

AL Championship Series: Mariners vs Blue Jays

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

George Springer

Pregame 7 Press Conference



Q. This will be your fifth Game 7, which is more than most players get to do. How do you draw on that experience and what are maybe some memorable times from your previous Game 7s?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Yeah, I mean, this is what you play for as a player. This is what you want. I don't think there's anybody across the league that if you said in spring training, Hey, you're going to be in Game 7 of the ALCS, that you're going to say, Oh, man, no. I think everyone's excited, so I'll look forward to it.

Q. John told us yesterday you've been playing through a lot all season long and obviously you're playing through the knee right now. What goes into the mental side of playing through physical ailments at this time of year?

GEORGE SPRINGER: You just have to understand and kind of accept that nobody on the field is playing a hundred percent. It's not just you. And at the end of the day, I don't really think anybody cares. If you're out there, you're expected to play and you're expected to perform to the best of who you are that day. So for me, it just kind of is what it is. I have a job to do, so I expect to go do it. It doesn't really matter how I feel.

Q. You have a process for learning how to maybe manage physical limitations or learning to work within what your body can do and figuring out how to use that on the field?

GEORGE SPRINGER: I mean, you can always say you have one, and then you get out there and the game starts and your brain says go. So I don't really put much stock into pretty much anything. I just say, hey, if I'm out there, I'm going to give you a hundred percent of whatever I got that day and strap up again tomorrow, and we'll see what happens.

Q. When you think about your athletic training staff here with the Blue Jays, who do you want to maybe share just their contributions to helping you get back on the field and what makes their behind the scenes group really effective in helping you and your teammates too?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Yeah, I mean, our strength staff, our AT staff has been unbelievable all year. They work so hard all year round. When you think about 'em, there's a never a time where you walk in there and they say, Hold on. I need five minutes. It's always, Okay. And it takes a lot to get just one player through 162-plus games, let alone a full team. So I know for me they get this old body ready to roll every single day.

So I owe a lot to guys like José Ministral, John Biggar, Drew MacDonald. Shoot, I can name 'em all. Scotty Weberg. It's a collective effort to get everybody back on the field every day.

Q. It looked, especially in that last at-bat, like you were really grinding last night. Did the knee get progressively worse as the game continued, and how were you feeling there in that last at-bat?

GEORGE SPRINGER: It just kind of is what it is, honestly. I'm going to do my best to go out there and play to the best of my ability. I don't really think it's a secret. I got hit in the kneecap. It's not ideal. So it's not necessarily the best thing, but at this point I'm going to play. Yeah, it's not ideal, but I will.

Q. And I guess going back to Friday night in Seattle, John Schneider talked about it, Ernie Clement talked about it, a lot of people talked about the booing while you were on the ground and the cheering when you left the game. I know you're used to getting booed, especially in AL West cities, but what did you think of that situation?

GEORGE SPRINGER: I mean, ultimately at the end of the day, I'm just concerned about my health, and that's out of my control. So it's just kind of one of those things where I



was concerned about my knee in the moment and I'll go from there.

Q. It seems like this roster gets a little more veteran and a little saltier with every passing year. What do you think that guys like you and Max and Chris and Gausman and others bring to the clubhouse beyond talent and just the experience of -- the collective experience of what all you guys have gone through in your careers?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Well, I mean, old age (laughing). That's one of 'em. When you talk to Trey Yesavage, it's really funny, the dude is 22 or 23 years old, which is hilarious, and you see the way he performs and is so poised, it's impressive. I just think for us kind of as an older group, you've been through a lot. You know, Max has been through a lot, so has Chris and Gausy and a lot of guys. So I just think being able to communicate with guys what you've been through experience-wise, whether it's on the field, off the field, it can help somebody.

Q. You've obviously been in these games before, you've won at this level. You and some of the other guys have kind of talked about this group generally and how tight you are. How much at this point in the year are you motivated by trying to help your teammates kind of achieve what you've already achieved here?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Yeah, I mean, for me, it's about doing anything I can to help anybody. I want it just as bad as everybody else wants it. I know our team wants it for the city, the fans, you know, all across from east to west. So anything I can do to help somebody, I will, whether that's sit down and have a good conversation or whatnot. I think it's fun. And it's not about me. It's about the guys. I want it just as bad as everybody else does in that locker room, even if I've already played in these games before.

Q. When you came over here, you were accustomed to winning pretty much all the time with Houston. Besides the contract itself, what appealed to you about the Blue Jays and what sort of vision could you see coming for possible nights like this?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Oh, I mean, everything that I saw, everything that I envisioned has happened. I think Art Ross and Mark were very honest and very open about what they saw for the team. Obviously, guys like Vlady and Bo at the time were here already, and you could kind of see it across the room, you could see what they were going to become as players, and it made it very obvious for me.

But this is why I'm here, to play in these games, these moments. I mean, our fans have been unbelievable all year. This stadium has been electric all year. So it's these types of moments that were kind of at the forefront of that.

Q. You have a lot of experience in these moments. What has it been like to watch some of the guys who hadn't been in the postseason much or at all before, like a Barger or a Lucas or an Ernie Clement, not just keep playing well, but elevate their game in the postseason?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Yeah, I mean, it's been fun, honestly. To watch guys not get too big, not get too high or low, just to kind of continue in doing what they have done all year has been a cool thing for me to kind of sit there, because I don't go out on the field, that's for them. So I get to watch them grow and learn and see all that. So obviously, for guys like Addy, Ernie, it's been a special year and I think everyone's starting to see who they are as a player.

Q. You spoke about what it's like to participate in a Game 7. Remove yourself from it for a minute and what do you think of a Game 7 in general in sports? What does it mean to be on that stage, to watch a game?

GEORGE SPRINGER: I mean, I think it's awesome. I think it's -- as a player, it's what you play for, it's what you signed up for. Then obviously, as a fan, you obviously know that both teams are going to go out and try and give it everything they got that day because each one's backs are up against the wall. I think those are kind of the moments in sports that everybody likes, those hectic moments, those fun moments.

Q. Kirby's a pitcher that likes to pound the strike zone, as you know. What's the kind of challenge in facing that? And then for you guys, what's it like preparing for a game where you might have to face all of their starters in some form, Woo and Miller and Castillo potentially all being available off the bench as well?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Yeah, I mean, he's one of the best in the game. He has been his whole career, and he has been again this year. So you just have to take it one at-bat at a time, adjust on the fly. And then, obviously, I think for each team, I think everybody that is available is available, so you're going to know at some point things that you wouldn't normally see during the year, a guy like Castillo or Bryce Miller might be getting loose in the bullpen. You have no idea, so you just have to take one at-bat at a time and embrace it.

Q. I know how proud you are of your family and you now have a sister who is a head NCAA softball coach. I wonder, how do you and her sort of compare notes and what do you learn from each other and maybe how proud are you of her journey in the coaching profession?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Yeah, she's extremely smart. She understands the game. I talk to her a lot. It's funny, I mean, kind of that brother/sister stuff. She kind of gets on my case a little bit more than I would like her to, but it's all good. I watch her, I root for her. There's been some times during spring training where her team's actually in the area, so I get to go see her. So it's been fun. I'm very, very happy for her, and I couldn't be more excited to watch her grow as not only a human, but a coach as well.

Q. Having competed against Shane Bieber over the years and now getting to be his teammate, what stands out about him on the mound and then of course in the clubhouse?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Yeah, I mean, he's super competitive. He wants to win. He wants to do well. He critiques himself probably harder than he should. He's been one of the best in the game his whole career. When he came over here, it's almost like he's been here for five, six, eight years already. He fit right in. I love the guy and I look forward to him out there today.

Q. First of all, what does your sister get on your case about?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Everything. Everything a little sister could possibly get on my case about, she gets on my case about.

Q. The other thing is, and I guess we just saw it, I mean you play and you conduct yourself with this joy all the time, but as we have seen the last game, the tenacity and the competitiveness to go out there when you're compromised with an injury and give, like you said, whatever you've got that day. How does that, is it a switch that flips, what's the balance between this intensity and competitiveness and the joy that you exhibit out on the field?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Man, I just think for me it's a game and I love to play the game. The game is so much fun. All these moments, the times on the buses, the planes, the hotels, how close you are to all your, you want to say, friends and family on this team. It makes it easy to go out and play and to have fun.

But at the same time you can never lose that competitive

fire. For me, I don't really know how to explain it, just kind of one of those things where I tell Schneids every day, Don't worry about me, once the game starts I'll be good. I don't know how or what, it's just one of those things where I know I have a job to do from pitch one to the last one, and then we flip it off and we see what happens.

Q. You mentioned Vlady earlier, you had a front row seat to watching him grow up and essentially becoming a man. When you think back to a young Vlady to now, what stands out the most about his growth?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Man, he has become everything that I thought he would become, and he's only going to get better, which is scary. I mean, the dude's 26 years old. He's still learning, he's still adapting to situations, still trying to figure stuff out.

But I think the way he handles it, he handles himself with such class, he handles himself with grace. He's always willing to learn. He's a guy who will literally give you the shirt off his back. Whenever you have a guy like that in your locker room it means the world to us. And I just think, as a human, a friend, a guy, he's just an unbelievable human being.

Q. I was going to ask about Vlad as well, maybe from a bit of a different perspective. Having been through some of the expectations as he's had to carry in Houston, what do you appreciate about the way that he's handled all the expectations around him, and then in this postseason found a way to really perform at a peak level?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Yeah, I think with Vlady, one of the things that gets lost is how young he actually is as a human being. He cares so much about everybody around him. That's what makes him great. Whenever you get a guy like that, again, he's earned every bit of whatever he's got. He's kind of shown the world a little bit who he is as a player, and what guys see and hear every day. He knows what weight's on his shoulders, and he's kind of embraced it. But at the same time, he'll say it all the time, he couldn't be here without all of us. And that's a cool thing. He genuinely loves the city, he loves this team, this organization, so it's a special thing to have a guy like that.

Q. Game 7 is exciting and dramatic enough. How much does it help to be playing at home?

GEORGE SPRINGER: Yeah, I mean these are our fans, this is an electric environment. It's been fun all year round. I know the city has wanted this for a long time. So to be here, to be on our turf, quite literally on our own turf, is



exciting, and I know guys look forward to that first pitch.

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