

AL Division Series: Tigers vs Mariners

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Detroit, Michigan, USA

Comerica Park

Seattle Mariners

Jorge Polanco

Pregame 3 Press Conference



back here, especially with the teammates and I played last year. I saw this team is a special team. It's a special group. And I wanted to be back here, and I just feel very grateful I'm here with the guys.

Q. Jorge, a year ago, a year ago almost to the day, you were preparing to have knee surgery. How different is everything since that day? And how worried were you going into this surgery, I mean, where your career is at, coming off of such a tough year?

JORGE POLANCO: Good morning, guys.

It was a little bit tough last year going into surgery. I was a little bit worried, to be honest. I have, like you say, surgery in my knee, so I was a little bit worried. But coming into this year, I did a lot of good things during the off-season. I recovered really well. I was down in Texas doing my rehab and all that kind of stuff.

And going into this year, I felt pretty good about it, what I had done during the off-season. So this year feels really good.

Q. Jorge, we've talked a lot about what Cal has done as a switch-hitter for you. What goes into maintaining both the right- and left-handed swings?

JORGE POLANCO: You mean like the preparation? Yeah. Seeing Cal doing it, myself, especially as a switch history, the preparation is a little bit -- I don't want to say tougher, but we've got to keep both sides of the plate the same. We have to do the same on each side of the plate.

Like, the preparation is just -- it's just -- it takes just a little bit more.

Q. Jorge, last year you dealt with the injury. The team didn't go where it wanted to go. And yet in free agency you ended up back here. What made this the place you still wanted to be?

JORGE POLANCO: I really wanted to be back here, you know? Going into the off-season, I always wanted to be

Q. Jerry talked about -- before the season about how they were keeping tabs with you while you were going through your recovery. On that note of you knowing you wanted to be back here, what did you mean to you personally, that, especially after coming off of a tough year, they knew what you were capable of and still wanted you back in the fold for this season?

JORGE POLANCO: If I'm ready, to be honest, having the team that you play with -- they know you've got surgery, but just to keep in touch, and they wanted to know how I was doing, how I was feeling. It just gave me so much confidence to go into my rehab. They gave me a lot of support, and I really appreciated that about them.

Q. Jorge, there were a couple weeks early in the season where you weren't batting right-handed in games. When did you start to feel confident again with that swing, that side of the swing? And what allowed you to do so?

JORGE POLANCO: I wasn't hitting right-handed because I got a little bit of --

THE INTERPRETER: He, like, strained his oblique.

JORGE POLANCO: Yeah. I strained my oblique for a little bit, so I stopped hitting right-handed for a while. So for me to come back there, I had to wait for it to heal a little bit, and then I started doing it like a month after.

I started going into the cage. I started doing my routine, trying to match my left-handed routine with my right-handed routine. And I just -- it took a little bit of time, but I feel really good now.

Q. Jorge, this year we have seen your exit velocity go up. We've also seen a good barrel rate with you. Other than health, which we understand last year was tough, what has contributed to those numbers for



you?

JORGE POLANCO: For me, it's here. That's the number one thing. But also, working on my approach, staying through the middle of the field, trying to get a good pitch to hit, and trying to hit to the middle of the field. That's what really helped my approach and helped my execute ability to go up.

Q. Was that a change for you in approach, or was that something that you had to get back to?

JORGE POLANCO: Well, I always try and hit the ball to the middle, but I really have to work on it this off-season. It was a little bit of change just like trying to stay to the middle, trying to focus on that, and hitting in front of a guy like (indiscernible), it was a lot of help. Hitting in front of him, just giving me a lot of confidence, and I just tried to work on that.

Q. You've been teammates with Julio Rodriguez now for two seasons. What have you learned about him since you became teammates, both as a player and a person, compared to, you know, before you knew him?

JORGE POLANCO: Yeah. I got -- I knew him before, but I got to know him really good last year. He's a great teammate. He's a young guy, but he's very mature. His work ethic is really good.

And watching him, I just learn a lot from him. Even if he -- even that young he is, I learn a lot from him, especially about his, like, preparation and all that kind of stuff. He's a guy I want to have next to -- I want to be next to.

Q. Jorge, you had an amazing month of April to begin the year, and then in May it was a 180, and you were hitting more ground balls than almost any other hitter in baseball. And then after a month, you completely got out of it. How were you able to make such a stark adjustment after the month of May to get back to who you are as a hitter?

JORGE POLANCO: It's baseball, you know? I think it's baseball. It's a game of ups and downs. I think you have a really good month. Then you have a so-so month, and then you've just got to do a -- you've just got to approach. You've got to make an adjustment.

This is an adjustment, the pitcher are going to make adjustments with you. You've got to keep working and trust it and keep on going and make an adjustment.

Q. When you -- you have two home runs in the playoffs off a Cy Young winner. Are you able to relish

that at all on the flight, watching the highlights or anything like that?

JORGE POLANCO: It's hard not to see the videos. People are going to send me the videos, especially my family. They're very proud. So I got to watch it, and I got to enjoy, you know? Yeah.

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