove's there, the catcher receives it well, the umpire is going to call it.

I'm going to mostly rely on the catcher first and then potentially the hitter. I'd allow them to do it.

As far as reserving or holding the challenge, that's -- I'll instruct them the impact of the game will determine if you should or shouldn't. I just don't want somebody up there

randomly in the bottom of the second inning wasting our last challenge and saying that's the end of it. I'm going to go fast ball. I want us to be smart about it.

We'll instruct them. We'll talk about it. We have very smart baseball players. They'll be able to make that adjustment. I think my fluoroscope guy is the guy I'm going to worry about the most between us. He's going to be like this.

Q. I was talking to DeRosa. He has high expectations for Carroll leading that team. Just get your thoughts on him participating in that. And the transition over the season to really become one of the faces of baseball.

TOREY LOVULLO: I love that D-Ro is going back at it one more time. He's the perfect man for that group. And for us to turn Corbin over to him, we're lucky that he's going to be in good hands.

Corbin kept us aware, myself and Mike, through text about what his intentions were, and when he finally made the decision, he was excited about it. The fact that he can represent his country really excites us.

We feel that way about all of our players that are potentially going to be in the WBC. I know you guys have probably seen those names. But it's official that Corbin is going to be representing Team USA. I think he's excited about it. I think he did it through his amateur career, where he's playing 18-U, 16-U. One of the best of the best. He's a really good player, he's very deserving of it, and I know he's excited to go out there and help the team win a gold medal.

Q. Do you have any sense on Gurriel with the --

TOREY LOVULLO: The timing?

Q. The window, yes.

TOREY LOVULLO: I haven't been in touch with him in probably three weeks. I don't know how he's doing right now. Last time I talked to him he's really, really encouraged about how he's feeling. He's in a good routine. Timing-wise, I've been generically told midseason, something along those lines. Like, head's up, it could be that long, a little bit longer.

We want to be patient with him, make sure he heals right. He's in a good space. That's the most important thing. He's back in Miami doing his rehab there. He's in good hands and taking care of himself the best that he possibly can.



Q. Acclimating to the Big Leagues is challenging. Is it any more challenging for pitchers or hitters? Is that anything that's changed over the years?

TOREY LOVULLO: I don't know. I think that the hitters are probably more excited about it than the pitchers. That's the general feel that I have. Pitchers are getting the ball maybe an inch and a half, inch to an inch and a half off the plate, they've been called strikes a lot. I get that.

Q. I'm not talking challenging, I'm talking about difficult. Not challenging pitches.

TOREY LOVULLO: The difficulties of it?

Q. The difficulty of going from Triple-A to the Big Leagues? Is it more difficult for pitchers or hitters?

TOREY LOVULLO: I don't know that answer. I would probably speculate and say for the pitchers it's probably a little bit more challenging. You're talking about last year without it, the pitchers that were coming up with it -- pitchers coming up with it from Triple-A and then not having it in the Big Leagues?

Q. I'm not talking about challenging it, I'm just talking about the difficulty of playing against the highest level of competition.

TOREY LOVULLO: Oh, I got you.

I don't know. I always thought it was more difficult for a hitter. I always thought it was a little better for pitching. Guys were able to land pitches, different counts. The 2-1 pitch in the Minor Leagues, a hitter feels like he has an advantage. A 2-1 count in the Big Leagues, I think the pitcher feels like he has the advantage. So the 2-1 pitch for me is a really, really big pitch.

Defense gets better. Young hitters come up and smash balls in the opposite field, and people are standing there or will run them down. I think pitchers have a little bit more of a challenge. Pitchers just have to throw the ball over the plate, command the baseball the way they have, follow the game plan. I think there's more against the hitter having success would be my call.

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