

AL Wild Card Series: Red Sox vs Yankees

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

New York, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

Boston Red Sox

Alex Cora

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Just a thought on Story was saying a few minutes ago that the job is not done yet. Along those lines, how you manage tonight with this one singular game trying to get a win, and where did you develop the mentality to go for the jugular each and every game during the playoffs?

ALEX CORA: I think the playoffs, the cool thing about the playoffs is you don't have to worry about the next series, the workloads, the back-to-backs, I have to play this guy because he hasn't played in a while. It is just, you know, what happens in that day, that night.

That's the cool thing about it. Something Dave -- Dave, that year I learned so much from him, like, Kid, you got to keep going. There's no tomorrow. Win today and then we will see where we are at the next day. Are you going to win every game? No. But you have to give yourself a chance every single night.

That's the reality of it. And since the first game I managed in '18, that has been the mentality of the group. It's the mentality for all of the other teams. Everybody feels the same way. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't. But the old man -- my bad, I said it. Dave was -- he is going to kill me for that one (laughter). From the get-go, that's what he wanted and that's the mentality I have.

Q. I meant to ask it last night, sorry to look back, but the near collision with Willyer on the defensive play running in front of Cedanne, what went wrong from your perspective? Is it something you addressed just in case it were to come up again?

ALEX CORA: No, no, it's two guys trying to make a play. Obviously communication has to be better, and they know it. Three years ago it was the other way around, we didn't have guys trying to make plays, now we have guys trying to make a play.



That's the way I see it. We got an out.

A lot of people in the dugout are kind of like, Oh.

I'm like, Wait, we got an out. Let's go. Move on.

But they know. Kind of like communication between Jarren and Rafaela in Baltimore, and then it happened again -- I forgot where it was -- in Sacramento, right? They know what they have to do. They are big leaguers, and they understand sometimes, you know, like mistakes like that, what am I going to tell them? Communicate better? They know it.

Q. (Off microphone.)

ALEX CORA: That part, yeah.

Q. Alex, your team has obviously won a lot of games in this building this year. How much will that impact your players' confidence going into Game 2 of the series?

ALEX CORA: Coming here, as I said, it is a place we know. We know it is going to be loud. We know it will be fun. It is a great place to play. We have been successful this year. We have struggled other years. I think what is going to motivate us is we got a chance to go up north if we win, right, to move on.

This is something that we have been talking about for a while, you know. When you get to October, then you make a run. It is not just getting to October. We want to win the World Series, and just happens that we are here in this stadium. And, you know, like I said, we have some good days and bad days. Hopefully tonight is a good one.

Q. Alex, you were talking about the influences on you your first year here. How much did Tony La Russa have to do with things like that?

ALEX CORA: Tony was good. Tony will leave me like a letter or notes every two weeks to go over, you know, his thoughts, you know, about the team, about how we were



doing things. That was good for me.

I still remember at the Palace, that off day in the ALDS when I interviewed with the Red Sox, one of the questions was, like, Are you willing to have a mentor with the organization?

Mentor, like I knew -- Tony or Leland?

They were like, Yeah.

I was like, I have no problem. Could put somebody, whoever. It didn't matter. That was kind of like, Yeah, of course.

But having Tony around meant a lot, not only for me, but for the rest of the coaches, especially Ramón, they had a great relationship. That really helped us.

Q. Did he have anything to do with the aggressive posture in the postseason?

ALEX CORA: No. No, no. He never told us how to do things or what to do. He just left his notes, and then from there we learned.

Q. In Brayan's career, every year it has been more innings than the last and lowering the ERA. Every year he has taken another step. Tonight, first postseason start. Why do you believe he was ready for this moment?

ALEX CORA: I just answered that one in Spanish. That's good. Throughout the season, you could tell that he is a more mature kid. I remember last year we had this "He cannot pitch in day games." Now he can pitch on day games.

I think what happens off the field has helped. His family is around. I still haven't seen the Netflix thing, but I know that there is a part there that I had a conversation with him about his family, how much he misses it, and we had to help him out.

This year they have been around the whole time, and that has helped him. It is very hard to be, you know, from the Dominican Republic and being -- pitching at this level and not having your support system.

And I honestly believe that that has pushed him to be the pitcher that he is right now. The stuff is really good. We know that. He is a guy that has developed the cutter, has used the four-seamer now.

I still remember an outing here two years ago or three

years ago that we wanted him to throw the changeup 40% of the time. That was the conversation before the game. Now it is the total opposite. Right? He has so many weapons. I am not saying the changeup is his worst, but it is not the same changeup as a few years ago. And it's still a good one.

So very versatile. A good kid that I told him yesterday, Enjoy, bro. Go out there and have fun.

Hopefully he does.

Q. Hey, Alex, how challenging has this been to try to do this without Roman's presence in the lineup, especially since you had to kind of recreate the offensive identity on a couple different occasions this year?

ALEX CORA: Yeah, I mean, we started with the two big boys hitting in the middle of the lineup, right, Casas and Rafe. Casas gets hurt. Rafe gets traded. The kids come up. They get hurt. Guys that are good baseball players are doing their job. Eaton, Soggy, they've been good for us. Hamy has played a lot better lately.

In the playoffs, home runs matter. It is hard to hit three in a row. This is our offense. We have to grind our bats, we have to take our walks, we have to run the bases well, we have to be on point offensively because we don't have the power other teams have.

And yesterday was a good day for us. We have to do it again tonight.

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