

95th MLB All-Star Game

Monday, July 14, 2025

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Truist Park

Aaron Boone

Tarik Skubal

Dave Roberts

Paul Skenes

Press Conference

PAT McAFEE: Hello, hello. Oh, it is an honor to be here. Holy hell. I think we're going to get this thing started. This is the third time this beautiful city has hosted the All-Star Game. First time it will be in Truist Park.

With it being 7,000 degrees outside, I think this is going to be the best All-Star Week of all time.

Tonight's Home Run Derby is going to be one they'll talk about for the next 500 years. The starting pitchers for these All-Star games will put on a performance they'll talk about whenever my great, great, great grandkids are roaming this glorious earth.

And it is my honor to be the host of this particular press conference. We'll get to your questions at some point. Cannot wait to hear them. Make them good because we've got living legends with us.

On that note, allow me to introduce the four men that you see sitting on this stage. The four men that will set the tone for this entire All-Star Week. To my right, living legend, World Series champion, manager of the NL All-Star team, from the Los Angeles Dodgers, skipper Dave Roberts. Good to see you, buddy.

Sitting next to him, the starting pitcher for the National League. He's the first ever Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher to be the starter in the All-Star Game in back-to-back years. He's the tenth ever NL pitcher to start back-to-back years. He's the savior of Pittsburgh three, four years from now. Handsome, LSU national champion, Paul Skenes is here.

And to my left, ladies and gentlemen, he has one of the hardest jobs in sports. He's the manager of the pinstripes. He's the man who my friend, Ty Schmidt, literally lives and dies with every single day. The AL manager, ladies and



gentlemen, skip Aaron Boone.

And the man who I was just speaking to a little bit ago is built perfectly for the position in which he plays. In his uniform, he looks fantastic. When he pitches, he has filthy moxie. Ladies and gentlemen, saving the city of Detroit, pitcher Tarik Skubal.

Now we need the starting lineups. We'll start with the National League with skipper Roberts.

DAVE ROBERTS: For the National League, obviously Pat mentioned Paul Skenes will be our starter. Leading off, designated hitter Shohei Ohtani.

Batting second, playing left field, Atlanta's own Ronald Acuña, Jr.

Batting third, playing second base, Ketel Marte from Arizona.

Batting fourth, playing first base, making a little homecoming, Freddie Freeman.

Batting fifth, playing third base, from San Diego, Manny Machado.

Batting sixth, doing the catching, from Los Angeles, Will Smith.

Batting seventh, playing right field, Chicago Cubs, Kyle Tucker.

Batting eighth, playing shortstop, switch bat, from the Mets, Francisco Lindor.

And batting ninth, making his first All-Star appearance, roaming center field, Pete Crow-Armstrong, from the Chicago Cubs.

PAT McAFEE: A lot of tough decisions there, and thank you for making those hard decisions, including the starting pitcher, Paul Skenes will be on the mound. Why was that the case for the National League?



DAVE ROBERTS: For me, it was easy. In the sense of, obviously, what Paul has done with performance should override and supersede anything, which he's done that. I think that when you're talking about the game where it's at, these two guys on stage with me, along with myself and Aaron, are guys that you could root for, are super talented, are going to be the faces of this game for years to come.

And so, for me, to have Paul represent the National League and, as you said, Pat, the first and only Pirates pitcher to ever do that in back-to-back games, All-Star games, unprecedented, and it wouldn't surprise me if he does it next year, as well.

But it's an honor to have him toe the rug for the National League.

PAT McAFEE: Cannot wait to watch. Thank you for what you're doing for Pittsburgh, Paul. I know this is what you look forward to most, Paul. You say give me the most amount of cameras, the most amount of lights and most amount of microphones. That's where I want to be. Thanks for coming to the press conference.

If you could, in a very uncomfortable way, because you hate compliments, can you talk about being the starter for the second year and what it means for you.

PAUL SKENES: It's a huge honor. Thank you, Doc, for giving that to me.

The All-Star Game is something that I think, for myself, I was lucky enough to do it last year. I don't imagine a scenario where I would turn down starting the All-Star Game.

It's just such a huge honor to be on this stage and play with all these unbelievable players, some of them that I've watched for years, and to be able to share a field with them is an awesome experience. So great to be back.

PAT McAFEE: We're thankful and lucky you're here. Great answer there. Nailed it.

Now we must go to the American League. Manager Boone, will you please reveal your starting lineup, please?

AARON BOONE: I will. We'll lead off with Gleyber Torres of the Detroit Tigers. He's had an outstanding year for what's been the best record in the American League so far, the Detroit Tigers, and he's been a tone-setter for them at the top, getting on base at an amazing clip.

Riley Greene, another young star for the Tigers, will bat second in left field.

Our captain in New York, the reigning MVP, Aaron Judge, will bat third and play right field.

Cal Raleigh will catch and bat fourth. He's in the middle of an amazing season. 38 home runs for a catcher in the first half of the season is hard to fathom.

Vladimir Guerrero, Jr., one of the game's feared hitters and becoming a regular at this event every single year, will be batting fifth.

And playing first base, Ryan O'Hearn will be our DH and batting sixth. He's put together now a couple really outstanding seasons with the Baltimore Orioles.

Junior Caminero, the young slugger for the Tampa Bay Rays, will bat seventh and play third base.

Javier Báez, in the middle of a resurgent season, has really just done really remarkable things this year, considering some tough seasons he's come off, playing center field from the Detroit Tigers.

And batting ninth, with his .332 batting average and his outstanding defense at shortstop, is the young Jacob Wilson.

So really excited to go at it with these guys tomorrow night. And obviously, to be able to give the ball to Tarik Skubal, one of the game's true aces coming off a Cy Young season last year and continuing that dominance in the first half of the season, 10-to-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio. What is it, 152 strikeouts now, 16 walks. Two things really hard to wrap your head around.

I think just speaks to his not only ability to command the baseball, but to do it in a dominant fashion. I can't wait to see him go get us off on a good note tomorrow night.

But excited to go at it with this group tomorrow night, and do it in Hotlanta.

PAT McAFEE: Hell yeah. Tarik, reigning Cy Young. You're the first Tigers pitcher to start in the All-Star Game in 12 years. I have a friend, Evan Fox, who loves the Tigers. From the Michigan area. Obviously, there's been a few runs, but you put them back on the map. Put them on your back, literally and figuratively.

How does it feel to do that for a city like Detroit? Why do you think this is your best stuff right now?

TARIK SKUBAL: I don't want to take credit for what our team's been able to do. We've got a great roster.



Obviously, we're pretty well represented at this game. It speaks to a lot of guys in the room. I just play my role, which is pitch. It's an honor to be here and it's an honor to have the trust of the guys in the clubhouse that every time I go out, they think we'll win. That's probably the coolest thing about this.

PAT McAFEE: What are your thoughts on the All-Star Game as a whole? It's a very storied thing in this world. But in sports as a whole, the Midsummer Classic is wonderful. What are your thoughts on this week and what it means for baseball?

TARIK SKUBAL: It's going to be fun. Anytime you get to be in a clubhouse with the game's best and to go against the game's best on the other side, it makes for a great product and I hope the fans appreciate that, that this really is the game's best players. It's an honor to share the room with them.

PAT McAFEE: In baseball, you have to throw strikes.

TARIK SKUBAL: No doubt.

PAT McAFEE: You can't just not tackle somebody. You have to do it.

TARIK SKUBAL: No doubt.

PAT McAFEE: You can get smoked out there, boys. Both of you.

Let's get some questions from actual baseball people.

Q. Tarik, do you anticipate bringing your emotion and stuff to the game tomorrow? I know you're an emotional player. How are you going to bring that to the All-Star stage?

TARIK SKUBAL: I plan to have a ton of fun. I'm going to go out and compete. Anytime you get to toe the rubber and the guys in the other box are the game's best, it's going to bring out the best in you. I'm excited for the opportunity.

Q. Dave, a few days ago, when Jacob Misorowski was named an All-Star, there was a lot of push-back. As someone who has managed a lot of these in the last few years, is there something that needs to change with the process in terms of getting pitchers to commit or naming All-Stars?

DAVE ROBERTS: This is a great question. I think it's a deeper conversation. I think, obviously, there's a lot of things in baseball where we've evolved as far as rules and

rosters and things like that which have needed to be; time of play, pace of play.

When you get to the All-Star Game, things that the Commissioner, the Players Association are still going to be digging into. I think for me, kind of my North Star is the All-Star Game should be the game's best players. It's about the fans and what the fans want to see.

So for this young kid to be named All-Star, I couldn't be more excited for him. He's thrilled to be here. I'm going to get him in there probably the fifth or the sixth inning, something like that, the seventh. And it's going to be electric. So the fans, the media, you're going to love it.

So, for me, it's an easy answer because if it brings excitement, attention to our game, then I'm all about it.

Q. The All-Star Game was moved out of Atlanta in '21 because of a law that former President Biden described as Jim Crow in the 21st century, and it was framed as a protest.

Dave, in the 2021 MLB Network special on stop Asian hate, you said, and I quote, I think it's being relentless with our voices. This is not something that is just an isolated moment in time that we're talking about. It's something that needs to be talked about on an ongoing basis and be relentless with it.

What happened to being relentless with it and why are we still in Atlanta when this is on the books.

PAT McAFEE: It was hard to understand. We were actually talking about that. Can you resay what you said there?

Q. There is a law on the books here in Atlanta, a voter suppression law, that Joe Biden has called Jim Crow of the 21st century.

Dave, in a 2021 MLB Network special, you said it's about being relentless with our voices and speaking up. This is not an isolated moment, and it needs to be something talked about on an ongoing basis and being relentless with it.

What happened to being relentless with our voices? Why are we in Atlanta when this law is still on the books and it's a dangerous situation to be a journalist in Atlanta because Atlanta has detained the most journalists by ICE.

PAT McAFEE: I believe the question was a political question about laws that are on the books and everything like that. And the All-Star Game was taken out, now it's



brought back? Interesting.

I don't know if any of us are the experts or the ones who should be giving answers on that. Respect and appreciate the way you feel about it. I would assume that there was a reason or some conversation that was had by the MLB and the state that all parties thought that this would be a wonderful host city for the All-Star Game, and I think everybody is all very excited to be back in the beautiful city of Atlanta. I think. I don't want to speak out of pocket for anybody, but I do believe.

With everything else you're talking about, I don't know if Dave is a lobbyist or Paul is a lobbyist or Tarik or Coach Boone. I think they would be great at it, if they decided to be as such.

But I think she was talking to you. I think so. I believe. Once again, it was hard to hear. Do you have any thoughts on Atlanta hosting the All-Star Game, whenever there was obviously some conversations in the past, I believe?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think Pat answered it perfect and honestly. I appreciate the question. I appreciate your thoughts. I do feel that I'm excited to be here. I think that it's a great city. I think baseball fans are excited to be here and celebrate these great athletes.

I'm not a politician. I do feel that everyone has their right to voice thoughts, but right now I really choose to just focus on the players and the game and be excited to be here.

For me, to be able to manage these guys and to manage against these guys, I'm honored. So I don't want to get into the politics. But thank you.

PAT McAFEE: With that being said, great for sports to showcase Atlanta, and we're lucky and thankful to do it.

Q. Paul and Tarik, with the ABS system being used tomorrow, do you envision you guys making a call for an appeal? And looking back at your short careers so far, are there any pitches in games you remember you wish you could have had a computer review?

TARIK SKUBAL: I know it's going to be implemented. Is it two challenges, or is it going to be unlimited, like Spring Training?

I don't plan on using them. I probably am not going to use them in the future. I'm going to let the catcher do that. I have this thing where I think everything is a strike until the umpire calls it a ball. With how good guys are behind the plate, Cal will be really good behind the plate. I don't know

the strike zone a ton.

But I guess there are some pitches that you think are strikes and you want them back, but I also think it's part of the game, and I love the human element of the game. I think maybe some other guys don't. But, yeah, those are my thoughts on it. I don't plan on using it, though.

PAT McAFEE: Paul, did you like the thought of a regulated strike zone?

PAUL SKENES: Pretty much want to echo what Tarik said. Pitchers think everything is a strike. Then you go back and look at it, and it's two, three balls off. So we should not be the ones that are challenging it.

I really do like the human element of the game. I think this is one of those things that you kind of think umpires are great until they're not. And so I could kind of care less, either way, to be honest.

PAT McAFEE: I love that you guys think terrible pitches are strikes. Respect. Such an optimistic approach to things.

Q. I have a question for Tarik and Paul. Hi, Tarik. Which batter are you looking forward to facing the most tomorrow?

TARIK SKUBAL: Hopefully, I only face three. That means I did a good job. What was the lineup again? Ohtani --

PAT McAFEE: Shohei, Acuña, and Marte.

TARIK SKUBAL: Who's hitting third tomorrow?

DAVE ROBERTS: Marte.

TARIK SKUBAL: If I had to pick one, it would be Shohei. What he does on both sides of the ball is really impressive.

PAT McAFEE: Do you have a question for Paul, too? Same question.

PAUL SKENES: Yeah, what he said. Hopefully just three hitters. I faced four last year. Judge was hitting fourth last year. I got to face him. Hopefully he's the last one tomorrow, too. We'll see.

Q. Paul and Tarik, it's not often that you get to look at the success of your season and how it compares league-wide. So I'm curious, how do you compartmentalize that and what are mindsets you'll take from All-Star Week carrying into second half?



TARIK SKUBAL: I don't really -- I mean, the goal to me of baseball is to win and win championships. So as much as this is an honor and I appreciate this moment and I'm going to have a good time over the next couple days, my focus is on winning a championship, and that's what the game's about.

So I don't really think that I've accomplished much until I win a championship.

PAUL SKENES: I think this is a good time to kind of reset. Obviously, the All-Star Game is tomorrow so we have, effectively, a two-day All-Star break. Hopefully just reset on those two days and go into the second half strong because it's pretty easy to have a poor second half and then everybody forgets about you starting the All-Star Game. Just got to keep going.

Q. Dave, what do you think this All-Star Week means for Freddie Freeman, being back in Atlanta and being an All-Star?

DAVE ROBERTS: It's something that I know once they announced it, that it was going to be held here, it was marked on his calendar. And then that was kind of his goal, was to get back here and get in front of the Braves' faithful that cheered him on for, what, 11, 12 years. So he's sleeping in his own bed for a couple nights.

Matt Olson, what just learned is Matt took his old locker so he doesn't have his old locker. It's a good move by Matt. He's a couple lockers down. He's back in his old clubhouse and he's excited. Like Paul touched on, it's a reset. Couple days. Take an at-bat or two and enjoy family and get ready for the second half.

PAT McAFEE: We appreciate you all so much for coming out. Shout out to you guys coming up here, facing the music. Tough questions. Tough questions from the media. Only more of those to come and hopefully celebratory ones, as well.

Have a great All-Star Week here in beautiful Atlanta, Georgia.

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