

AL Championship Series: Mariners vs Blue Jays

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Seattle, Washington, USA

T-Mobile Park

Toronto Blue Jays

John Schneider

Postgame 3 Press Conference

Toronto - 13, Seattle - 4

Q. At least for now, does the Andrés home run have the feeling of a series-changing home run for you guys?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's a big swing. I think, yeah. Again, we're focused on tonight, and tomorrow we'll focus on tomorrow. But, yeah, I think just kind of -- I said it during the game, kind of in that situation, runner at second, nobody out, taking a shot and trying to be aggressive on Kirby's fastball. So you never know how the game's going to go, you never know who it's going to be, right? But really, really big swing to get us going and then kind of on down the line that inning. Yeah, man, that was a big swing Andrés.

Q. Three of the first four hitters walk, homer, double, and some really loud contact against Bieber there. What changed that he was able to do what he did after the Polanco double?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think just he was Shane, you know. Probably a little amped up coming out in the first, and then just kind of an arm side miss to Julio. First pitch breaking ball to Polanco. He navigated that situation. To me, biggest inning of the game was the second. He strikes out the side, kind of keeps the game in check a little bit. And then he had really good command. His fastball, he spotted it. The breaking balls were awesome, slider especially. Changeup too.

I thought that he got into a really good rhythm, retired a bunch in a row there. But the second inning to kind of keep the game where it should be, that's just a sign of a veteran pitcher.

Q. But as big as the second inning was, he wasn't able to get a shutdown inning in his last start against the



Yankees either time, so how big was the third?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, third, fifth, I mean, they're all big. But I think -- again, I've said it a lot, it's why you acquire a guy like Shane. You just see how he is. He was making big pitches. It's a big pitch to Cal for the strikeout too. It's fun to watch guys like that work. It was exactly what we needed tonight.

Q. It seems like this season whenever people have really started to doubt you guys, whether it was regular season, playoffs, you guys have responded with an awful lot of fight. How much satisfaction do you guys take in the room of kind of proving people wrong like that?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's kind of been what we did all year, you know. Again, no one expected us to win the division, no one expected it us to be here, and I think the guys take that to heart. And I couldn't believe prouder of the way they went about today. We talked about of the game about normalcy, and it's one thing to say it and force it, but it's another thing to do it and live it.

So I'm proud of the way they did it. There's some adjustments you have to make as you go. Again, seven-game series, it's not a one-game series, not a three-game series, so there's going to be adjustments we need to make tomorrow, and they're going to be ready for it.

Q. You said on the broadcast and you said it earlier, just be ready to hit the fastball. Given how much Kirby's almost obsessive trying to get ahead, were you going up -- was that kind of the pregame meeting like, Hey, look for the fastball early because he's going to try and get ahead, especially if he misses first pitch?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, a little bit. It's tough because after the first two games that's been our plan with all these guys. These guys are very similar, and they all have really good stuff. So it kind of comes down to quality of contact, which we had today. Yeah, we don't want to deviate from what we've been doing, and if you take away the fastball, you could see where he kind of went to the slider, slider



heavy. Vlad kind of sat on one, hits it out to center.

I just thought we executed a really good game plan and approach against him, knowing that he's going to come right after you, and it's the difference between trying to just put the ball in play and trying to do some damage, so that was the adjustment we were shooting for today.

Q. All three games the batters have been very aggressive, especially with tonight Kirby, you know he's going to be around the plate, doesn't walk many, but what switched, what was different about this game? Because you were aggressive in all three.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Five homers, for one. I think that stands out. But it's a sign of a good process, it's a sign of adjustments that are being made. I'll trust Pop and Lou and Hunter to do that 365 days out of the year with our guys, and then for our guys to go do that.

The approach didn't really change. I think result changed, really. We were trying to -- I said it before the game, beat him to the spot on certain pitches. And you have to make adjustments as you see fit as you go. But I thought we just stayed pretty relentless on Kirby and then had some big runs late.

Q. How big was that, even in a blowout, for Addison to get that first knock?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, it's awesome, man. I said it before the game. Man, he carried us for about three weeks or so this year. And he's a first year big leaguer, first full year big leaguer, and he's going through ups and downs, so that was hopefully a little bit of an exhale. I mean, he flushed that pretty good. It was nice for him, it's nice for Gimi, it's nice for Varsh, Kirky. I mean, we're built around George and Vlad and them doing that, but I think those other guys to kind of -- Ernie continuing to swing it and guys just not being afraid to take some shots. That's the biggest thing. If you're grinding and you're a young guy not being afraid to continue to be who you are. I've been saying it all year, be who you are. And for Addy, it's taken swings like that.

Q. That third inning after the Clement double when Giménez comes up, that's a spot where a lot of times this year you guys have bunted and played for the one run there. Can you describe sort of not going and using that approach in that spot and then playing for a bigger swing?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I mean, we're down two. You know what I mean? So to me, at that point you're not trying to play catchup one at a time. And I think it goes

back to what we talked about yesterday, what we talked about before the game today, where it doesn't matter who it is. We have really good hitters and we have guys that have been in the postseason and know what the hell's going on.

So I think for Gimi right there it's -- I love the fact that he didn't try to just play ping-pong and get a guy over. It was really refreshing. Going back to your question, yeah, it's a big swing because it's what we're trying to do. We're trying to make adjustments as to what they're doing to us.

And in that situation, down two, I trust Gimi to handle the bat at the very least and at least get Ernie over, but I loved the intent in which he swung with.

Q. It's about three weeks ago that you guys were in another dry spell and then Varsho hits that grand slam against the Red Sox and flood gates open offensively. Do you see potentially some parallels between that Gimi swing in that spot as well?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I hope so. I said it when we left Toronto. I hope we find some slug in the air out here. Maybe we did. But we're taking them one game at a time, really. I think that there's -- I'm really happy with the way we played today and the way we executed a game plan and we're going to have to do it again tomorrow. It's just one day at a time right now.

Hopefully it does, hopefully it gives us some momentum. This team has played us really well over the course of the time that I've been here in this seat, so to break through a little bit feels good. And to have the guys be convicted in an approach and to see it come to kind of fruition, I think can be pretty valid going into tomorrow, but it's a whole new test tomorrow against Castillo.

Q. You mentioned Shane's slider. What about that pitch makes it so effective? And he threw it a lot today too. Anything that went in a that?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think part of it is game planning against their lineup, part of it is just the fact that if he commands it, it's really good. Him and Kirky did a really good job of pairing. When you look back to his start against New York, his cutter was kind of nonexistent. He didn't really get to it. So I think pairing that with the slider led to some swing-and-miss, ends up with eight strikeouts.

But when it's on -- I mean, even going back to his first outing with us against Miami, that's what you saw, it's strike to ball, strike to ball, and I just think he executed it at a really, really high rate today.

Q. Putting Myles in for Santander, was that score-dependent and was there a thought to have Myles run for Tony earlier?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: No, kind of score-dependant. Everyone's grinding right now, and Tony's grinding. I think with the score where it was, you've seen us play that game, that type of game a lot, where you get to a certain point, and Tony gets three at-bats against the starter, and you kind of flip the script to defense a little bit.

So just in talking to him -- and, again, you're not assuming you are going to win because the score was 8-2. You know what I mean? That's how we play. So I want -- you know, in a perfect world if he was feeling a hundred percent, yeah, he probably stays in because you do have a six-run lead. But it's kind of how we play, and I think everyone will be ready to roll tomorrow.

Q. Wondering because it was a little odd to not run for him and then take him out, so I thought maybe something --

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I think during the pitching change, he came over, checking with him and stuff like that, and he's good and he's got to score on a single and all that kind of stuff. I don't want to say I was playing it cautious, but I think at that point with where we were in the lineup he may get another at-bat and things like that, so just kind of getting some feedback from him too.

Q. Before the game, Bassitt said to us that he wasn't concerned and the team wasn't concerned because you hadn't played your game yet in falling behind 2-0, and you've said multiple times and so have others that when you do play your game, nobody can beat you. Is this a game that sort of reinforces that feeling in there?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think so, yeah. That's much more like us. Looking back to the series before, we had our approach, we did our thing, and we had some home runs. So that's kind of -- I don't want to say it's an added bonus because guys can do that, but, yeah, it's nice to kind of put the blueprint of what has gotten us here out in real time in a game that you needed to do it.

So momentum can be a real thing. We're going to approach tomorrow like the series is 0-0 and continue to try to do everything we can to do to win tomorrow.

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