

AL Championship Series: Mariners vs Blue Jays

Sunday, October 19, 2025

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

John Schneider

Postgame 6 Press Conference

Blue Jays - 6, Mariners - 2.

Q. Game 7, it's been awhile since one of those happened here. How are you feeling about being a part of this?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Got to enjoy it, man. This is what we sign up for. Whenever you can play for Game 7 to go to the World Series, it sounds kind of cool to say it, you know.

But this is why we sacrifice everything. It's why players sacrifice everything. Again, it's special and unique, but you have to look at it as a game. Again, easier said than done, but really happy with the way we played today. Got to come out and do it again tomorrow.

Q. With Vlady, you were with him eight, nine years ago when this is what people were dreaming of. Does that give you a different appreciation for witnessing it up close now seeing the full maturation of this?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Honestly, yeah. I think what he's done this year performance-wise has been kind of what we expected out of Vlad. What he's done behind the scenes and how he's handled being the face of a franchise is pretty unique for a 26-year-old dude, you know. So to be along for the ride, I think -- I've been spoiled to be along his journey for as long as I have. So to watch him do what he's doing right now and six homers in the postseason, he's playing great defense, he's running the bases well, this is kind of what you look for for one of the elite players in the game.

Q. You guys led the majors this year in comeback wins, but elimination game's kind of a different beast. So with that in mind, how big was it for Trey to come out and get the first six guys, I think four via strikeouts, and just buy the offense a little bit of time to score first?



JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, huge. Again, I can sit up here and say we trust him and his demeanor, which we do wholeheartedly. For a guy to go out and execute the way he did was awesome. It's kind of how we're built. I think the reason for a lot of comeback wins is because we can pitch, we play good defense, and it allows our offense to do its thing. Huge double play balls, right? That doesn't happen all the time.

You don't want to say you're fortunate, but we play good defense and Trey made big pitches. It's a great play from Vlad, Trey getting over, all that kind of stuff. But for him to kind of just settle the game in, I think that was really, really big today.

Q. To pivot off that, Trey loads the bases in back-to-back innings, but you don't have anyone up. You lose, you go home. What was it about Trey that you were seeing that you thought he could kind of work through that?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think you're watching their swings, and I think that his split was -- and slider, really, were a difference-maker today. So you're trying to read that situation, you're trying to understand where good spots are for other guys, not panic. Again, I think if he wasn't missing bats the way he was, it's probably a different story. So all that stuff gets taken into consideration.

I actually said to Pete -- in the second inning, I said, This is a little different than last time. So I think you watch that unfold, you kind of read his heartbeat as he's coming in. Again, man, that situation, especially against Cal, it's kind of like who else do you want there, you know?

Objectively numbers-wise there's maybe some sense to be made of that, but I think he was in the moment and understood what he had to do.

Q. It's easy to see the home runs, the 13 Ks, the three double plays, but I want to talk about the little things that happened that maybe turned things around. Things like even Giménez taking the bunt off when he sees Naylor running in. Like, that's a move that he probably won't do next time. And even in that double



play in the third inning, it would have been easy to have corners in to get the guy at the plate, it was only 2-0. And you kept 'em back, and that gave Vlady the chance to make that double play. Talk about these little things.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Little things is how we're built. We've been doing it all year. I've talked to Gimi -- guys that we ask to bunt, Gimi, Heineman, Myles, if you see an infielder in, go ahead and pull it back and take a shot to smack it by him. Gimi actually made a little eye contact with me after the first one, and I kind of was like, yeah. I mean, I trust him to navigate that at-bat, right?

As far as the infield in or back, I mean, I think you look at the score, you look at how they're built, you look at who is at the plate. I mean, what does Cal have, 64, 65 home runs this year? Whatever it is. You got to give yourself some space. So if the score was different, maybe a little bit different, but underappreciated, I think, is how Vlad -- Vlad can play really deep because of his arm. In that situation, too, you need some wiggle room for a guy that hits the ball really hard.

Q. When you brought Hoffman in for two innings, was that planned right from the start? If you were leading the game, he was coming in for two?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah.

Q. And your defense can be an intimidating factor. Is it something that -- how much does it help your pitching staff to have that defense every day behind them?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: They love it. Man, they talk about it. They have talked about it openly. I think that they're not afraid to be in the zone. Sometimes you get burned when you're in the zone, right? We have seen it this postseason, we have seen it this year.

But I think that it's how we're built. It's allowed us to have comeback wins. Every guy that's on the mound trusts that -- when you look at it, we've got, what, four or five Gold Glove finalists, we have guys that have won Gold Gloves, guys that are going to win them this year, I think. So they trust that plays are going to be made behind them.

Q. This is the deepest in the postseason this franchise has been now since '93. I don't know if a young John Schneider at Auburn could have dreamed of helping the team get to this point, but what is it like for you to be a part of this?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's great, man. I mean, again, I've

said it so many times. This team, this group of men, are special. You never know where the journey's going lead. It leads to a Game 7 in the ALCS and that's frickin' awesome. I was impressed with the way they reacted after the game. They kind of went about their routine, they went about their business.

So I don't really think about it in the moment. You think about what you're trying to do. It's pretty frickin' cool that we are where we are. I'm not going to lie. You got to keep your foot on the gas and get ready for tomorrow.

But I think it's really cool for our fans. I thought our fans tonight were amazing. I know they are going to be tomorrow. So you kind of take the historical part out of it a little bit, and you focus on what you're doing right now. But again, man, when spring training starts, and you say, hey, you got one game to win to go to the World Series, you take that every single time.

Q. We saw a really tenacious at-bat from George to start the game. How is he doing?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: He's good. He's as good as you can be doing on, tomorrow's October 20th at 36 years old getting hit in the knee and battling everything. I thought his at-bats were good, kind of set the tone a little bit there in the first inning. I think it's kind of cool because that's kind of who we are. His at-bats, he grinded. They were good. He didn't get a hit, but it kind of just sets the tone for what we're trying to do. So Georgie, man, he's something else this time of year.

Q. You keep talking about who you are as a team. How is that going to help approach a historic day like tomorrow?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I've thought about that a lot. I think that what's cool about this group is the way we play is kind of the way you play every day in the postseason. You're trying to put the ball in play, you're trying to slug when you need to slug, you want to make big pitches, and you want to play good defense. So it's going to be cool tomorrow. I know these guys are already talking about, it's one game and you have to play your game. And it's awesome that we have guys like Max and George that have been at the mountaintop of this game and have talked through situations that they have already been in for other guys to navigate tomorrow, or today.

So it's cool right now. We'll enjoy it for another 30 minutes, but you got to be ready to go tomorrow. And this team is, I've said, unbelievably good at it, but it's pretty believable right now when you watch 'em do it in real time.



Q. How much did Barger really kick start the offense tonight and just overall your thoughts on his contributions in the postseason?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: He's been awesome. He changed his hands a little bit Game 2 in Seattle. He moved 'em up a little bit, which is not easy to do. I think that that's a huge swing. You get two runs, you have bases loaded, and you don't really capitalize. Vlady crushes one to third and Geno makes a great play. That to me was kind of the swing of the game and all of a sudden it's 4-0 instead of 2. But Addy has been exactly what we've needed. For someone to come in -- going back to when Tony got hurt, he kind of stepped in and filled that role of power and production. And he's got a great way about him. To not be afraid to make a mechanical change in Game 4 of the ALCS, when it's your first full year in the big leagues, speaks volumes to his confidence, the confidence that our hitting coaches have in him, and how talented he is.

Q. Further to Hoffman. If he goes two tonight, does that make him available tomorrow or what's your situation with him?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, everyone's available tomorrow. Biebs is obviously starting, so that takes him out of the equation in the bullpen, but every single person that is active on our roster will be available to play tomorrow.

Q. Obviously you just mentioned it, Shane Bieber's getting the start tomorrow. This is the kind of situation he was brought to Toronto for. What are your expectations for him tomorrow?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think when you get into this situation, historical game for the franchise, right, you want a guy that's kind of been there. You want a guy that has a super high sense of awareness in the moment. That's exactly why we traded for him. I said it before, it was kind of a quiet, I don't want to say quiet acquisition at the deadline, because he was hurt, but this is what we envisioned.

So when you're in a game that if really, really matters, obviously, and there's been a ton of those games since we acquired him. But you expect him to be Shane. You expect him to have a slow heart beat, you expect him to execute and give us a chance to win.

Q. Can you describe your emotional state in the 3rd, 4th and 5th innings when all you could kind of do was, hey, the kid's got it take care of it here?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Not great. You know, I feel like

we've run into that a little bit in this postseason. Whether it's Aaron Judge with the bases loaded, or Cal Raleigh with the bases loaded. I said it before, man, I have so much confidence in every guy on the team.

Trey, in that situation, I think that he's grown up a lot since he's been here. He's grown up a lot this year. He's grown up a lot since he's been here. In that moment, to make pitches, to get over and cover first and not screw it up, to settle himself down, I think that shows exactly who he is and what we think he is.

But my emotional state has been a fricking mess for months, man, to be honest with you. I'm just calling it what it is. This is fun. I can't wait for, I wish we were playing right now. But, yeah, man, it's part of it. And you never know who is going to come out on right side or the wrong side of it. Today we did, we got to do it again tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: John, you're none the worst for wear, you're doing great.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: (Laughing.) I'm going to go fill this cup back up.

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