

AL Division Series: Yankees vs Blue Jays

Sunday, October 5, 2025

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

Manager John Schneider

Pregame 2 Press Conference

Q. Just wondering, you guys walked Judge a lot over the past years. You chose not to yesterday. Was that just strategy or coincidence?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Kind of just game state, you know. Again, I don't have a set plan as to if we're going to pitch to him or not. You kind of read the situation.

Again, he's a really talented hitter. I think if you can take the bat out of his hands in certain spots, great, but you've still got to make pitches to him too.

Q. Just wondering your thoughts on the lineup today as far as K-F being in there, Santander starting the day on the bench. What led to those decisions?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Just getting some right-handers in there, obviously, leaving a couple of lefties in. Keeping Tony's left-handed bat on the bench with Lukey and Barge as well. Fried is a tough matchup for anyone, lefty or righty. Just tried to keep our defense intact as best we could and have some options against their right-handed bullpen.

Q. Back to last night, Hoffman obviously not normally in a 10-1 game, but you guys had an extended break, you have some off days coming up. What was your thinking putting him in that situation?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Just wanted to get him in. I think it was seven days since he was in a real game, minus the sim games we had here. Just wanted to get his feet on the mound in the postseason. We were keeping his pitch count to a certain point.

Volpe was his last hitter actually, so he'd be good to go today with the off day tomorrow. Just wanted to get him into a game for the first time in a while.



Q. At some point last weekend when we asked you about whether or not you preferred a break, this is before you clinched the division, or wanted to get right into Wild Card action. You didn't necessarily have an answer, you were undecided. Based on what you saw yesterday, are you convinced that maybe the layoff was really good for the club?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah. I mean, that was kind of where I was leaning anyway. But you just never really know. You never know how you're going to be playing through last weekend. But I think it was good for a few guys.

I think it was good for Vlad, for Kirk, not just because they hit home runs. I think just ironing out some mechanical things and getting a little bit of rest for guys that have played a lot.

I thought that we came out and played kind of our game, which is what you wanted to do, and hopefully we can continue to do that. But going back a week ago, yeah, I think that the break was good for a lot of guys.

Q. I remember talking to you in Spring Training and you talked about Kirky starting 115, 120, I think you told me. He agreed. I remember running to his locker to ask him the same question because my eyes were popping out of my head. He got to 111 starts. Was that a conscious effort down the stretch to kind of whittle him back a little bit?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, especially after we got in in Kansas City. We still trying to win the division, but it allowed a little wiggle room. Heineman had a really good year too. I think that maybe played into cutting eight to ten games off of what we expected out of Kirky too.

At that position, you know it's physically and mentally demanding for anyone really. It was nice to kind of give him a little bit of a blow.

Q. In his relatively short time here with Shane, how would you describe how he's integrated himself into this team, both as a performer and as a teammate?



JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, really pretty easy. He kind of fits the mold of pitchers that we have here. Just a professional, very aware of what he wants to do, very aware of how he wants to get better. I think when you're that type of pitcher and you're coming into another group that's similar to you, you kind of hit it off a little bit.

From that standpoint, it seemed pretty seamless. It kind of seems like he's been here a while, to be honest with you. Then from a performance standpoint, kind of what we expected. When you acquire him, you're kind of targeting games like he's going to be pitching in. You feel good about having him against a really good team on the road or home or whatever it is. So I think it's been a pretty seamless transition.

Q. John, obviously you had to make this decision before Game 1, but having seen the Yankees up close in the postseason yesterday, what attributes does Trey Yesavage have to make him a good fit for this moment?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think he has the stuff, you know what I mean? We feel pretty good about him, the pitcher, and what he can do. A little bit of unfamiliarity, I think, with this team is a good thing. They're a really, really talented team who can make adjustments and can game plan really well.

So you're asking a young kid to go up against a good team. But I think it's a different kind of look than really most other pitchers in the league from where he releases his pitches from. I think that plays well against this kind of team.

Again, I like his stuff, but I think especially kind of not being familiar with him, kind of added to it a little bit too.

Q. Since you guys acquired Myles, what have you seen from him on the field as well as leadership-wise?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's funny, we talk about this group, right? It's easy to have some big name guys get a lot of attention. Myles has been one of the kind of glue guys of this team in the clubhouse, in the dugout. Understands what we're asking of him, understands his role, brings humor. Obviously brings elite defense, base running. He can put the ball in play.

Kind of just an unassuming guy and a guy that's been through a lot the past couple years. He's been one of the big reasons kind of we are where we are. Not just performance, but I think kind of just -- I've said it so many times, this is a really tight group. He is, I don't want to say the ringleader in a lot of stuff, but I think he has the respect

of everyone in the clubhouse by the way he goes about his business and the way he treats everyone.

Q. You were the guy on the way up through the Blue Jays Minor League system who was trusted with and tasked with the future superstars, with Bo, Vlad, Biggio, all with you on the way up. How does Trey stack up, not as far as talent and performance, but just as far as the mentality and getting here so quickly compared to those guys? Where does he stand as far as just the place you need to be between the ears to be successful up here?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: He's pretty damn good. Going back to when those guys were coming up, the game is kind of in a different spot, you know what I mean? Obviously different with those guys. You look at Bo, Vlad, Cavan, their dads being who they were, that was kind of the narrative and made things a little bit easier for them to conduct themselves at this level. What was that, 2019 when they debuted?

Looking here six years later, the game has changed big time. And I think that guys are ready a little bit earlier, and I think that they have that confidence to be ready a little bit earlier, especially pitchers.

When we drafted him, I think the thought was to try to move him pretty quickly, he was pretty advanced. Since he's been here, he's really kind of settled in pretty nicely. It's not an easy thing to do, right? To be on your fifth team of the season and to be surrounded by veteran pitchers that you're talking to every day and veteran players. So he's kind of made it a little bit easier to trust him, just when you have conversations with him, when you kind of watch him navigate his days.

Again, not that he had the experience that the other guys did, but I think that he's been in enough spots to where this can be semi normal. This is not really normal, but I think that this can be semi normal for a guy like him.

Q. With the absence of Bo in this roster, Andrés Giménez has had to deal with the responsibility of being the shortstop. What can you say about his performance so far?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: It's been phenomenal. When Bo went down, we had a loose time frame of kind of what we were looking at in terms of his absence and asked Gimmy about playing short, and he said give me a couple of days to kind of work at it. I think it took him one day for him to come back in and say I'm good.

I've said this before. I think Andrés is the best infielder in

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Major League Baseball, no matter where's standing. I think he's that talented. He's been great. He's made unbelievable plays. He makes tough plays look easy. Even the play yesterday up the middle just came out of nowhere. He just has a good pace about him.

Stepping in, again, he's making it look pretty easy, you know, when you don't really prepare for it in the off-season and things like that. He's been steady. I like his at-bats. It's funny. I like his at-bats since he's been playing short, which sounds funny. I don't know if he's kind of more engaged being the leader of the infield and if that carries over. But I think he's kind of taken his game to a little bit of a different level as a whole since he has been there.

Q. Granted that Max has been a big presence in your dugout for his non-pitching games the whole season, he's not going to pitch in this series, I was just wondering what he was like in the dugout last night during that game?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: He was Max, looking at everything, dissecting everything, kind of talking to guys like he normally does. He's out throwing the bullpen today like he normally does. He doesn't have an off switch. It was the exact same as it was in the regular season, whether he was not pitching and healthy or not pitching and not healthy. It was the exact same. That's what he brings every single day.

He's like an extension of me and Pete a little bit, not because of his age, but I think he's just been through a lot and seen a lot. I love having him in the dugout. When he's pitching or not, he's never off, and he sees everything.

Q. With Trey, when the game starts today in the first inning and you're looking at him, what are some of the boxes that he needs to check for you to internally be like, okay, he's good?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think just command. That's it really. I think kind of where he's throwing -- fastball, split, slider -- how he navigates the first time. There's going to be a little bit of traffic, all those things. I think he's shown that in his first starts here, in his three starts here that he's throwing strikes, he's not backing down.

Against this team, you have to do that. If you're giving them free passes, it makes it really tough with the power that they have up and down.

So to me it comes down to just staying aggressive, getting ahead of hitters, and kind of seeing what his stuff looks like and what the first yellow light situation may look like and how he navigates it.

Q. You mentioned in the last five, six years it's changed in terms of guys being ready earlier and coming up. Seems like playoff contenders across the board, down the stretch, are going to pitchers in big games including the team across the way. Why do you think that's changed? Why do you think guys are ready earlier?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I don't know. Throughout the game, amateur, professional, guys' stuff is really good. The way these guys train, the way that they're kind of built up in the off-season, it's kind of just where the game is right now. I feel like 97 is the new norm with a wipeout breaking ball.

Louis Varland is throwing a 90 mile an hour curveball yesterday with 101. That's kind of where the game has gone, and that's kind of what teams are looking to acquire, what teams are kind of looking to develop. I think that it's tough on hitters. Hitting is really hard these days.

Q. When Trey first came up, he mentioned one of the things he was working on this season was more right-on-right splits. How do you think his split plays right-on-right as opposed to right-on-left? Is there anything you can take away from the way Kevin uses his split versus righties that applies to him?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I'm sure there is a bit. Similar arsenal but really different, to be honest with you, because of where he's coming from release point-wise. We've talked to him about that. It's a really good pitch. You've seen a lot of lineups load up righties against Kev in the past to try to take away that split. You have to continue to throw it. You have to get a good feel for it, carry the zone, take it out of the zone.

That's a big part of his game, and I think when he's landing that, it's not predictable with fastball and slider too. It will be interesting to see how they come out. They were obviously really aggressive against Kev yesterday, swinging early in counts. So see how it is with Trey and see how that pitch is kind of carrying the zone.

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