

AL Championship Series: Mariners vs Blue Jays

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Seattle Mariners

Dan Wilson

Pregame 7 Press Conference

Q. Lineup question because you don't usually change it up too often, but you got a little different look in there today. What kind of went into bringing Victor back in and moving some guys around?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, I mean, really Victor's the only change and looking at how he has swung the bat and I think more or less the energy he brings to our club and the energy he brings to the lineup and some of the things he can do on the bases and whatnot. So a chance to get him in there today and kind of, again, make a little bit of an adjustment, change things up a little bit.

Q. A lot of your guys have talked about embracing the pressure and the expectations of the stakes. I know that might be stressful to do at times, especially from your vantage point, but why can that be beneficial to have that mentality?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, I think number one, it's undeniable. There is that -- it does exist, and you're not human if you don't feel some of that for a Game 7. We've kind of gone through it in Game 5, and we talked about understanding it and at least acknowledging that there's something on the line.

Then being able to channel that in the right direction, I think, is key. These guys have done that all season long. We've been in situations, particularly down the stretch in September where you've kind of had to win. You had to win that night, and I think these guys have developed a good strategy on how to deal with that.

So that's all part of embracing what's ahead of us. Tonight, Game 7, it's an incredible opportunity and I think these guys see that for that and we'll go out there and do what they do.

Q. Did you give any consideration to starting Bryan at



all today? And if you bring him in in relief, would you do so at the beginning of an inning? Could you see him in the middle if inning? How would you see him being used?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, I mean, this is George's game tonight. I think that's where we had kind of gone all along. In terms of the bullpen tonight, we say all hands on deck. It's definitely that tonight. We'll have just about everybody down there, just about everybody available.

I think how we use them, how it looks, will depend largely on how the game rolls out. But I think that the thing that is the most exciting is just the guys want the ball, they want to be in there, they want to be the guy to be in the moment, and we've got a bullpen full of guys that want that and that's the good news.

Q. With all those guys available, what is optimal for George? Is it one time through the lineup? And how many different looks do you want to give Vlad if you do pitch to him?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, I mean, I don't know that we have a set thing for George tonight. George, he rises to the occasion often. We hope that George can go six or seven for us. That would be ideal. But we'll just, again, see how the game unfolds.

In terms of Vlad, like, he has swung the bat extremely well, and this postseason has been no exception to that, and a guy that's been very dangerous. So again, as we talked about a little bit last night, a guy that you have to be very wary of there in the middle of the lineup, and I think that is something that we'll definitely consider as we go forward tonight.

Q. It's been kind of rare that George has had an outing where he's kind of got rocked like that last time around. What have you seen in the moments where he has his ability to kind of work through that and bounce back, and how different is it when it's the same lineup that he's going to face the next time around?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, George is -- I think we have seen



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him rise to the occasion. I think tonight's game in terms of what's riding on it, the emotion that's going into it, all those things I think George does a very good job of handling and turning into a positive. So tonight, I foresee George going out there and doing what he does at a high level, and that is getting ahead with quality strikes and creating that either weak contact or swing-and-miss like he does. That's the George that we have seen in big games and that's the George that we hope to see tonight.

Q. We have seen the Blue Jays lineup get hits when it's over the plate, get hits when it's on the edges, get hits when it's outside the strike zone. With all the strikes, obviously, the Mariners throw, it comes down tonight. How do you best approach a lineup that 1 through 9 -- mostly 1 through 9 has the ability to hit it far and also just make great contact? How do you go about that?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, I mean, I think that is the challenge. But again, I think keeping the count in our favor and making good pitches when we're ahead and getting them to hit the pitches that we want them to hit. That's really what pitchers try to do anyway, and that's what we're going to try to do with this lineup tonight. They're not always going to get hits off the plate, and more times than not, they will get weak contact on those or swing-and-miss. So that's how we're going to attack it, and I think as a pitching staff, bullpen and starters, that's our strength. I think that at this stage of the game, and going into a Game 7, you go to your strengths, and I know George is going to go to that and continue to be successful.

Q. What is your message to the team tonight? What are you going to say in the clubhouse prior to them going out?

DAN WILSON: Yeah, I mean, just remind them who they are. This is a team that has come a long way. Just remind them of the things that they do well. I think, we've talked about it a lot, but before games, and before big games, we've talked about identity a lot as a club, and these guys just going out there and doing the things that have helped them be successful all season long. Offensively, getting runners on base, grinding out at-bats, driving the ball in the gaps. And then on the mound attacking the zone with quality pitches and inducing the weak contact or swing-and-miss. That is what we do, and that is how we'll win Game 7 as well.

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