

AL Division Series: Tigers vs Mariners

Saturday, October 4, 2025

Seattle, Washington, USA

T-Mobile Park

Detroit Tigers

A.J. Hinch

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. A.J., thanks. I'll just ask you about your decision to not only put Colt on the roster, but to start him today and have Wenceel available off the bench.

A.J. HINCH: Yeah. So, I mean, it started with Colt. We sent -- put him through a workout yesterday. He hit live off a couple pitchers, and once he was deemed healthy, it was a pretty easy decision. We wanted his bat in the lineup.

We'll be somewhat conservative with the defense, just given all the different plays and angles and stress we can put on him, but he demonstrated that he can put together a competitive at-bat, good swings.

You know, he swung and made contact. He had a couple check swings. He swung and missed. All the things that give us a lot of confidence that he can give us as many at-bats as possible.

So putting him at the DH started the decision process of putting Carp in right field and then Parker versus Wenceel in center and so forth.

So, you know, I feel like Colt strengthens our lineup against the starter, and Wenceel certainly strengthens our bench as almost two players in one off the bench for later in the game.

Q. A.J., what's it mean to get Hanifée back on this roster and to have a team that he can match up against a little bit better?

A.J. HINCH: Yeah. I feel good getting Hanifée back active. It was an unlucky part of some decisions over the course of September. At the end of the month, we played Cleveland every day, pretty much.

Plus, going to Boston, we made a decision to change the configuration of our pen, and he was the odd man out. He



has pitched very well for us. He's tough on righties. He can manage his way through a pocket of hitters and get a lefty out as well, but it's been getting him back on the roster in the right configuration of the opponent.

So with his -- you know, they're a little bit more right-handed here. They can still offer a lot of issues left-handed, but he strengthens the right side of our bullpen and keeps the ball on the ground, and he's been a big part of our pen even though it doesn't look like it in the game logs or how the last couple of weeks have gone.

So it did make a tough decision on Paul Sewald. We took him off the roster, and I let him know yesterday. He threw a live BP. He's going to continue to work in case of injury. Or if we can win the series and advance, he'll be in consideration for the next series.

So all these decisions at the end of the period that we're allowed to reset our rosters come with, you know, some pros and cons and different strengths.

Q. A.J., just batting Gleyber leading off once again, what gives you confidence to put him at the top of the lineup, and what have you seen in his at-bats recently, and how soon can he break through?

A.J. HINCH: Yeah. He's got a lot of qualities as an offensive player. One that never really goes away is his own discipline. And tonight, when you face a guy like Kirby, he makes it really hard because he lives on the edges with plus-plus stuff across the board.

So the tougher at-bats we can give him, the harder we can make it on him. And Gleyber might swing at the first pitch, smoke a single or a double or a homer and kick start us, or he may work a seven-, eight-, nine-pitch epic at-bat because he knows the zone so well.

I like him at the top, whether it's at first or second. But against a starter, we're trying to give him as many tough at-bats as we can 1 through 9, and it starts with Gleyber.

So even on the days he's not swinging his best or doesn't look like he's putting up the numbers as he has for the



majority of the season, the at-bat quality still seems to be really good.

So he's one swing away, whether it's breaking out or being a major, major contributor. And I trust him to be ready.

Q. You ended Spring Training with a really brutal travel schedule, and you ended up here. You've been on the road forever, and you ended up here. I wondered if -- deja vu or --

A.J. HINCH: No. It's just more that this is what it's taken. Obviously the season schedule comes out, and we knew we were going to end on the road. What we didn't know is that we would bounce from city to city and go on a Wild Card Series on the road and then have a nice little party and head out west with a long travel out here.

But there's so much adrenaline and so much energy that surrounds these playoff chases and ultimately these playoff races, and our guys are handling it fine.

So you may have seen players in the same clothes. You might see, you know, a dry cleaning bill or two. The clubies might have to pick you up with a few extra cycles of laundry, but this is the playoffs, and this is where you want to be. If you have to be on the road for 30 more days to win the World Series, you take it.

And so our guys are fine. They're just -- I've seen their wardrobe, you know, recycled a couple times. Jack Flaherty's got the best wardrobe.

Q. A.J., you've seen the Mariners from afar for -- this whole regime and even before that. What strikes you as different about the Seattle Mariners this year as opposed to any other Mariners team you've seen?

A.J. HINCH: I think they're even a different team within the season that we saw them. At the beginning of the season, there's a lot of feeling out amongst all teams. We came here for the second series of the year, and the guy tonight wasn't active. George was hurt. So just seeing him back active again, not only in July, but in the postseason is a little bit of a change.

But at the beginning of the season, as everybody's feeling each other out, your version of your team, how you get out of the gate.

Then we saw them in July, and it was about as explosive a team as we saw the entire year. We saw the home run power. We saw the aggressiveness on the bases, and we saw the high-end pitching. And we saw their ability to get to the finish line, which sounds like a complete team, which

is why they've been able to run and complete their season in such a positive way.

So, you know, there's -- they can come at you with a lot of different ways, whether it's small ball, aggressive base running, speed, power. We know about the arms. It's historically always been a high-end pitching staff.

So there's not a lot to not like about the Mariners and how they put together their season. They won the AL West. So I don't know how long I have to compliment them, but I know they're a formidable opponent. They've earned their way here. You have to play well to beat them. They rarely beat themselves, and they play close games, and they're used to it, and so are we.

So I love the challenge of this series. Even kick-starting it out here in Seattle. We're going to take it home to Comerica in a couple of days, and we've been practicing winning series the whole year. And we've won one against these guys, we've lost one. Now the most important one.

Q. A.J., I'm sure you're tired of talking about how great Tarik is, but for those who don't see him on a regular basis like your fans do, what allows him, from your standpoint, to be as consistent as he is, especially these last two seasons?

A.J. HINCH: Yeah. His work in between starts probably doesn't get enough attention because most of the time the focus around him is his strike throwing on the days that he pitches and how -- to what degree is he going to dominate; right?

Like, you have the Maddox, CG (phonetic), you know, incredible performance on a Sunday in Detroit, and then I get questions when he gives up two or three runs.

It's like, What's wrong with Tarik?

I'm, like, Nothing.

He's just an incredibly talented pitcher who puts in the work. So if you don't watch us or you don't know him, you look out at his presence, you see the velo, you see the stuff, you see the hardware, you've probably heard of him if you haven't watched him, but I get the true opportunity to sit and watch him in between starts and how he's put together not just a good start, not just a good stretch, but an expectation, you know, within himself to be elite.

And that doesn't come in one good season. That comes over time. And he's an easy guy to root for. I know he's got some ties back to this area, and it matters to him to be on a winning club and be a big reason why we're winning,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

and we wouldn't be here without his emergence.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports