

NL Championship Series: Dodgers vs Brewers

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American Family Field

Los Angeles Dodgers

Andrew Friedman

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. People are going to watch this series, obviously for the baseball, but see a big economic disparity between you guys and Milwaukee. I'm curious, from a front-office perspective, what have you seen from how Milwaukee has built their rosters -- not just this last year, the last couple of years -- that have made them a perennial postseason contender?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: Yeah, the Brewers are a really good team. Team speed, defense, they don't chase, put the ball in play. They do a lot of things well. And I think the depth of their roster really helps them withstand 162 games and also puts them in position to be a really competitive team in October.

So I've known Matt Arnold for a long time. I think what him and his team have done is incredible -- not surprising. But just the attention to detail, the way the roster fits together, it's really impressive.

Q. Obviously the Brewers got the best of the Dodgers during the regular season. As you guys went back and looked at or reflected on those match-ups in those series, what did you see that posed to be the biggest challenge for the Dodgers? When you go into this match-up today, how different is the team today just considering you were without, whether it was Blake Snell, some others?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: Yeah, we're just looking to win a game against them. Going on six in the regular season, and we earned it, we deserved it. They pitched really well against us. We didn't have our typical kind of approach and game plan. They got us off that a little bit, which is helpful to have lived through and seen.

We also weren't at full -- Munce wasn't in there. But, again, they're a really good team, a really good pitching staff. I think those six games and going through it and being able to postmortem and look at that, I think it will be helpful



going forward.

But, again, their pitching staff is really good. And coming off the series against a really good pitching staff, runs are going to be at a premium. Fortunately for us we feel our pitching staff is really good as well.

Q. You had talked about your background with Matt Arnold and how you weren't really surprised he's been able to do what he has here. From your time together in Tampa Bay, what did you kind of see in him that made you confident in his ability to do what he's been able to do here?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: He's a great evaluator. He was in the middle of a lot of things that we did and had success with the Rays. Really good evaluator, incredibly hard working, curious. Just watching him continue to grow and develop has been fun to watch, less fun those six games that we couldn't win against them this year.

But he's really talented and he's got a good staff around him. And just looking at the different moves they've made over the years, it's helped put them in this position.

Q. You already had very good rotation pieces going into free agency last winter. What made you say, hey, you know what, I think we need Blake Snell, too?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: I've known Blake a long time. And just getting a chance to watch that maturation over a 12-year period and seeing that growth, we felt really strongly that not only could he help us in the regular season in accomplishing that first goal, but what he would bring to our staff in October -- everyone wants to pitch in October. I think for some it is literally a part of their identity and what they yearn for more than anything. And I think Blake is one of those guys.

So in talking to him early in the offseason, or even over the years, that part was clear. And I think just he loves those moments. And just betting on the pitcher, the head, how much he cares was something that he was the number one target for us this offseason.

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Q. I'm curious, when you and your staff did your research over the winter about why it was so hard to repeat and what you needed to be wary of coming into the season, what played out the way you thought and what played out differently?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: I haven't really had a chance to kind of think through the '25 season -- living it day to day but not really being able to rise above it to really assess. Living it, there were definitely challenging moments. How much of that was residue of that or just the peaks and valleys that happen over the course of 162 games.

I mean, we talked about it a lot this offseason that two potential pitfalls that we felt really good about -- one was how our guys are wired and that complacency wasn't going to be something that would set in, like them being focused on and driven by legacy and doing something that's so incredible difficult.

And the second one is usually if you're the last team standing at the end of October, you've used a lot of your pitching very aggressively throughout the month to do it. And we didn't really have that.

Now, our bullpen did, but didn't have it in the conventional way. So adding some fresh arms we thought would be helpful with that. But the kind of day-to-day stuff, I haven't had a chance to kind of reflect back on yet.

Q. Following up on Matt Arnold and the Brewers, just to drill down, if you can, for an extended run like they're on, like you had in Tampa, what's the most important thing or two when you didn't have payroll that you have to get right to make it through seven or eight years of making the playoffs?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: I think every market, every situation has its own unique challenges. And I think knowing who you are and what you need to do to have success -- it's different for every market. But staying true to who you are, having a group that works really well together, I think collaboration throughout departments is critical because you have to do it in a less conventional way.

I think identifying and leaning into the strengths and the advantages that you do have -- I used to give this analogy, but when I was with the Rays, I was able to, if you think about it, doctor. We were able to be knee specialists and know every single thing about the knee. We didn't have to worry about any other part of the body.

And I came to the Dodgers, and it was, like, oh, my God, I have to learn everything about the body. And so in

different situations, it's knowing who you are, what your advantages are and attacking that. I think they've done that exceptionally well.

Q. How do you think Kershaw has handled a role he's not used to throughout his career? And being a part of this best-of-seven series, where do you think he can provide value for you?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: I think it's something, the outing he had against the Phillies, it had been a long period of time between throwing and it's a different role. He would never make that excuse, but it was very uncharacteristic command from him, which you think of command and you think of Clayton Kershaw.

So I think him having experienced that will be helpful. His mindset all along has been, I want to do whatever I can to help us win. And he's embodied that. And I would bet on him to be a part of helping us win this series.

Q. Dave touched on it a little bit but could you walk us through the decision to add Ben Casparius to the roster when there's guys like Henriquez, Kopech or even Kyle Hurt maybe, who are staying hot?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: Ben obviously was big for us this year. Had gotten off track a little bit. So we sent him down and challenged him with what to work on. And he did.

And you can go one of two ways when those moments happen. And he chose the path of attacking exactly what we'd kind of laid out for him and put himself in a really good spot.

So going through this lineup and what we felt like -- we had what we felt like were a lot of good choices, but felt like Ben was the right one for us.

Q. Did you come out of the DS with any sort of concern level moving forward with Shohei offensively given how he looked last series? I know moving him back in the rotation is more about lining guys on rest, but because he's not having to pitch one of the first two games, do you think that helps concentrate just on hitting here this week?

ANDREW FRIEDMAN: I think the biggest thing is the stuff that the Phillies threw at us obviously was really good. But even beyond that, I thought the execution was as good as it can possibly be.

So I think the combination of those things lining up -- look, if a pitcher who has really good stuff executes at an A-plus level, hitters aren't going to hit. Hitting is way too difficult.



It's about hitting mistakes more than not. And they executed it on him at an elite rate.

So could some swing decisions help and potentially get a mistake? For sure, but I think it was the most impressive execution against a hitter I've ever seen.

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