

AL Wild Card Series: Red Sox vs Yankees

Monday, September 28, 2026

New York, New York, USA

Yankee Stadium

New York Yankees

Manager Aaron Boone

Workout Day Press Conference

AARON BOONE: We have not made those final decisions yet.

Q. What do you need to see from him or hear from him to let you know that he's a go?

AARON BOONE: I've talked to him a bit. Want to see another year. Again, I don't know if there's one definitive, like, oh, there he is, he's on. It's more just letting the day unfold, seeing where we're at, and making a final call one way or the other.

Q. Is there any more clarity on Aaron Judge? You said yesterday you did not believe he started any baseball activity.

AARON BOONE: He did some hitting underneath and threw yesterday underneath. Obviously the weather did not allow us to get outside. I believe he'll be part of the live today. He's making progress. We'll continue to see where he's at.

Q. Have you made any determination on Grisham and Weathers yet?

AARON BOONE: Not a final decision. Grish very much in play. A very important day. He'll be part of the lineup as well. Not a final on Weathers yet. We may have him throw.

Q. Aaron, you've obviously been in charge of a very, very successful team since you became manager, but one that hasn't been able to finish it out. How much does that motivate this team or haunt you to push forward and get a championship?

AARON BOONE: I think it's the number one motivating factor. Had that's probably the first reason you do this and why you pour so much into it. There's other things that



matter too, of course, but that is the number one factor.

For a lot of us here that have been here a while, we've had a lot of success, but we haven't won the big one. It's always been the last team standing, and that ultimately is the number one driving force and continues to be.

Q. With Judge, how realistic is it you could put him in right field at this point, or he's strictly a pinch hitter/DH?

AARON BOONE: I don't know. We'll continue to evaluate, and I'll listen to trainers and medical and see where we're at.

Q. I know we talked a lot about the specialness of this rivalry, but now it's in front of us again in the postseason. Can you just speak a moment about what makes this such a great rivalry and some say the best in all sports?

AARON BOONE: Look, I think the proximity, the Northeast, the historical components that go back over a hundred years, the success of the two franchises, some of the epic series of the two franchises.

We obviously play in the same division with one another. Over the years going way back, there's competition for the players and free agents.

But I think it ultimately comes down to two big markets where baseball means so much to so many people, and the passionate fan bases that exist for both birdie hole you're talking about two franchises that have been very successful.

It's special to be a part of. It always is. Even when you go there for a regular season series or they come here for a regular season series, it always feels a little bit bigger, and now back-to-back years we're going up in this Wild Card series against them.

It will be a great battle. They've had a great year and a



great club. We're certainly looking forward to it.

Q. Does your home run define your baseball life in many ways, your epic home run?

AARON BOONE: I mean, I don't know. My baseball life goes back to as far as I can remember riding my big wheel in the clubhouse in Veteran Stadium. My dad and my grandpa, over 50 years, I feel like I've been in the game. It's all I know.

Obviously that moment is what a lot of people identify with me, and I understand that a lot of people have an amazing story, a lot of those that I've heard, tied to that moment. As a sports fan myself, I certainly have an appreciation for that because I had my own moments in sports fandom that are unbelievable.

Yeah, I mean, it's what a lot of what I'm known for, I guess, but I don't necessarily look at it that way.

Q. It's been about a year since Cam's incredible start against the Red Sox. When you've seen everything you've seen this year, is it almost amazing that that almost doesn't faze him at all, that one moment isn't any bigger than the others at this point?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, we obviously love his makeup. He's obviously super talented and really skilled, but he's also really tough and able to focus, and it seems like the bigger the game, the better he seems to be here in his young career.

But we're just excited about the person and how he's developed. I give a ton of credit to our scouts who drafted him and our player development who got him ready and got him better and better. He's just been -- he's done such a good job since he's gotten in the organization of -- you know, it's not an easy thing sometimes for players to apply things and truly get better.

You have a plan for every player that they do this, this, and that, they can get better. Cam's shown the ability to do that, whether it's taking information, whether it's coming out of the draft and getting physically stronger. All the things that have been put on his plate, he's handled with relative ease and not been overwhelmed by any of it.

You saw kind of a rapid, steady improvement through the Minor Leagues to what he is now, and he's turned into an ace in the sport. That's a credit to a lot of people, most of all Cam, though, for having that aptitude.

Q. Given all your uncertainties, how many different lineups right now are you penciling out as possibilities

for tomorrow?

AARON BOONE: Yeah, there's a few roster decisions still that we keep kind of bouncing back and forth thinking about lineup construction. So those are still things I'm wrestling with to some degree. Ultimately, we've got to settle on it tomorrow and go let it rip.

Q. As you planned, you have three penciled out, six, five?

AARON BOONE: I don't know, it's more just deciding who we want to start against a certain thing, what's the makeup of our roster as far as how many pitchers, how many position players. So that kind of impacts like in-game stuff. All things we're looking to finalize by the end of the day and obviously have to have finalized by the morning.

Q. What have you learned from Tolle's two starts against you this season?

AARON BOONE: Another outstanding pitcher in this league. Obviously a big prospect for them. Got a taste of it last year. (Video disruption). Became a staple in a rotation that's been very good this year. They're a team that pitches really, really well, and Payton Tolle is right in the middle of that or right at the top of that.

We know we'll have our work cut out for us. We'll be ready to go certainly. Hopefully we can get to him a little bit and supporting Cam.

Q. What is it that makes Tolle so effective against you guys?

AARON BOONE: He's got a great fastball. He's got a great four-seam fastball. He's got a great kind of competitive presence to him. We talk about Cam a lot. I don't know Payton, but he seems to have that good level of confidence but also having a lot of fun out there he's got a great fastball that he's able to command, top of the zone, works his breaking ball. But he seems to have a really good presence to him.

Q. How much are you looking forward to this challenge for you as a manager? You expect to go into tomorrow with a lot more offensive options than usual. You can really play around with matchups.

AARON BOONE: Yeah, depending, again, which way we go, how many pitchers, how many position players, kind of impacts those moves you're able to make in the course of a game. So depending on which way we go, that will fix how aggressive you are.



Q. You guys have had postseasons where you're waiting for a guy to get back from injury but maybe not to the extent like a three-time MVP like Judge or Stanton. How would you describe that kind of, this period right now where you're waiting to find out not just if you're going to get a guy back, but guys with that kind of impact?

AARON BOONE: I don't know, simply just waiting on that. Trying to get guys -- you know, a number of those guys that are knocking on the door, trying to get them healthy and right, and then we make a call.

Q. This will be your eighth postseason now. I'm curious, how have your philosophies, approaches, strategies about managing in October changed since that 2018?

AARON BOONE: It's hard to say. It's hard to look back. You certainly evolve, and experience teaches you a lot. So I don't know how to put that necessarily into words because you just, you're living day by day and constantly trying to get better, and hopefully you learn from experience that teaches you certain things in certain situations. I think I've benefitted from that.

You know it all comes down to starting tomorrow in Game 1. It's like none of that matters really.

Q. Does the experience create like a sense of comfort for you where you're more familiar so you're not --

AARON BOONE: I don't know, every postseason is different. There's been postseasons where we've kind of limped in. There's been postseasons where I feel like we headed in kind of at our best.

I go back to last year a lot. You guys heard me talk a lot about I felt really good. We went through a lot as a club last year, and I felt like we're playing our very best at the end. In '22 we had a great club for most of the year, but we were kind of broke at the end and kind of limped in. Got to the Championship Series, but we were a Shell of what we were probably in July or August. Every year is a little bit different.

This year there's a lot more decisions to make as far as the roster. Some years where you're really kind of fighting over who's the 26th man, whether that's a pitcher or a position player. This year there's a lot more in flux there. This year presents its own different challenges.

Q. Over the last decade there's been a few teams that have really ridden their starting to pitchers to win the World Series, like Dodgers last year, (audio disruption)

in '19, Red Sox in '18. Do you anticipate using your starting pitching aggressively, your starters out of the bullpen as you go deep into October? And how do you prepare those guys for that kind of role?

AARON BOONE: Look, I think our biggest strength as a club this year and certainly as we head into the postseason is the strength of our starting pitchers. If we're to get to the top of the mountain, I feel like it's going to continue to be leaning on that strength.

We're expecting a lot from them, and hopefully we get them in a position to deliver.

Q. How are you looking at second base right now? Is it strictly Jazz, or has Volpe done enough that he can make a platoon?

AARON BOONE: It's one of those things I'm considering. Volpe is very much in play. The platoon stuff is in play there. Obviously Jazz is just coming back from the thumb. He was able to get a couple games in, would have liked another one or two, but the weather didn't really cooperate this weekend.

Anthony's put himself very much in the mix to be a part of the equation.

Q. You've taken a number of teams to the playoffs obviously. This team has two rookies that are going to be impact players. You have some new players here that you got at the trade deadline. Is it going to be a whole different thing for them in October? As much promise you've seen from them and they've played well, is October really going to be a different look?

AARON BOONE: It is. We feel great about the makeup of these guys. Again, we talk about Cam, one of the great things is I feel like our player development has done a really good job in preparing a lot of guys that we expect to play critical roles not only this October, but moving forward with our team.

When you talk about Cam and Rice being pillars of our now and our future, George coming up, Volpe, Will Warren, what he's been able to do his first two seasons, I feel like we have a lot of guys ready to contribute.

Obvious bringing in a Luis Garcia, he was really good for us. And kind of this year with Washington and then continuing with us really kind of came of age as like a front line hitter especially against right-handed pitching.

Look, you never know how guys are going to react -- Spencer Jones has come up and done amazing things for



us and really played well and earned real opportunities.

Proud of those guys for not just getting here but becoming important factors in the now, but certainly for our future. I credit our player development and the guys in that that have put themselves in that position. You never know how guys are going to handle their first time going through it, but I love their makeup and expect them to handle it well.

Q. Tolle has a reverse split. Is that how you view him?

AARON BOONE: A little bit. I mean, I don't view him reverse, but closer to neutral.

Q. That won't impact your lineup making?

AARON BOONE: It could. Yeah, it could.

Q. And with Spencer versus lefty pitching, he's put up some really good numbers. I know earlier you were kind of using him as a platoon guy? Do you view his success against lefties as real success?

AARON BOONE: Again, I think we get a lot of times caught up in a smaller sample, but from my watching him, I feel like he's been really impressive against left-handed. It's not just, yeah, he's gotten hits, but he's faced a lot of tough lefties and not only held his own but kind of thrived. I feel like he's had some of his better at-bats in those situations.

So it's still a small sample in the grand scheme of things, but that's what's really impressed me about Spencer is people always talk about he's got swing and miss and tremendous power. He's had a plan and an idea up there and an ability to make some adjustments depending on who he's facing in his matchup. I feel like he's aware of his strengths and weaknesses.

So I've been really impressed as a young player, his ability to kind of adapt and make some adjustments.

Q. Aaron, you mentioned Lombard and how impressed you've been with him, but obviously part of a calculus probably in bringing him up when you did is him being ready for this opportunity. Where do you think he is compared to where you thought he might be as he heads into the playoffs for the first time?

AARON BOONE: Ready.

Q. What gives you that confidence?

AARON BOONE: Just watching him go through it all this couple of months, how he's handled himself, how he's

handled success and fallen down. I feel like he's totally equipped for it. You never know how it's going to go in a game here and there or a series. Baseball is going to baseball a little bit there, but I believe in the skills and the makeup.

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