

# MLB Winter Meetings

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Orlando, Florida, USA

**Philadelphia Phillies**

**Manager Rob Thomson**

Press Conference



## 2025 BASEBALL WINTER MEETINGS ORLANDO

Coverage Presented By

CohnReznick 

**Q. Was it a good morning?**

ROB THOMSON: So far it's pretty good, yeah. It's been good. Doing a lot of work in the room up there and trying to figure out where we're at.

It's one of those things where, okay, if you sign this guy, we go this way. If you don't sign this guy, we've got to go that way. As long as you have those plans in place, then you've got to execute it obviously. But so far, so good.

**Q. Can you speak to what it means to have Schwarber back?**

ROB THOMSON: We've always wanted him back. It's not done yet. He's so different than most of the guys I've ever been around because he's got that -- he's a great player, one, and he knows how to bring the heartbeat of the clubhouse down when things are going rough. Not only the clubhouse, but individuals as well.

He's just a -- I've talked about it no end. He's just a huge part of our ball club.

**Q. When that contract is signed, what would give you confidence that he can maintain a high level of play throughout that deal?**

ROB THOMSON: I think just his work ethic. The body's gotten better over time. He's in the best shape of his life right now, and I don't think that that's going to change. He's so intelligent. He sees the game a little bit different than a lot of other guys, and he works at it, watches a lot of film.

I think there's a really good chance that he's going to maintain this level. I mean, this was an unbelievable year for him. So I don't think we can expect this every year, but I still think he's going to be a high level performer.

**Q. Have you talked to him today?**

ROB THOMSON: Texted, yes. That was it.

**Q. What was the exchange?**

ROB THOMSON: Just hope everything's going well. That was about it.

**Q. I know you guys kicked it around in the spring, but if he were to return, could he get more reps at first base, or just kind of go with same arrangement you have?**

ROB THOMSON: We could get him some reps there, get him some reps in left field to give somebody a day off, half a day off, get them off their feet. It's not going to be a consistent thing.

**Q. Early in the season, you moved him behind Bryce, and kept it that way for a while until Bryce got hurt, and didn't go back to that once Bryce came back. Is that something you'll rethink doing to maybe protect Bryce a little more?**

ROB THOMSON: Yeah. And I haven't talked to -- I've got some ideas, but I haven't talked to the players yet. I don't want to talk much more about that. Yeah, I've thought long and hard about it.

**Q. Can you speak to maybe why you didn't go back to that arrangement when Bryce got back? Was it just a matter of how well Schwarber was hitting in that 2 spot?**

ROB THOMSON: And the fact that Harper was protecting Schwarber too. Schwarber is having at that point a career year, and I just didn't want to mess with it.

**Q. You talked before about you can do what you want. Whether it's stay managing, not managing, you're happy with where you are. What led you to want to be here for two more years mostly?**

ROB THOMSON: It always comes back for me, are you having fun? Are you enjoying it? Are you getting in somebody's way? Are you getting in the way of winning?

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I'm still enjoying it. I love the organization. This is the only place I want to go. I don't want to go anywhere else whenever I'm done, because I love the people and I love the organization from the owner to Dave to all our player development people.

It's just a group of people that really come together and want to win baseball games and want to win a championship. That's what I like.

**Q. I'm sure you're aware about the treatment Bryce Harper underwent recently. I was curious what the level of communication is between the organization and the players in terms of medical treatment in the off-season and what thoughts you had about such an important player going kind of off the board with a treatment like that?**

ROB THOMSON: I'm not sure if it's off the board. We didn't know anything about it. It's an elective procedure. I think it's designed to help in recovery. Other than that, I don't know very much about it because it's a new procedure.

**Q. Have you spoken with Kerker at all since the end to make sure it doesn't stay with him?**

ROB THOMSON: Yeah, he's doing good. I talked to him a lot obviously after the game, the next day. The following day he came in to pack up and we had another chat. I talked to him a few weeks ago. He's in a good spot.

**Q. After the loss to the Dodgers, the locker room with you and all, it was real emotional. We've all seen end of season losses and all, but this one seemed a little different, like more emotional. Can you speak to why maybe that was, or did you notice it also?**

ROB THOMSON: Yeah. A little bit because I think guys are probably a little bit frustrated that we've been there, we've been close, and haven't gotten it done. I think that's great motivation going into next year.

I think there's some frustration there. It was a hard-fought battle. I think everybody in that clubhouse felt like this was the year, last year was the year. So it was heartbreaking, to tell you the truth.

**Q. Dave and Preston both talked about how (no microphone) change of scenery. I was wondering if you talked to Nick this off-season and do you think a change of scenery would be good for (no microphone).**

ROB THOMSON: No, I haven't talked to him, to tell the truth, but I still respect Nick. At the end of the day, what he

wants to do is play every day. You can't dog a guy for wanting to play every day. I've been around plenty of people who didn't really want to play every day. That's not my cup of tea.

Yeah. I think that in some cases it is good for guys to have a change of scenery and go to a different place that motivates them in some certain way or helps them in some certain way. Whether that's the way it is with Nick, I'm not sure.

**Q. How do you feel about the potential for your outfield to be more productive? It's kind of been a struggle in some regards the past couple years. Just overall as a unit, do you think from what you're hearing in the suite and what you're trying to do there, can it be better? Can it get better?**

ROB THOMSON: It can be better, yes. We've got some ideas. Obviously you have to execute those ideas and those plans. I think there's some good plans in place, and hopefully we can execute it so we can be more productive. But I think the opportunity is there.

**Q. Have you talked to Alvarado much this off-season?**

ROB THOMSON: I haven't. It's tough. He's in Venezuela. It's tough to get a hold of those guys sometimes. Usually I go through Jorge Velandia on that. I'm sure in the next week or two, sometime before Christmas, I'll reach out to him.

**Q. Overall do you think his off-season will look any different after the kind of year he had this year?**

ROB THOMSON: Well, I think he's probably going to do the same, try to be in the best shape he can coming into Spring Training. He was in great shape last Spring Training, throwing the ball well, and all of that other stuff happened. So it was a little bit of a shock.

I'm sure we'll get the same Jose Alvarado back that we've it in the past.

**Q. You talked about Schwarber and what he means to the clubhouse culture. Do you get a sense at all of the connection and what he means to the fan base?**

ROB THOMSON: Yeah. They love him, and I think he really loves playing in Philadelphia. I really do. He does so much in the community, so much in the clubhouse. I mean, there's more to him than there are a lot of guys because he just brings a lot to a lot of different people.

**Q. With Schwarber and possibly J.T. returning, have**

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**you given much thought to maybe there's a way to infuse new energy in the lineup that's kind of the same?**

ROB THOMSON: I think there's going to be some changes -- even if we sign both of those guys back, there's still going to be some changes, and there might be some change within the lineup as far as the order, which could infuse a little bit of energy.

We won 96 games last year. It's not like we're not doing well. We've got a good club. No matter what happens, we're still going to have a good club.

**Q. One thing the Phillies haven't done a lot since you've been manager is bring rookies and prospects through. It looks like that's going to start to change with guys like Andrew Painter, maybe Justin Crawford. How do you anticipate bringing young guys into the clubhouse?**

ROB THOMSON: I always think when you bring a young guy up, close your eyes and let them play. No matter what happens, he gets two, three months, whatever time limit you want to give him, and don't even talk. Just let him go.

I think the guys that we have at the upper level of our system are performers and eventually they're going to perform, even if they get off to a slow start. That's why I say you've just got to close your eyes and let them play and leave them alone and let them work themselves out of it.

These are the type of guys that can do that. They have the makeup. I think they can handle it mentally and emotionally. Philly is a tough place to play.

**Q. This is the first year with the challenge system with the balls and strikes. Have you had some early thoughts on strategies for that?**

ROB THOMSON: I have, but I really want to sit down with our Minor League, especially our Triple-A staff, because they know more about it than I do. I think I'm going to really like it. I liked it last year in Spring Training, and I think the players really liked it for the most part.

There's a couple of guys that weren't real keen on it, but I think for the most part, guys liked it.

**Q. You'll come up with a strategy, right?**

ROB THOMSON: Absolutely, yes.

**Q. Do you know Japanese pitcher Tatsuya Imai?**

ROB THOMSON: Yes.

**Q. Can you talk about him?**

ROB THOMSON: I just know all the guys that are being posted from Japan are really good players. This guy Imai is a really good pitcher. I think he'd be good in a rotation in baseball.

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