

AL Division Series: Yankees vs Blue Jays

Monday, October 6, 2025

New York, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

New York Yankees Manager Aaron Boone

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. How do you approach tomorrow given the deficit that you guys are facing, knowing that Judge said yesterday you guys have done this before.

AARON BOONE: We approach it like we have really all season, but even more specifically, the last six, eight weeks where we feel like we've been playing with a lot on the line every single day.

We'll go into our hitters' meeting, and it's about win today, period, and not getting ahead of that and even keeping it smaller than that. It's about going up and trying to win every pitch. Keep it small. Keep it simple and know that you go out and win a ballgame tomorrow, that's as far as you go. That's how we'll look at it, and I know that's how our guys will be.

Q. What's the level of confidence in Carlos Rodón and giving him the ball in this spot?

AARON BOONE: A ton. He's been obviously one of our horses this year. He's had a great year, and any time we give him the ball, we feel like we have an excellent chance to win. That will be the same tomorrow. He'll be ready to roll and hopefully get us off to a good start.

Q. And then Vladimir Guerrero Jr. is obviously having a good start to this series. What are the challenges he presents, and how do you kind of navigate him from here?

AARON BOONE: Obviously he's a guy that hits the ball incredibly hard, has a good idea of the strike zone, has power when he gets kind of in that mode too a little bit. Obviously he's hit a couple balls out of the ballpark but also shown his kind of bat-to-ball skills where he can kind of spray it around the yard too.

He's certainly hurt us so far, and hopefully we can contain



that a little bit tomorrow.

Q. You had said Thursday you felt more anxious going into that game than any other just because of your feelings of how good you thought this team was. Is it exactly the same going into tomorrow, any less because you're --

AARON BOONE: It's not tomorrow yet, so I don't know.

Look, every day is different, but the postseason always comes with excitement, angst, anticipation, nerves, all that. I'm sure that will be no different tomorrow as it was yesterday, as it was the day before.

At the end of the day, it's trying to prepare the best you can to be ready to go win a ballgame. A lot of confidence in our guys.

Q. The even disposition, did you acquire that as a player, or was that something you had to learn as a manager?

AARON BOONE: I don't know, it's the gig. It's sports, high stakes Major League sports. Usually you're playing with a lot on the line, you're playing for a lot, you're playing against, especially this time of year, another great opponent. So you certainly go in realizing anything can happen, and your job is to prepare the best you can and go out there and try and be your best.

That's been the story of my life.

Q. You talked last night about how it can feel like the world is caving in when you're 0-2. How do you get guys to avoid feeling like that tomorrow?

AARON BOONE: I didn't talk about us feeling that way. That's the world around you that happens when you lose a playoff game, you win one, it's the run of emotions. The challenge is always trying to stay off that roller coaster as best you can, and you've got to be able to do that as a player.

We're human. You feel things. It sucks when you lose.



It's exciting when you win. And you try and absorb that, but you've got to keep moving. That's what the regular season is. That's what 162 is, and that's certainly what the playoffs is when it gets ramped up and the reaction can be after every game so exciting or so deflating.

You've got a job to do. And that next play, that next pitch, that next game becomes the most important thing, and that's where you've got to keep your focus.

Q. Do you want guys to kind of get away, like unplug today, or is it different for everyone?

AARON BOONE: Everyone's different. We're open today. Obviously some guys will come in for treatment. A couple guys need to throw. And guys will move around. Mostly guys will treat it like an off day to kind of reset, give your mind a blow, give your body a blow. But that looks a lot of different ways for everyone.

Q. When you look over in the other dugout and there's Don Mattingly, I don't know what kind of relationship you've had with him, but how is he perceived by you, the Yankee family, and baseball in general?

AARON BOONE: The utmost respect. When I played here, he was kind of transitioning back into coaching and stuff, and I got to be around Donny then. Obviously managing against him, him being in the other dugout. He was one of my favorite players in the '80s when I was growing up and a guy that I loved watching.

Just a guy that's turned into kind of a baseball lifer that was obviously a great player and now has been an outstanding manager and coach. And certainly across even different generations, he's one of those guys that has the utmost respect from so many people. Just who he is, the way he treats people, you'd be hard pressed to find a bad word about Donny.

Q. Just following up on the challenges of facing Vlady, you've watched him since he debuted as a 20-year-old. What area or what facet of his game have you seen the biggest improvement or growth in his development?

AARON BOONE: I don't know. It seemed like as soon as he debuted, he was such a polished -- obviously you understand the ability to hit the ball hard and the bat speed and the presence he has in the batter's box. But I thought even right away had a real good knowledge of the strike zone, controlled the zone really well.

I think kind of the all-around player, though, that he's also become. He came up kind of as a third baseman,

transitioned to first base, where he's really athletic over there. He kind of impacts the game on that side of the ball. You don't think of him necessarily as a speed guy, and yet he'll leg out infield hits. He'll press you on the bases. He'll be super aggressive, sometimes ever over aggressive, he'll give you something out there.

He's just really well rounded, and I think now, having re-signed kind of has really cemented himself as kind of the face and leader of that organization. Certainly a guy we have a ton of respect for that's hurt us over the years, but just a well-rounded, polished player.

Q. Trent's kind of hit a rough patch at the plate here. Throughout his career he's kind of struggled in the postseason. Can you sense any frustration from him for not being able to get going on this stage, or how do you navigate this stretch here?

AARON BOONE: Didn't he have a huge postseason against the Mets a couple years ago?

Q. Yeah, but just for his career, he's like .160 something.

AARON BOONE: That's the nature of the playoffs and small sample. I trust Trent Grisham and his at-bat quality. We faced a couple tough pitchers. Yesavage yesterday, that was different. That was one of those outings. I still think he threw out a hit yesterday.

Yeah, it's just a few games, and we've had some tough matchups in there where he's faced a couple of tough lefties. I trust the at-bat, like he's going to not get overwhelmed by a situation. He's going to throw a good at-bat on you. He's going to have the ability every time he walks up there to get on base and the threat of leaving the ballpark.

We played six games, and I trust the at-bat.

Q. With Yesavage yesterday, Cam the other day, down the stretch the Mets went to young guys for big games, the Red Sox. Why do you think young guys are coming up so quickly and having so much success at this level in big games?

AARON BOONE: I don't know. I mean, you even watch these playoff games and see the amount of -- we've all, I think, marvelled to some degree at the stuff these pitchers have over the last five, seven, eight, ten years, right? I think more so even this year, it feels like it's even gone to another level. You turn on every game, and it's this guy is throwing a 99-mile-an-hour cutter, this guy's got a 95-mile-an-hour split or whatever.



Then these young guys, you know, with what they're able to do now with optimizing pitchers with the high speed cameras, with grips, and what a ball does and how an individual pitcher's body composition works to kind of optimize them with what they should be throwing and can be throwing, I think you're seeing that probably at a younger age maybe, maybe in the high school, college ranks, coming up obviously through the Minor Leagues.

It's remarkable, the amount of young, impactful people that come up and right away you can trust in big situations.

Q. Are you considering any lineup changes for tomorrow?

AARON BOONE: We'll see. We'll see. Yes, but it could be the exact same too. That's something I'll kind of work through here the rest of the day and try to have my decision by this evening where I'll send it out. Could be one or two, but it could very well be the same too.

Q. When you do consider that, how much is Shane Bieber a factor in that or just the situation? How much do you look at the individual matchups of who's going up against you tomorrow?

AARON BOONE: Well, yeah, Shane Bieber, that is the thought. We're going up against Shane Bieber. That's how I'm going to formulate the lineup. Shane's been a reverse this year, been kind of both throughout his career, more of a neutral guy. Then you also have some consideration to what they have in the bullpen, how you space things out a little bit. It starts with the opposing starter.

Q. I was going to ask you about Bieber as well. From what you've seen of him since he's come back from the surgery, how does he compare maybe to the last time you saw him in the playoffs?

AARON BOONE: Similar. I think he's thrown the ball well. Looks like his fastball's in a good place. He's going to throw the curveball, the cutter, the slider. He looks like Bieber to me. I know obviously a long road back for him, good pickup by the Blue Jays being able to get him and being able to insert him into their rotation. He'll be a challenge for us.

Q. You've talked about how during the season protecting the reliever so they're ready for a heavier workload in the postseason. You think now as the postseason has stretched to needing 11, 13 wins that positioning your team to be in prime position in October, if not takes precedence over trying to get

every last win in the regular season, it's always on your mind?

AARON BOONE: I'm not sure exactly what you asked.

Q. Are you always throughout the season keeping an eye of being positioned and healthy for the postseason as opposed to maybe 30 years ago where piling up as many regular season wins as possible?

AARON BOONE: I never look at it as positioning myself for the postseason. Like I think when you start assuming you're going to be in the postseason, you're in trouble. I look at it as, yeah, we're trying to play an extra month of the season, and you want those guys in a good position.

At the end of the day, you have to protect these guys. As much as the bullpen is used, in the end, it's tough to win big when you have key guys in the bullpen that have fallen off, and I think you can do that if you get too aggressive with them during the regular season. There's certainly times when you have to be, but I think you've got to be mindful of both of it, but not so much in saying I'm preserving them for the -- I mean, you're trying to -- I know in our case, like this year, you're trying to go out and win the division and do all those things.

You've also got to look out for these guys too. They can't go out there 80 times or they're going to break typically, or they're not going to be at their best and then where are you? To be a successful team to win a division, you've got to get contributions from a lot of people down there.

And everything's different. You may just look at the schedule and say, oh, this guy's throwing two days out of five. Well, it might be a time of the year where he's a little beat up too. Good enough to pitch, but you're also picking spots to where, hey, I've got to be a little careful with this guy. He needs a few extra in this little stretch of the season.

That's not always said or known necessarily because a guy's not hurt, but those things pop up throughout the course of the season too.

Q. Earlier you were mentioning riding the emotional roller coaster. I just wonder from a mental standpoint, can you describe the transition that players have to go through where in the regular season there's always another game, there's always a tomorrow to suddenly get to the postseason and every game means so much and there may not necessarily be a tomorrow?

AARON BOONE: Hopefully it's not a huge transition. You should be playing every game -- A, regular season game



obviously doesn't take on the same meaning and importance of a postseason, but that should never impact you as a player. Whether you're going out there -- almost in some ways a Spring Training game to a regular season game, for an individual player, you should be putting absolutely everything into that being successful. Nothing should really change. Every game should be big and important.

I think one of the learned skills that -- or acquired or born with or whatever -- being a Major League athlete, you've got to be able to withstand and handle success and failure over the long haul if you're going to have a career at this and a sustained career at this. That's a challenge, and that's sometimes hard, and that's what the really good ones are good at.

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