

AL Wild Card Series: Red Sox vs Yankees

Thursday, October 2, 2025

New York, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

New York Yankees

Aaron Boone

Pregame Press Conference

Q. With the lefty, you ultimately went with Ben Rice in there at first base. How difficult was the decision between him and Goldschmidt, and ultimately why did you go with Rice?

AARON BOONE: It was a tough decision. I just think, you know, the way Benny is going right now, you know, the impact he is having, the ability to change a game, the presence in the box right now really over the last few weeks. And, you know, understanding -- not knowing how they are going to deploy everything, having that true balance in the lineup.

And then I wanted Wellsy in the game where I feel he has been really, really good back there and swinging the bat well. And, you know, it gives you kind of a real weapon with Goldy on the bench, you know, in a big spot or hopefully, hopefully for defense late if we are winning.

So a difficult, ultimately, call, but one that I felt like was the right thing to do.

Q. You mentioned defense late for Goldschmidt. He is so sound offensively at first. What is your confidence level with Ben at first base, and what type of growth have you seen from him in the position throughout the year?

AARON BOONE: I am confident with Ben at first. I feel like he has grown a lot over there. He is a good athlete. He moves well, and I think he has just really gained really only playing the position there the last couple years where it's been introduced to him while also catching.

He has gained valuable experience, and with that, I feel he has shown steady improvement over there to where I feel like he is going to be a really good first baseman over there at whatever point. He has still work to do, obviously, but he has done a good job for us.



Q. Maybe relatively small sample size, but are there any signs from Cam that you might look for or see early pregame, just to kind of know where he is at or that might be good or bad about his performance?

AARON BOONE: I don't expect to see anything different than usual. He's got a really good way about him. Really confident kid. He expects to go out there and pitch well. I saw him right before he left last night, and he was ready to go.

I expect him to have a real healthy demeanor about him today. And whatever result comes, I don't think the moment will be too big for him.

Q. What was that exchange like when you saw him last night?

AARON BOONE: When I was walking out the door, I was walking past him, I said, Ready to roll?

He said, Oh, yeah.

I said, Get some rest.

Q. Are you looking at this as a full regular start for him if it is going well, or are you looking at it it's elimination so --

AARON BOONE: Yeah, no. No, I have a ton of confidence in Cam. If he is going, no, he can pitch -- when he is on his game, he can go out there and pitch deep into this game.

You know, that said, you have to stay nimble and you have to be able to, you know, adapt if the situation calls for it. But my plan at all is not to, you know, "This is a few inning" thing.

Q. This could be a difficult question to answer sometimes, but at what point did you feel that confidence in Cam? At what point was there a start?

AARON BOONE: Well, it started in Spring Training. There



was a start late in spring. Might have even been against the Blue Jays. I don't even know. You guys probably could look it up.

He came from Minor League camp late in spring, was built up. I think pitched probably four or five innings maybe for us. But it was late in spring, and like an important start for a young pitcher. You know, like he was going to be the featured guy that day.

I didn't know that much about him, frankly, at that point. And I really remember it pretty well, like, first of all, liking what I was seeing on the mound from him. But in between innings, keeping an eye on him, watching his interactions, watching him go about things. He just had a really good way and like a healthy, like, competitive edge to him, but like under control, too.

So that actually caught my attention a lot in Spring Training. Then, obviously, following him through the Minor Leagues this year and backing up a really strong year last year with another really strong year this year where he gets bumped eventually to AAA, does well there. I remember being really excited when we brought him up and we were going to commit to him going into the rotation. And he didn't disappoint.

Q. There were a lot of questions earlier this year about Volpe for you. He is now starting all three of these games. Is there a before and after when he got the shot in the shoulder that you have seen?

AARON BOONE: I mean, he started to swing the bat better since then, obviously. I don't know how much that played or didn't play into it or how much of a factor it was.

I think part of it is just him getting it going again offensively. I feel like the final couple weeks of the season he started to swing the bat well, and obviously has carried that into the first couple of games here in the playoffs.

It has been six to eight weeks too of the defense being up to Anthony's standards again where he is playing really well and fast on defense where he had that stretch in June or July, that four-week stretch where he was scuffling out there. It's been a couple months of really good now.

Q. He had a good October last year. Obviously had a good series. What about his personality or his game do you think translates?

AARON BOONE: He is a gamer. He is a tough kid. You asked me all season long how he handled. He is a guy that handles failure and success really well up here. He is super competitive too and likes the action and likes the --

obviously put together a really good postseason last year. So far he has been terrific these couple games for us.

Q. Aaron, Jazz said he fired up MLB: The Show after Game 1 to relax himself. Have you ever done that with that game in particular?

AARON BOONE: No.

"Seinfeld."

Q. Aaron, on the flip side of the pitching matchup --

AARON BOONE: Hey, we showed up yesterday. Fortunately.

Q. On the flip side of the pitching matchup, they are also throwing a rookie. What is that like in terms of preparation, getting your guys ready, a guy maybe they haven't seen? What is any impression you might have to share about Early?

AARON BOONE: I have been impressed. Similar to Cam, he has rocketed through their system. Started in AA this year. Was excellent in AAA in, whatever, four starts he has had, and in the big leagues he has had success.

He is a good-looking young pitcher that, you know -- look, it is 2025. Even though there's not a lot of familiarity from experience facing a guy, although Giancarlo faced him on a rehab this year, you're still able to glean so much information about guys, certainly more than when I played when you hadn't seen somebody.

You weren't getting video from the AA guy. Now you are getting quality video. You have the machinery and stuff that allows you to prepare for different guys. Obviously, we don't have experience facing him, but you have a lot of information about him.

Q. What do you like most about Trent in the leadoff spot? You used him a lot there this year?

AARON BOONE: Patience on base. Really good at-bat. Obviously power. He's a heavy at-bat. Tough situation, tough pitcher. He is not going to chase a lot, he is going to make you earn it. He has done a great job in that spot for us.

Q. Any thinking with the way Rice is swinging it right now to just bumping him up there to get more ABs?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, but I also like him in the middle just as much. And tonight especially, I wanted to, if I could, right-left/right-left it.

Q. Aaron, what are you seeing Giancarlo Stanton's at-bats?

AARON BOONE: He looks likes G. He just missed a couple. I think he has gotten four or five like "ooh." I don't feel like he is off much at all. I feel like there's been three or four pitches he has missed clipping.

I expect him to have an impactful at-bat tonight.

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