

AL Division Series: Yankees vs Blue Jays

Friday, October 3, 2025

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays Manager John Schneider Workout Day Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming in.

Q. Who will be the starting pitcher for Game 1?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Right to it. Kevin Gausman will pitch Game 1.

Q. And what is the status of Bichette going to ALDS?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Day to day still. Coming right down to the wire. We'll see how today goes and make that decision tomorrow.

Q. Just to follow up on Bichette, what else is on the to do list in order to activate him?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Running for one, see how that feels, and probably hit some velocity, whether that's in the cage or off some live pitchers that we do have here from the Triple-A group.

Q. A lot of the numbers are self-explanatory, but what else about him makes him your ideal game guy?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Just his steadiness. He's the same guy every single day. You don't worry about him getting caught up in the noise and the stuff that goes with a Game 1. How he's performed for sure. Definitely -- how he's performed really in his time here, but definitely down the stretch in the second half.

Veteran pitcher going against a veteran lineup and knowing how to make some adjustments too.

Q. I know we've talked about Aaron Judge a lot this season, probably more in the next few days. But does anything change regular season to this? Anything get cranked up or turned down how you approach him?



JOHN SCHNEIDER: Not really. I know I've gotten plenty of boos in New York and even some boos here if you walk him. I get it as a fan of the game. But I don't think so. I think you look at their lineup as a whole, you look at certain spots where he's coming up. You're definitely aware of where he is at all times and respect the hell out of the season that he had.

I don't think anything really changes with the way we'll go about him or anyone else.

Q. John, do you have a protocol as to when you'll pitch to Judge and when you'll put him on? I think you walked him 16 times in 13 games, something like that.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Every situation is a little bit different. Again, he's really good. It's not a foregone conclusion that it's going to be a home run or anything like that. I think you just trust guys in certain spots, and I think if there's a way to limit the times he does swing and potentially impact the ball, that's a benefit for us.

But there's no set of rules to say when and when not to.

Q. Do you have anything set for Game 2 and beyond that in your rotation?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Still working through it right now. Getting pretty close, though, but don't have that ready to announce just yet.

Q. You obviously saw the Yankees a lot this year. How were they different when you saw them in September post-deadline versus the version you saw pre-deadline and the moves that they made?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think having some pitchers come up. Schlittler, getting Hill back, and improved bullpen obviously from even when we saw them in the summertime. I think they've made an effort to shore up some defensive spots, I think, adding McMahon.

They're playing, I think, a little bit different type of game right now. It's just watching that series against Boston, finding some different ways to score, utilizing some speed.



It's relatively the same roster, but I think they're going about it a little bit differently. And that happens as the season winds down and as you get into the postseason.

You've still got to be very aware of the power potential with a lot of these guys, but I think they've made some good additions at the deadline and played really well down the stretch.

Q. The Jays obviously are further now in the postseason than they have been in a long time without playing a game. What is success for you in the postseason?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Winning. I think for us, especially this year, it's playing our game. It's understanding how we play and how we use guys and what we're asking of guys. It's nice to win the division, it really is, and it's nice to set yourself up the way you want to. But once you get in it, success is about winning and just playing our game. That's the only way you can kind of think about it at this point.

Q. What are you hoping to see from Vladimir Guerrero Jr. when the game begins tomorrow?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I want Vlad to play free. I think there's so many things that go into him when he is really good. Talking about from an offensive standpoint, I think he's used these past couple days to get pretty damn close to where he needs to be from a swing standpoint.

But I want him to play free. I don't want him to put pressure on himself because he is the face of this team. I want him to play how he plays every day. I think if he does that, he's going to find himself in some big moments and really needs to kind of just lock into what the task is in that moment.

I know we go to his offense, we go to the home runs. I need him to play good defense. I need him to run the bases well. But I think there's going to be some spots where he's up there, and I think that he's anxious to do something big. And just realize that Vlady needs to be Vlady, and that will take care of everything else.

Q. Saturday's forecast is sunny and spectacular. Have you been told whether or not the roof will be open or closed?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I have not been told 100 percent. I know that's up to the league. Seems like a pretty good day for it to be open just in terms of temperature and things like that. So I think they make that call tomorrow morning. It seems like a pretty good chance for it to be open.

Q. Since Kevin's been here, he's made it clear many times he came here to be on a winner, on a team, and be a big part of that. We'll ask him later, but what does this opportunity mean to him?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I'm sure a lot. As you get older and further along in your career, you don't take these opportunities for granted. I know that Kevin has spoken openly about that, an opportunity to set the tone in the series and go out there and perform. I think he's really going to be up for it, you know what I mean? For as even keeled as he is, I think you'll see a little more emotion out of Kev.

I think down the stretch he kind of took that on within our staff, where he kind of wanted to be the guy. Tomorrow's a perfect example for him to just set the tone at home against a really good team, a team that knows him, a team that he knows. So I think he's going to be really excited for it.

Q. Despite winning the season series and despite winning the division, you still come into this series as the underdogs. Why do you think that is, and is there any benefit to that?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Bigger market in New York, right? They're a good team. I think they have a lot of big name players. They've got a lot of hype around them and probably were favored to win the division when this season started. You can't ignore their talent.

As far as being an underdog, I don't think these guys care one way or another to be honest with you. I think that we think we can beat any team on any given night or day. We've got to go out and play our game. You understand why they're projected to be pretty good because they've got a lot of talent, but the underdog thing, I don't think we're playing into it that much.

Q. When you look at the two cracks at the playoffs you've had before, what lessons or things did you learn from those that you'll take into managing this series?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: There's been some good and some bad, some more well documented than others from you guys, thank you. I think that what you learn from it is playoffs is a different animal. There's things that happen in the postseason that don't happen in the regular season. I think just trying to be aware of those, communicating those before the series starts with everybody, and that's it really.

You still have to trust what you're seeing. You can go into



it with plans and contingency plans, and you never know what's going to happen on any given night. So you've got to kind of react in real time as well. I think going through good times and bad only makes you better. If you're not learning from things that happened in the past, you're not getting any better.

You still have to trust your guys. You still have to watch the game. You still have to see what everyone's doing in real time. I think what I've learned from it is it's baseball. You make the best decision in real time based on what you're seeing, and no matter how it works out, you're good with it.

Q. What is the difference to you between managing like a best 2 out of 3 and a best 3 out of 5?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, different obviously. I don't want to say it's not all hands on deck, because it is. 2 out of 3 is tough. Game 1 is always important to get off on the right foot, but it's just trying to win a five-game series instead of a three-game series. Are there going to be times when you hold back? No, absolutely not.

It's just really coming down to winning three as opposed to winning two. You can line things up a little bit differently pitching-wise. You can get a little bit creative. That's kind of what we're working through now. But the goal is to win the series.

Q. Obviously the Blue Jays are the only Canadian team in the league, fan base here in Toronto and across the country. How much does the idea of being that lone Canadian team resonate with you in the clubhouse?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It does every day with this group. It's an unbelievable honor to play for a country. I think this team, more than any other team I've been around, has kind of leaned into that a little bit, and they understand kind of how many people are watching them every night. The support we get in this building is unbelievable. It makes it really tough to come in and play here, and we really like playing here.

It's cool to say that you're playing for a country. It's East Coast to West Coast everyone is pulling for this team. It's something we don't take for granted for sure.

Q. Just back to Bo, what's enough for him for you guys to have him on the roster? If he can give you one at-bat a game, is that enough? Do you need him in the lineup as a DH? What's the threshold for inclusion for him?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I would say for him to be on, he'd have to play pretty regularly. Just with the way we deploy our guys, we don't want to deviate too much from what we've been doing. So it's not saving him for a Kirk Gibson at-bat once a game that may not come. He'd have to be pretty regular in some capacity.

Q. And where are you guys at with the position players-pitcher split? Are you thinking 13-13, 14-12?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I'm going to finish that as soon as I'm done with you guys. It will be one of those two, whether it's 13-13 or 14-12. But we're having some pretty good discussions. It will one of those two.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports