

AL Division Series: Tigers vs Mariners

Saturday, October 4, 2025

Seattle, Washington, USA

T-Mobile Park

Detroit Tigers

Tarik Skubal

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. Tarik, obviously you guys had a ton of fun in Cleveland and celebrated quite a bit, but coming back to Seattle, what is the first thing you did when you got back, and what is it like to be here now?

TARIK SKUBAL: The first thing I did was make sure my family got in all right and went to sleep. So that was what happened there.

But yeah. It's always good to get back to this city. This city means a lot to me. Obviously I spent four years here. I was born in California, raised in Arizona, but I feel like I kind of grew up here in college, getting independent. So this place will always have a special place in my heart, for sure.

Q. Do you have a bunch of ticket requests and stuff?

TARIK SKUBAL: Not crazy. Not crazy. I mean, I think the most is kind of self-inflicted is I'm going to have the whole team out tomorrow, which I think will be a cool experience for them. I think they have a scrimmage in the morning. I've been talking to the coach. Get done with the scrimmage and come on over. I think that's 34 guys on the roster, but I think it will be worth it for these guys to just come experience playoff baseball.

And I understand that I was in their shoes however many years ago that was, seven.

Q. Last year was your first year in the playoffs. What did you learn from last year that you've applied to this year from the experiences of last year?

TARIK SKUBAL: I think -- I mean, I think the biggest thing is the game is still the game. You've still got to -- I still need to execute and do what makes me have success, which is first-pitch strikes, getting ahead of guys, getting into leverage, and getting guys out.



So as far as that part, the game doesn't change. The environment is just a little bit better to play in, a little bit more fun. Emotion on both sides runs a little higher, but baseball is still baseball, and that's probably the most important takeaway.

Q. Tarik, if I remember right, you went up and visited with the SU baseball team when you were here in April.

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah.

Q. Obviously you're making sure they can come out tomorrow. Why does it mean so much for you to stay as connected as you are with that program?

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. I just remember when I was going to school there, the pro guys would come back and throw and work out with us, and I thought that was really cool. You know, I thought, this is awesome to have guys who are in professional baseball and grinding through the Minor Leagues. I idolized those guys. I wanted to watch those guys and pick their brain and see why they have success and why they're good and how they got to be in that situation.

So I think it's important to just understand that it's not a dream, you know? You can dream about playing in the big leagues and getting drafted and all this stuff, but those things can become a reality for all those guys. And I think it's important to get back in front of them and talk to them and share some knowledge.

I don't have all the answers either, but just share some knowledge and -- like, this is real. It's not some -- it's not a fantasy. You can actually accomplish what you put your mind to. So I think that for me is why I want to get in front of those guys and always try and take care of them when I'm here.

Q. Tarik, did the version of you that was here several years ago watching Felix Hernandez think it could be a reality to be sitting where you are right now?

TARIK SKUBAL: Honestly, probably not, but that didn't



stop me or it didn't alter my motivation. I remember coming to games here and Edwin Diaz was closing it out, and I was like, this is the coolest place in the world. I'm enjoying this game. I'd get goose bumps when he'd come running in and they'd do his whole thing.

So moments like that are full circle or surreal, however you want to put it. And that kind of gets back to that question why I want to go back and do those things.

Q. Tarik, the two outings you had against the Mariners, they were so long ago, one in April and one against the All-Star break. The team looks different. Do you take anything away from those outings? Specifically because they've added Naylor or Suarez right before the trade deadline.

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. It's some of the same guys, but also different. It's a different roster. At the deadline they made a lot of moves and did different things, so it will be a fun challenge. The offense is good. The pitching is good. This is a good Seattle team. But -- we'll have our work cut you out, but we're all up for it.

Q. Tarik, obviously the emotions of pitching in October is different from the regular season. How do you channel -- whether it be mentally or physically, how do you channel that added emotion and added adrenaline to make you better in those, those starts, as opposed to maybe becoming more helter-skelter because of that?

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. I don't -- I love it. I love the environment. It's what you prepare for. It's what you work for. It's why you do the things you do in the off-season. It's all for moments like this, to just go play baseball in the biggest stage, to go out and compete and win a championship. It's why I do what I do. It's all the motivation that I need.

Winning is everything to me, so it's a great opportunity to go out and compete and show that all the work you've put in is worth it for moments like this.

Q. Tarik, you guys are in the midst of what will eventually be a 16- or 17-day road trip before you get back to Detroit.

A.J. was joking about doing laundry and stuff. Does it feel like it's been that long?

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. I've already worn all the underwear once. I had to take those in and have the clubies do some stuff. I'm wearing the same shirt I wore in Cleveland already because I had to run it through and get it

washed. That's fun, though. Socks. Ran out of socks too.

So you bring all that stuff, and they wash it and stuff. But I don't think anyone's complaining about being on the road for however many days it's going to be. We've got a great opportunity to play playoff baseball, and it doesn't really matter where we're at right now.

Q. How have you seen Troy Melton grow and progress as a pitcher and even as a teammate since he arrived with you guys in July?

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. I mean, he came up. He's kind of pretty to himself. I kind of just want to let guys be and be who they are, and our relationship will grow just over time.

But it just seems like nothing matters to him. He just kind of goes out there and plays and competes, and I love that because a lot of the stuff that's out of his control I don't think ever dictates, you know, who he is or how the next outing is going to be.

I remember an outing I think he gave up a couple runs or whatever, and I kind of was like, "Hey, man. Just brush it off. We're going to need you tomorrow. That's kind of the mentality we need to have."

And he said, "I know." And he said it with a pretty stern voice.

And I was like, "Okay. You're good, bro. We've got it."

He's very confident, and I love it. He's got great stuff, so he should be very confident in his stuff and just go right after guys. So I'm excited to watch him go out there and compete.

Q. Is it a unique and different position for you now to be in that spot where you're the veteran the younger pitchers are looking to for feedback and advice?

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. I don't really consider myself a veteran. I haven't hit free agency or anything. I've played five years in this game. I think veterans are -- eight plus or so I think is kind of the cutoff.

But it's something that I take pride in. I want guys to ask questions or strive for whatever. And if I can be any resource to any guy, I want to be able to do that.

And that's something I take pride in, is being a good teammate, being there for guys, whether things are going good and especially if things are going bad. So I just want all my guys -- all the guys in there to know that I've got their back no matter what happens.



Q. Tarik, as much as you're able to observe from afar the couple of series that you've played against the Mariners this year, what stands out about this rotation at large and what makes it special?

TARIK SKUBAL: Their pitchers?

Q. Yeah.

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. I think they've all got really good stuff, I think 1 through 5 or 6. They've got, like, six or seven guys that are really good, and the bullpen is really good.

The stuff they have is great. I think they pitch the way you're supposed to pitch. They get ahead of guys, they get guys into leverage, and they punch guys out.

Obviously Woo isn't on the roster, and he's also very, very talented. I think his fastball is about as special as it gets in our game. I don't know if there's a better one, to be honest. So they're very talented. They go right at guys, and it will be fun to compete against them.

Obviously I'm not in the box, but I think our hitters are up for the challenge, for sure.

Q. If I remember right, when you were here in April, you got catering or carry-out, postgame spread from one of your favorite restaurants on campus.

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. I'll do that tomorrow.

Q. Are you going to be doing that again?

TARIK SKUBAL: Yeah. For sure. For sure. I'll do that again for sure. It's one of my favorite taco spots, Tacos Chukis, it's phenomenal. I wish I could go and eat there. It travels fine, but when you eat it there, it's -- I have dreams of this place. It's so good.

Yeah. It's like that, and anytime I get back to the West Coast, In-N-Out -- those two places are, like -- whenever I get out East, Michigan, I'm like, Damn, I wish I could go have a taco or hamburger.

So, yeah, I'll have that postgame, and I'll look forward to eating as much as I can of it.

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