

AL Wild Card Series: Tigers vs Guardians

Thursday, October 2, 2025

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Progressive Field

Detroit Tigers

Manager A.J. Hinch

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Obvious question. Putting Gleyber to the top and then rotating it up, can't really call it a shakeup. What's the thought behind that?

A.J. HINCH: Couple things. One, lifts a little bit of the burden of leading off for Parker. Probably more importantly, it's just spreading out some of our hitters. When you play a team as often as we play Cleveland and, especially, the last couple weeks, I started to see where they attack and who they attack and when before.

Given that this game generally turns into an all hands on deck, classic bullpen-type decisions -- and it doesn't have to be that way -- but if it does we're trying to create some dilemmas. Obviously, having Wenceel in the middle creates an advantage. Having a righty and a lefty in the same spot, it creates some penalty if you attack Gleyber or if you go after Carpenter, wait until you get to the bottom of the order with some of their other lefties.

Given the balance of their pen and the likelihood of this game being chaotic like they usually are with us, it felt like this was the most balanced lineup we could put in there.

Q. A.J., what do you draw from your other experiences in do-or-die games, elimination games, like a game 7, game 5. Going to the World Series and winning it in 2017. How valuable is all that to you in this situation?

A.J. HINCH: I think what it teaches you is that it's still a 27-out game and you've got to use all of them and it's not over until you get 27 outs. It may take more. The biggest lesson in my experience has been both teams are going to face some adversity at some point during the day. It's going to a bad hop. It's going to be a bloop hit. It's going to be a walk.

Something is going to happen where the nervousness and anxieties increase, and the game goes on. So you've got



to be able to weather a few punches from the other side and you've got to be able to deliver a punch of your own, a time or two. I've seen games where you get the lead and hold on. I've seen games with dramatic finishes and everywhere in between.

Just play the game and try to keep your guys grounded with where their feet are in the situation that presents them in that moment, that's the best way to win the game.

Q. Kerry said he set two different alarms this morning because he didn't know what time the game would be. How do you handle the unusual nature of not knowing when you're going to play?

A.J. HINCH: When I originally sent out the lineup to the guys, I gave them the scenarios. At that point, the Cubs and the Padres weren't done yet. And then as the night went on, we started to eliminate certain times. And then it fell to the Dodgers/Reds. When the Dodgers got out to a lead and I wanted to press send on the 3:00 game, Cincinnati came back and made it close.

We couldn't commit to anything until at or around midnight. I'm glad Carp was sleeping at that point. Makes me feel good about his readiness for today. I sent out the message, as did Peter Warden, our director of travel, just making sure our guys were alert to when they did get up, whether in the middle of the night or in the morning, they would be aware of what the game time was.

Q. With it being a potential all-hands-on-deck kind of game, do you have everybody available, ready to go for this one?

A.J. HINCH: Yeah, Tarik won't pitch and Casey won't pitch. Those are the two guys that will be in the dugout with us and not down in the pen. Everybody else will be available. I think that's the fun and anxious side of this type of game for the managers is that every move has a reason. Every pitcher that you have at your discretion comes with some up side and also some impact on later decisions later in the game.

So it's part of it. I've been through a lot of these. I think



the first decision is always the toughest one. And Jack can certainly go deep in the game. You don't have to make early pitching moves depending on the situation and the quality of stuff coming out of his hand. Or we have more than enough pitching to use them all.

Q. What happened with Torkelson's foot yesterday and how's he doing?

A. He fouled the ball off his back foot the previous bat. Out of precautionary reasons, we got it checked out. Originally, when I sat in here, I thought they were getting his arm and hand. He had a double, like a bank shot off his forearm and his hand. Neither of those were of any concern.

There wasn't great concern on the back foot other than he started to bruise a little bit so they got it checked out. Everything's fine.

Q. A.J., did you also move Tork to try to jump start him a little bit? What do you think? Offensively will it help him see more pitches?

A.J. HINCH: I moved Gleyber up because he's one of our best on base guys. He can work in the bat. He may hit the first pitch in the gap for a double, he might have a seven or eight pitch walk. He makes good decisions at the plate. He's led off before in big games.

When the lineup rolls around and guys at the bottom are getting on base like Javy has in recent games, it's nice to have Gleyber up faster. Making them make decisions faster is probably key in this game. You want Gleyber Torres to have as many at-bats as he possibly can. He's generally hovered in the 1, 2, 3-hole the entire year. Getting him on base multiple times today will increase our run scoring.

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