

AL Division Series: Tigers vs Mariners

Friday, October 3, 2025
Seattle, Washington, USA
T-Mobile Park

Seattle Mariners

Cal Raleigh

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Cal, they announced that George is going to start Game 1. You've seen him the last month. What makes you confident that he's ready to handle this and pitching well?

CAL RALEIGH: Yeah. I mean, this last month's been great. He's really been hitting his stride really well. And we all know it's been there. It's just fighting those injuries, trying to get into that consistent routine, you know, and just kind of getting into that mentality and that kind of routine.

So, you know, we've seen him do it before in playoff games, both in the pen and starting. So he's done it before, and I have a lot of confidence in him going tomorrow.

Q. One thing you've mentioned so much about this team is how you guys have been able to take it day by day and that's what has made this group special. How do you balance that with looking around, seeing how different it is now in this playoff atmosphere?

CAL RALEIGH: I think, number one, enjoy it, take it in. We're going to have a lot of fun. Enjoy these games. It's what you play for all year. This is a time where it gets fun. Everybody is going to be on their feet. It's going to be a packed house. It's going to mean just a little more obviously in the playoffs.

So we're excited. It's just finding a way to take a deep breath here and there and resetting yourself every once in a while, every inning or so, and just getting back to the basics and trying to keep it just like a regular game, which we obviously know it's not, but, you know, like I said, finding a way to get back to even and taking that deep breath.

Q. Cal, for you as the season went on and, you know, your home run totals escalated, did you notice a



change in how pitchers approached you? And if you were getting less to hit, how did you make sure you wouldn't miss the one pitch you might get?

CAL RALEIGH: Yeah. There was multiple times this year -- you know, it's a cat-and-mouse game. It always has been and always will be. It's happened multiple times. This year it just happened maybe a little more frequently than often.

It's just understanding that I've got good hitters behind me, so not trying to expand too much, not trying to feel like I have to get the job done myself or I have to hit this amount of home runs or whatever it is. It's knowing that I go out there, swing at the good pitches, try to hit the mistake, like I always have, and try to keep it as simple as that.

Q. How have you been able to utilize this ballpark? I know it's a pitcher's ballpark, you hit so many fly balls, more than other guys do. Do you tailor your swing to hit fly balls in this park knowing that you have the power to get it out of there?

CAL RALEIGH: Not really. Obviously I know that my swing is my swing. When things are going good, I get extension. And when you get extension, that's when you're hitting line drives in the air. So that's what I've always tried to do. Not trying to lift, more so just trying to get extended.

So I wouldn't say I've tailored it necessarily to this park because it's not really a great park to hit in, in general. So just trying to put good swings on it and trying to hit the ball hard, and the rest will take care of itself.

Q. Cal, the last time you played the Tigers, you got swept in New York. You went into Detroit and swept them right before the All-Star break. What do you remember about that series, how you played in that series, and can you take anything away from it considering it was right before the All-Star break?

CAL RALEIGH: Yeah. It's been long time. It's a really good team over there. Obviously they hit a little skid at the end of the year, but that happens to every year.



But we know we're going to have our hands full in this series. They're a really good ball club. They do things exceptionally well -- bat the ball, really good staff, good bullpen.

So we're -- obviously we won the series, but we don't really put too much stock into that because everything's different this time of year. So like I said, we're going to have our hands full. They're a very good ball club, and, you know, looking forward to the series, and this time of year it's not going to be easy no matter who you face.

Q. Cal, I think it's been just a little over six months since you were sitting right here for the contract extension press conference. What has this past six months been like for you, just the whirlwind of the historical milestones, the All-Star week, winning the West? What's been just the roller coaster of an experience for you?

CAL RALEIGH: Yeah. It's been -- I mean, it's been a crazy year. You know, first off, I mean, obviously getting to win the West last week was something super special, and it's something we haven't done in twenty-plus years. It was just nice to enjoy it with the guys, let the guard down, really just celebrate with them. And like I said, something that hasn't been done in a long time. So it meant a little more doing that, and doing that was amazing.

And yeah, with the rest of this stuff, you know, contracts and then everything that kind of came after that with the hot start, and then, you know, the Home Run Derby, and what felt like every single day, you know, some stat being thrown around there, it being talked about, you know, on TV or whatever. So it was just crazy, something I never thought would happen and something -- I don't really have much words. It's been a crazy kind of ride this year.

Q. Cal, you mentioned at the regular season wanting to just instill to the rest of the clubhouse, just stay in your routine, keep doing what you've been doing. We've seen in the past couple scrimmages the lineup doing what it does, scoring with the homer but also just getting on base and hitting in a variety of ways. What have you noticed with the team over this bye, especially considering how this is a position that a lot of the clubhouse haven't been in with the bye?

CAL RALEIGH: Honestly, the last few days I thought went really well. Went pretty smoothly. I thought it was good the guys were treating it like a game situation, we were able to get out there, from all the small details, from having people in the stands, you know, the PA announcer, the Jumbotron on, in full uni.

So just the small things like that. It was good to kind of simulate a game and get out there. And guys were taking it pretty serious. Guys weren't up there just hacking the first pitch every time. We were working counts, working situations, and try to put the bow on it today, finish up all the prep and, you know, get ready for tomorrow.

Q. Cal, you've got a lot of playoff experience on your team up and down the roster, and with the starters and the bullpen as well, but what about the group that was there in '22, the experience that you guys had? What do you take from that and take into this this time?

CAL RALEIGH: Yeah. I mean, you know, with the -- with winning the Wild Card, getting to the DS last time -- obviously we're in a little different position this time. And I think just -- hopefully we can take something from it, not taking anything for granted.

We played three tough games, but we weren't able to finish those games with the Astros a couple years ago, and understanding that it's important to finish, it's important to stay locked in, things like that.

And hopefully we can combine that with obviously having a few guys here that have been to the playoffs, Naylor, you know, the big one that's kind of included in that.

So we have guys that have been here before, which is nice, but we know that just not being satisfied and trying to finish the job is going to be important this time.

Q. Cal, the Statcast numbers on Kirby's sinker don't look all that different, but he does -- he has talked about how he's made a grip change, and obviously just looking at him in the field, you see fourteen punch-outs. From your perspective, what is different about that pitch?

CAL RALEIGH: Than in years past, you're saying? I mean, I don't really see a big difference in it. I know pitchers are always -- it's the same thing with hitters. Sometimes you lean so far one way with the grip and then you've got to kind of go the other way with it just to kind of get that movement profile back.

So he's done a great job. I think for him it's always come down to the locating, you know? I think the stuff's always been there, but I think over this last month he's done this really good job locating, and he's found that confidence with it, and whatever it is, whether it's a grip situation or some cue that he has going on, it's doing what it's supposed to right now, for sure.

Q. Cal, you've talked for years about your appreciation



for the fans here. How much do you feel like this year in particular you've really connected with them more as your public profile continues to grow?

CAL RALEIGH: Yeah. I mean, they've been great all year long. They've been great years prior too, so it's not like this is a new thing or anything. It's just -- you know, it's kind of taken on a different level maybe than in years past. And they've been amazing, and I'm really looking forward to seeing them this week.

I know they're excited for this weekend, and it's going to be a fun weekend for sure.

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