

AL Division Series: Tigers vs Mariners

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Detroit, Michigan, USA

Comerica Park

Detroit Tigers

A.J. Hinch

Postgame 3 Press Conference

Mariners - 8, Tigers - 4

Q. A.J., short series. Things get magnified, obviously. What are you seeing with the inability to kind of sustain offense? Is it a hat tip or something to the pitcher? Or are you seeing something from your guys that approach swings?

A.J. HINCH: Yeah. This is the hardest time to hit. I mean, I know just when you're facing high-end pitching in October, it's a grind. And obviously their guys are really talented and are exposing a little bit of the zone control that we talk about all the time, where those who win the strike zone usually win the competition.

So not easy, you know, with what Gilbert was throwing up there. What was it, kind of -- not many fastballs, a lot of sliders and splits. And, you know, as we were swinging more and more as the game went on, we had a really hard time putting back-to-back at-bats together that were productive. And when that happens, you know, the innings can get short or quick, or big at-bats end up not going your way, and that's the nature of the competition.

You know, we've got to get back at it tomorrow.

Q. A.J., the Riley throw that got by Dinger, what happened on that play? Where did that start to go wrong?

A.J. HINCH: Yeah. A little bit of a breakdown all the way around. I thought Riley stayed under control and made the right throw, you know? It was a little bit off target from McKinstry, so he doesn't cut it. It skips and gets by Ding, and then just everything, you know, that could go wrong in that play did go wrong in that play.

And then it was a close play at home, a little bit of a Hail Mary trying to get an out. I couldn't quite tell if the glove



got under the foot. But yeah, just a rough play all the way around.

Q. A.J., you were able to create some stress with Kerry Carpenter in the leadoff spot. Is that kind of exactly what you wanted with runners on the corners there? And how did you see him pitch to Kerry with all those balls down in the zone and how disappointing --

A.J. HINCH: Yeah. Lineup construction is going to create some pressure points on both fronts.

And, you know, we feel it with errors, with Cal as a switch hitter and what are you going to do there? And Polanco in the middle of the order, what are you going to do there left and right?

So I know we've talked about it more and more this year with how we've changed our lineup, but they got their bullpen up pretty early, and I think that was precisely because of the left-handed dominance at the top of the order, and Gilbert was able to get through it then and another inning, which set him up differently.

So, you know, we put some pressure on them at the end there. It was nice to get Munoz an inning in there. Nobody likes to see him in a game, but this particular game, getting some pitches on him hopefully will pay off in the next couple games.

Q. What did you see from Jack tonight, and how much were you weighing when to go to your bullpen from the third inning?

A.J. HINCH: Yeah. I thought Jack's stuff was really good at the beginning of the game. It looked like he came out. The crowd was behind him. He had adrenaline. His stuff was up. He got some swing and miss.

And then it looked like the two-strike hanging breaking ball to Robles just sort of got him off track. Then it became sort of a 50/50 strike ball for the next time through the order.

So, you know, the -- we escaped it with the Naylor at-bat, which is always tough. I can go to the lefty there and try to



match up with him, and then it creates a really long path for the rest of the game when we're down a couple runs.

Jack picked us up with that, and then the next inning there's some damage.

And the bottom of their order really gave them trouble, both the first time through and the second time through. And then once we jumped off that part of the game, the bullpen was going to take over.

Q. A.J., your pitchers held off their sluggers in Seattle the first two games. Was this kind of just what they do? They keep coming at you with the power? And how do you even counter that?

A.J. HINCH: Well, we're not going to quit. You know, we had two games where we pitched tremendously well, and we had a lot of parts of this game where we pitched tremendously well.

But listen, this is the playoffs. And I keep saying they got here for a reason too. And they won some of the at-bats and certainly hit the ball out of the ballpark a couple times.

I thought the slider that Crawford hit out backed up. You don't see many left-handed hitters go oppo at night here like Cal did. Obviously Geno.

They do hit homers when you make mistakes, but we're going to play the rest of this series out and see if we can answer the challenge of getting through this lineup and putting up more runs.

Q. A.J., you got -- facing elimination tomorrow, but you've got a former overall No. 1 pick in Casey Mize. Can you just speak to the confidence you have in him?

A.J. HINCH: Yeah. No, we've earned our way here, and we've had to play more and more back-against-the-wall-type games. I know our guys are going to be ready. We have to pay attention tonight to the game to see what time we play. But that's the only concern going in. We've got to show up tomorrow and win a game and get this series back to Seattle.

We knew it wasn't going to be easy. We knew it wasn't going to be hand-gifted to us. We're going to have to earn it and play better in all aspects against a really good team. And we can because we have a really good team too. And I'm looking forward to game time.

Q. A.J., the last time you sat here and talked, you didn't know what time the game was going to start for two hours and 51 minutes. I'm curious how you

reacted to that continuing and what you saw out of your team in that time.

A.J. HINCH: So we had updates about every 15 to 30 minutes from the league. They do a great job of keeping everybody on both sides up to speed. I was on a couple different calls with Dan with the league to keep everybody updated. And as soon as we got info, we took it right to the players. So it was pretty easy and pretty -- as our home clubhouse, we have all the amenities that we could possibly need to hang until game time.

So we weren't going to start in the rain for just the quality of the starting pitcher getting started, and we all knew that and were updated perfectly.

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