

AL Division Series: Yankees vs Blue Jays

Tuesday, October 7, 2025
New York, New York, USA
Yankee Stadium

New York Yankees Manager Aaron Boone Pregame 3 Press Conference

Q. Aaron, this team has not been fazed by much throughout the course of this season, but now you're facing elimination this postseason for the third time. How would you describe the determination in that room right now?

AARON BOONE: I mean, strong. I trust in these guys, in their preparation and readiness and confidence that they're going to walk out there regardless of result. We're walking out there tonight expecting to win a game and expecting to be successful.

That's as far as our focus is right now, just keeping it small, go out there, win pitches, win innings, and hopefully force it to tomorrow.

Q. Bieber only a handful of starts this season, coming back from injury. How different does he look in coming back as opposed to the guy they've seen in the past?

AARON BOONE: I think he looks similar to me. Obviously when he's been healthy, he's been one of the best pitchers in the league. It will be a challenge. And he's pitched well enough to where they have real options over there to be on this postseason roster and making a start.

It will be a challenge. I feel like we're certainly capable of having a good night against him, and that's our expectation.

Q. In your lineup today, how much were you factoring in the starting pitcher versus -- and to splits there and matchups there versus the fact that what they have in the bullpen, a couple lefties out there. Keep your righties on the bench rather?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, it does, but I'm putting out there what I think has the best chance to be successful against



Bieber. I understand in the short time at the back end of the season, he's been a reverse split. Throughout his career, he's been very neutral. Some years one way, some years the other. I feel like he's very similar to that.

But the people they have in their pen, their lefties are very lefty specialist type guys, so having the threat of especially a couple of our righties over there is a presence that I like to have. But it's more about putting a lineup out there that I think has a chance to best be successful against Shane today.

Q. Obviously you had a choice at first base. Considering there is a little bit of that reverse split thing, what is Rice doing well or what makes you think that's the right choice?

AARON BOONE: He's just been more than a dangerous hitter, especially here down the stretch, and kind of killed the ball all year against right-handed pitching. He's just a real threat in the middle of the order, while Goldie has that presence looming over there where hopefully we can get him into a good matchup, and even better than that. Hopefully I'm putting him in late because we have a lead and he's playing defense at first base.

Q. Aaron, you said your players are determined. Do you have a gut feeling yourself at how this team will respond?

AARON BOONE: I think we'll respond well. We've handled adverse situations, I feel like -- well, all year, navigated that. It's a group that's very close, close knit, very close together. They trust in one another, and that's important this time of year. You want to kind of be playing for that guy next to you and trust in them and making sure you're communicating well with one another, which they do.

But it all comes down to going out and playing well. I feel like our guys are in the right frame of mind to go do that.

Q. After spending eight months with this group, how would you say its personality is the same and different than last year's group?



AARON BOONE: I thought last year's group came together well. You always go into Spring Training -- look, it's not everything, right? You can have years where there's some angst and everyone's not clicking or simpatico with each other. And that's okay too. You prefer the other way, where guys are super close.

I feel like this group has built a real bond with one another. I think I felt that way about last year's club too. These guys trust each other a lot. They lean on each other a lot. They communicate really well with one another. Like especially in-game stuff that they share with one another, constantly talking through no matter what's going on, they do a really good job of that.

You know what, going into every season in Spring Training, it's always kind of my sappy dream that you want to be on a team where you want it for the guy next to you more than you want it for yourself. I feel like this team has achieved that with what they've done together and how they've grown together as a team throughout the year.

Hopefully that serves us well in the game tonight.

Q. After the clinch against Boston, a couple guys on your team said convincingly they didn't even know that no team had ever lost the first game in a three-game set and then come back to win it. With all the information these guys are able to get, how much of a skill is it, in a sense, to not take information that might not be helpful in that moment or might get in your head?

AARON BOONE: Again, everyone handles it different. Some guys know everything that's going on around them. And another one of these things that I challenged these guys on from day one in Spring Training, make sure you know what you can handle. If that's something that's going to be a distraction for you and affect your ability to do your job well and you have a small window in a career here, if outside noise is going to bother you, then turn it off.

I think everyone's got to make that decision for themselves, and I think everyone's a little bit different. So there's probably some guys that are oblivious to things that are going on. Some guys know probably intimately what people are saying and all those things.

There's no one way to do, but I try and at least challenge these guys to make the right decision so that they can be the best they possibly can be.

Q. You obviously want your players solely focused on winning tonight, but when the reality is there's a

necessity to win three straight games against a very good opponent, are you in effect coaching against human nature? If so, is that a difficult thing to do?

AARON BOONE: The good thing here down the stretch is we've really latched onto this win today. Win today. We almost scratched our way back to win a division, and it was kind of that mindset and that mantra, the final month, six weeks is what happened yesterday. We talk about it in our advance and hitters meeting and things like that or things that come up.

But it's like that's over with. We won another series, whatever, we didn't. It's like let's go win today. That's as simple as our focus is, and that's as small as I want us to keep it regardless of what happened. These guys have done a really good job with that, and whatever happens tonight, I expect they'll go out and do the same.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Cam Schlitler. Just the fact that you guys called him up in July and he had three-plus months just to kind of get acclimated, how valuable was that to him and to you guys?

AARON BOONE: It was really valuable for us as a team because he pitched so well. Obviously had a game, just a game for the ages to get us to this point. Yeah, I think also very valuable for him. His growth has been awesome the last two years to see him kind of rifle through our system and continue to get better and better. And I think when he got to the Big Leagues, like I think he got better.

I think he's obviously confident in his ability, and he walks out there with some pretty good equipment. But he's super matter of fact and expects to do well, but also is kind of accountable and over himself too and like wanting to, man, how can I pull something from that outing that needs to be a little bit better or build on something that was really good in that outing?

I feel like he's done a really good job of that, and that's a testament to him and his confidence, but also his expectation of I need to keep improving. He's done great.

Q. The splitter more or less disappeared in baseball for like a decade recently, and now it's being thrown more than it ever has in the postseason. What do you think helped bring it back what does it do that's made it so effective?

AARON BOONE: I don't know. Roger Craig is smiling somewhere, though, right?

There are a number of guys, it does seem like. We have guys on our team that do it. Obviously we saw a great one

in Game 2 with Yesavage. And Gausman, it's been a staple of his now.

I don't know. I'm not so entrenched in the pitching world to see how these things get brought up again. I think with what we know about pitching and how they outfit guys, I think more than ever, that's where the big advantage pitching-wise is. With all these cameras and technology and stuff, you're really able to outfit guys with what they should be doing based on how their body moves. So I guess that's probably lended some to this pitch.

I didn't really think about it, but it does seem like it's way back in our game.

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