

AL Wild Card Series: Tigers vs Guardians

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Progressive Field

Detroit Tigers

Casey Mize

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Casey, what was the moment like for you when you found out that you were going to be starting game 2?

CASEY MIZE: It was a 15-second phone call. But it was good. Yeah, he let me know, you're going to go game 2. We met earlier in the day. He said he would let me know whether it was 2 or 3. He said you're going to be game 2. That was it.

Q. Obviously, you've had the experience to be on the other side of the conversation where you weren't, right? What is the feeling understanding that you are now getting the opportunity and your team trusts you in that kind of way?

CASEY MIZE: Yeah, it's cool. Means a lot. Yeah, I look back I on it and saw I wasn't going to be on the roster here, it was tough. But it fueled a lot of my off-season work and the things I wanted to do to get better to never let that happen again.

To have this opportunity a year later in this place is pretty cool for me. Just to see that full circle. But, yeah, when you have your team trusting in you, your manager trusting in you, that's always a great feeling as a competitor and as a teammate.

Q. We've talked a bunch about what's kind of fueled your late run here, your last five or whatever, five or six starts. In your mind, we talked about the slider. Was there more to it that has got you from where you were to where you are now?

CASEY MIZE: Yeah. The slider piece has been big. And then just working with Fet and Robin on some mechanical stuff. I was starting to get too close. We were making sure I wasn't getting in bad habits physically.

When it comes to mentally, I knew I was going through a



tough stretch and I knew we were going to be playing in October so I had to look myself in the mirror and say hey, man, don't let this happen again. I want to compete in the postseason. So it's got to get better.

So I've been throwing the ball better because of some adjustments I've made. And just realizing that things weren't going great there for a bit this summer, and I wanted to turn it around.

Q. Casey, first off, congratulations. Are you able to look back on the start in Boston a little bit differently now that you guys have clinched. You're here in the postseason. What are your takeaways from what you did last time out?

CASEY MIZE: Yeah, it was the biggest game of my life at the time so I was really excited about that opportunity. The atmosphere was great. It felt similar to a postseason atmosphere, which was a good litmus test for me of how am I going to handle this. I feel like I threw the ball really well.

At the time, obviously was frustrated with the loss. But I said maybe I'd be able to look back at it at a later time. Now that we're here, I can look back on that and realize it was a good opportunity for me to compete in that atmosphere and it went pretty well.

Q. Can you put into perspective what it's like to be sitting here now versus what it was like when you entered spring training and questions that were there?

CASEY MIZE: Yeah, there was a lot of unknown then. There still is now. I think it's a constant in sports, right, which is what makes it so fun.

But, yeah, I had a desire to compete hard, make the team, provide value, and win coming into spring training. I still feel the same right now, which is cool, to kind of look back at February. And I journal a little bit so I was kind of looking back at some of the notes from then that I have. It's like I still feel a lot of the same way then that I feel now.

So, yeah, it's been a long season and it all comes down to



this. But my focus and my intent and my competitiveness is also there and that hunger to provide value is still there as well.

Q. What are your thoughts on José Ramírez? Do you feel like he's one of the best players you've ever seen hitting and all around? How tough is he to face in the box?

CASEY MIZE: When people ask me who are some of the toughest players you've ever played against, José is one of the first two, three, four that comes out of my mouth. He's such a talented guy all the way around. Steals bases, hits for power, plays excellent defense. It's all there. And I know he's a leader of that team and he's a constant. You think of Cleveland, you think of José. So it's a tough challenge any time we get to play him.

Q. On that note, you talked a little bit about the hitting aspect of José Ramírez. As a whole, this team has been up and down when it comes to their bats. What makes Cleveland so difficult to pitch against when it comes to their bats?

CASEY MIZE: They just know how to manufacture runs and don't give up on an inning. You just watch and you got to get three outs with these guys. They can still do some stuff with two outs and manufacture a run there and steal a run from you, it feels like at times.

So it's like a tough team. They do a lot of the little things right. I know that comes up a lot when you talk about this team because it's true. So, yeah, it's just -- they're different from the team that's all swing or miss and slug versus some teams that will put the ball in play. Can also slug as well, but it's just they manufacture runs in a different way. That can be pretty tough on pitchers.

Q. We've talked at various points over the season about two strikes, finishing guys off, the effort to do that. How much does lineup put a particular challenge on that, the way they can foul pitches off, extend at-bats, put balls in play?

CASEY MIZE: You have to kind of pick and choose with certain guys and certain lineups of -- I'm not going into the start about I'm going to try to get a swing and a miss today or I'm not gonna, whatever.

You have to realize, hey, this lineup might be tougher to go punch out ten versus another one. So we have to make decisions as a pitcher sometimes of how much are we going to try to expand the zone with two strikes and try to strike them out or are we just going to try to stay in the zone and get the swing and miss but also end the at-bat

quicker than you normally would so you don't have to throw 20, 25 pitches an inning against guys that are going to foul off pitches and get on base.

This is a team that comes to mind. They're tough to put away at times. So, yeah, those are the decisions we have to make on an outing-by-outing basis or hitter-by-hitter basis.

Q. A.J. had referenced having a tough conversation with you here last year around this same time. What do you remember about that, where you were, what the emotions were like when you found out that news?

CASEY MIZE: We were shagging BP and then, like, the bullpen area there's a fence there. The Guardians bullpen actually because they weren't out there. We went in there, and A.J. and Fet let me know I would be left off the roster.

So, yeah, it was tough. Now when I'm doing my bands, look down and see the spot when I was sitting, sometimes bad memories for sure. It's cool to walk by it now and say it's that moment and that place kind of helped change the pitcher and player that I am. So I'm glad it happened to me in a way.

But, yeah, it's cool to not have those conversations as well.

Q. Did you half expect them to take you back out there to give you the good news?

A. Yeah. A.J. came in and found me. I was in the training room doing stuff yesterday. He was like I was gonna take you out here, but I'll tell you now. You're on the roster. And I, like, fake celebrated, you know. So, yeah, we just did it there. He joked he was going to take me out there again.

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