

NL Championship Series: Dodgers vs Brewers

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

American Family Field

Milwaukee Brewers

Manager Pat Murphy

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. All of us who work in Milwaukee have become accustomed to the openings. For those that are new to the Brewer bandwagon, why do you do them?

PAT MURPHY: Why do I do them? To make us all more comfortable. Everybody knows everybody. I know where you're from, what your intentions are, sometimes. I don't know.

The guy's here from the New York Post. Better not make a comment about the Mets or the Yankees or something, or refer to somebody. You know, it helps me a little bit. Strategic.

No, I just like everyone to, you know, have a voice and know where they're from and what they're in the room -- we may come across somebody sometimes, maybe not a journalist or a writer or a videographer, maybe just somebody hanging out that just came to watch.

Q. Like a married couple?

PAT MURPHY: The married couple thing has got me a little freaked out when they said, well, we've got a third one. And I was, like, okay, I don't want to hear about it. (Laughter).

Q. To the game, now that the team you're playing isn't 90 miles away, what kind of atmosphere are you expecting tonight? And how much does the fan interaction actually impact the game?

PAT MURPHY: Like I said, I was really, really, like, shocked when we went to Wrigley, how impactful that was, I thought, on the game. I thought they were incredible. I'm not taking a shot at our fans, because I get to see that all the time. And they do make a difference.

This season, the fans have made a difference. There's no question. And that's important.



But seeing what I saw in Wrigley Field, that was an incredible environment, home-field environment. Then you throw in the wind and the ivy and the brick wall and the basket and just how tough it is. It's right on top of you. It's a tough place to play, tough place to play.

So, yeah, the environments matter. What am I expecting tonight? I'm expecting our fans to show up.

And everybody wants to see the Dodgers play. They have some of the biggest stars in the game -- and. Really, I mean, some of the biggest stars in the game.

Look at this room. This room, not too many seats open. If it was the Brewers and the Biloxi Shuckers, you wouldn't have a full room. So the Dodgers bring it.

Q. When Abner was in here, he was talking about one of the differences, when he was hurt last year and the stuff he went through, he kind of learned to become a more disciplined pitcher. What's the difference you've seen in him now versus maybe last year, a couple years ago, in that regard?

PAT MURPHY: I think Abner has realized -- I think he has matured -- but I think he realizes we love him, you know what I mean? For some people it's hard to accept that love. And he realizes this team loves me, needs me and accepts me. With all my antics or whatever it is, they love me, they accept me, they need me. That's a great place to be where you know you have great worth with your team and you have value. That's a great feeling.

And I want that for our players to know that all of them have that place and value. That's kind of cool -- especially when these players haven't played for a long time. It adds to the fabric.

Q. I know Ashby can go more than one inning, but in general is there something you like or the organization has begun to like about an opener besides getting through the first inning? In other words, taking pressure off a young starter like Priester or Misiorowski? Is there something you've grown into



liking about it?

PAT MURPHY: One is it makes the other team make a choice: Do you want to bat those guys there, and you're going to get a leverage match-up early on. It's important. You saw what the first inning meant to the series, last series.

But I do think there's also a little softer landing for a rookie pitcher. I'm not sure those factors are that big, but it's basically now the true starter may not have to face those opposite-hand sluggers more than twice, because we all know the number is about three times around.

But it's case-by-case. Remember the game that this kid threw in Tampa? They took him out, whatever. I mean, it's none of my business. I wasn't in on it, so I don't know all the particulars. But I remember watching that game, and I remember watching the other dugout. When they took this kid out, everybody went, whew, thank God. I don't care who else is coming in. So there's something to it.

Q. On some of the roster decisions, starting with Mears and Myers, is Mears healthy? Was it just a matter of getting the length to match-ups out of Myers?

PAT MURPHY: Mears is off and Myers is on. Mears has been unbelievable for us this year. He's been that get-out-of-a jam guy. But he's really been most effective when used in small spurts. We're in a seven-game series and we basically have one and a half starters available or maybe a total of two starters available as far as length and where they are right now in the season.

So with that, we've got to look for more length. Most people drop the position player and add another pitcher. We chose not to for particular reasons, and then gained some more length out of that.

Q. On the left-handed side, just the decision to stick with Gasser instead of Rob Z and DL as the other options there?

PAT MURPHY: Yeah, those are all big discussions. Rob Z, again, short increments, right? They go 1, 4, 7 with their deal. We've done that all year -- 1, 4, 7 with our three lefties. They do 1, 4, 7 mostly. So the Rob Z thing, you'll get two bad match-ups.

And if they were to ever hit for Muncy you might get zero match-ups. And that was that. And he's short -- I don't mean short -- you know? He's a one-inning guy. All right. Whereas Gasser and DL Hall can extend. Gasser especially can get out to out to 55, 60 pitches. DL hasn't

been stretched out that far recently. And we made the decision to go with Gasser.

Q. On a scale of 0 percent to 100 percent, would you share with us the odds --

PAT MURPHY: You love this inside information. We should have you in the office and just give you all our forms so you can be part of the whole thing.

Q. Great.

PAT MURPHY: Jump in there.

Q. The odds Priester pitches tonight. What would that mean for the rest of the series, his availability?

PAT MURPHY: I think the odds of Priester throwing today is about 73 percent -- 71 percent.

Q. When you guys are making the decision to roll the lefty out against some of those guys at the top as an opener, what is it about Ashby specifically that has made him that best fit for you guys or makes you think he's that best fit over some other lefties like Koenig or Gasser?

PAT MURPHY: That's a great question too. Ashby's done it. He's done it recently. I like Koenig more at the end, his versatility, even his length, really.

Ash has been used a lot. So do we go Ash one inning? Do we go through Muncy? That's the other thought. So I don't know.

Is Ash better against righties a little bit with the sinker? Who knows? That goes into it.

Q. Yesterday you talked about Ohtani as a pitcher, but how are you going to utilize Ohtani as a hitter? The Phillies used a bunch of lefties and he struggled a little bit. So is that going to be the key for you?

PAT MURPHY: I think most people struggle against Sanchez, Luzardo and Suarez. Those guys are really, really good, really good. So I don't consider Ohtani struggling. I don't. It's baseball.

You can go through 30 at-bats or 50 at-bats and not put up the same numbers and maybe be hitting the ball hard or whatever. But I don't have Ohtani struggling.

But I want to throw lefties against him whenever we can. It's always harder for a lot of those lefties to face lefties that are throwing 95 and above and sinkers into them.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

The way you do it, here's how you beat every great hitter. Babe Ruth pitch the same way: Hard in here as you can, and it opens up over there sometimes. Do you double up in here or maybe not? Or do you open the breaking ball because he's looking for it in here. It's a little cat-and-mouse thing. And that's what we will do.

Q. At the end of last series, you shouted out the coaching staff. Couple guys that are kind of on the bottom of the coaching-staff ladder, Christian Correa and Adam Weisenburger, the bullpen catchers. How important are they to what you're trying to do?

PAT MURPHY: That whole position, bullpen catcher, is not like the old days where all he did was only catch in the pen. Now they're involved in scouting reports and all sorts of things. We have another one, Tyler Duvall, who is involved with the front office.

But those guys, Weis has caught in our system and we've known him a while. He's been with us a number of years. They have catch partners that's very important to the pitchers. They're involved in the pen. They understand the guys' stuff. They understand their routine. They're very, very important. It's like a caddie in golf, very important.

Q. In trusting Ashby to open tonight, how do you weigh the guy he has been for so much of the year versus the guy the way he pitched against the Cubs?

PAT MURPHY: I think he pitched well against the Cubs. Busch hit a ground ball up the middle. Then he hit a guy on a bounced breaking ball. The three-run homer, they had his pitches, and Suzuki looked to first and saw the sign. It was a change-up, and hit a high change-up, which is his third pitch.

I think he pitched well. And he's pitched well all year, and he's one of our guys. We're not looking at a small sample of what he's done lately, especially if the ball's coming out good. And he's confident.

Q. You guys like to be aggressive on the bases. That's kind of your game. You didn't have your first two stolen bases against that Game 5 of the Cubs --

PAT MURPHY: We had three. They didn't give us one on the Yelich steal. It's utterly ridiculous. I'll argue with anybody about that. It's a stolen base. Because they didn't throw the ball. Why did you give Sal a steal then, because they didn't make an attempt on Sal, either? Right? The other day when he left early. They don't make an attempt on Sal. And you don't give Yelich one for third? That's preposterous.

Q. I'll call it three.

PAT MURPHY: Thank you. I feel so much better.

Q. In a series like this, how do you balance guys being aggressive and playing your game, but also not wanting to take away from a big inning for those guys like those guys like Jackson, Williams and Yelly?

PAT MURPHY: What you have to think about is bases are really, really important. But they're not more important than outs, you know what I mean? You've got 27 outs to work with in the first nine, you can't afford to make silly outs.

But if the bag is there, if the bag is there, you've got to take it, or you want that pitcher to be worried that you might take it. Because if he's thinking about he might take it, that might change how he executes that pitch.

So the threat of the steal is real. It's real. And if I can get the third baseman to play on the grass for a right-handed hitter because he bunts, haven't I helped myself pitching-wise?

But it has to be legitimate. You have to be able to put down the bunt. If he backs off and covers his position, then I've got to be able to bunt. Then if I do, it's like, wow, then the pitcher has to run all the way over there, turn to a left-hander, he's got to go all the way around it, throw to first, catch his breath. It's more than you think.

It seems so easy, but we have to take advantage of stuff like that because we've got guys playing that have 80 games in the big leagues and we've got to play that tight. That's part of our offense.

Q. You touched on it with the value of having more stretched-out guys in a series like this, but seven-game series with two days off versus a five-gamer with three days off, does that also change how much room you have to manage aggressively, or can it change the kind of roles that guys might be called on to fill throughout this series?

PAT MURPHY: That's a great question. It does. It does. And it's one of those things where it's, win tonight, but when you get to about Game 4, you better be careful of what you've done to your pitching staff.

So it might show up Game 4, Game 5, if you aren't mindful. So there's all sorts of that into it. Now we're still playing win tonight, that's utmost, win tonight. But it's first game. Now, when you get into the second game, especially the third game, okay, we just had a day off, how much do you



want to use here, what do you have to think about? That's where you can get exposed because now your thinking is, ah, we're not playing win tonight, we're playing, hey, we've got to pitch these guys because these guys are gassed. We've got to try to keep ourselves from that situation. Comes down to depth and quality of depth.

Q. You talk a lot about the who in the room. When it comes to Quinn Priester specifically, what gives you the confidence to see how resilient he was after the early season struggles that he'll bounce back coming into this series?

PAT MURPHY: There isn't a guy in that room that doesn't trust Quinn because they've watched him go through that very thing. He came as a very unfinished product. And he's still an unfinished product. I call him a rookie because he's never really pitched consistently like he has this year.

When we got him, he had some starts where, whew, this guy needs some work. Maybe not, maybe not ready. He just stepped up. It was through that adversity, as I mentioned, the Cubs game that was here and they waxed him, you saw him grow and come back out with a focus and a certainty and a conviction that said, I can do this. And then he got on a roll.

And man, it was, wow, pretty special. Unknown, a virtual unknown. I'm sure that most Dodger players can't name eight guys on our roster. No offense to them, they shouldn't have to know the names, but these are some guys that hopefully they know their names by the time it's over. You never know.

One of our clubbies last night, our clubbies, one of our clubhouse attendants gave Mookie a ride. It was a pretty long ride all the way out to the cars. Passed me right by like I wasn't even there. It was like zzz. I'm, like, hey, 10 years, I've never gotten a ride. It was Mookie in front smiling.

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