

# NL Division Series: Cubs vs Brewers

Friday, October 3, 2025

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

American Family Field

**Chicago Cubs**

**Manager Craig Counsell**

Workout Day Press Conference

**Q. Couns, your feelings just sitting up there, kind of a full-circle moment in a way, being back in this room?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: No, I think we've been over that part. I think we're over that part. We're getting ready for a playoff series and trying to advance to have a chance to play in the World Series.

That's the job at hand right now, and that's the focus right now. We've already done the other stuff. That's how I'm looking at it.

**Q. I meant more than, like, at that exact desk and stuff, and just being --**

CRAIG COUNSELL: Oh. I guess I did spend a lot of time in here, yeah, that's right. (Laughter).

Weren't that many people in the room usually. Maybe three of you.

**Q. Did you sleep good last night?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: Great.

**Q. What is the calculus that you will use to determine your pitching progression for tomorrow's game? How much is science? How much is wear and tear on your pitchers right now? And how difficult is that process right now for you?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I mean, I think we're going into this with a couple plans. We're going to let everybody throw today and then make a decision after that. But we've definitely got what we'd prefer to do.

We'll just see kind of where everybody is at today I think is important. There's obviously some -- we asked some guys to do a lot, so we'll just check on everybody, and that will



kind of instruct us on what we're going to do.

**Q. Last night after all the celebrations and everything, you were saying kind of there's no better atmosphere than Cubs-Brewers, and this is the first meeting of those two teams in the playoffs. What's it mean to be a part of that?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I mean, I think, at least from my perspective kind of being on both sides of it, I think the regular season matchups are awesome. It's a lot of fun. And it's really -- a lot of times there's extra energy from fans and there's fans from both teams in the building. That's always made it a lot of fun.

These are two cities that are close together, very close. I think each city's residents have thoughts about each other's residents. Harmless, obviously.

But yeah, so the proximity of the cities makes it fun, no doubt about it, and the proximity makes rivalries, too, and teams being good makes rivalries.

**Q. Knowing this team as well as you do and playing them as much as Cubs and Brewers play, is there anything that you maybe wouldn't know about them or that they wouldn't know about you at this point?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: I mean, I would tell you that -- we had an advance meeting, like coaching advance meeting. It was shorter than the Padre meeting. There is a lot more knowledge. Most of it is because we play them more and we've played them more recently. Quintin Berry was on the coaching staff last year. I was obviously part of the organization, know a lot of the players. The managers know each other pretty well.

There is kind of less, and we're very aware of each other stylistically, no question about it.

**Q. Speaking of that familiarity, have you found in the games you've managed against Murph that you can better anticipate his moves than in games against other teams?**



CRAIG COUNSELL: I mean, I think baseball is less about that than -- I see the Brewers play on how Murph would want a team to play. That doesn't help you strategically. It's just, you're building kind of teams and what's important to you. That's good coaching. The things that are important to him come through in his team.

That's what I see the most. It doesn't help anticipate first and thirds or some small detail like that necessarily. There are a few things, but those are very small details. But stylistically the team plays in a way that he wants them to play, and that's good coaching.

**Q. Just to follow up on that, how specifically have they taken on that personality in terms of how Murph would want them to play from what you've seen of the Brewers this year?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: How specifically? I mean, they don't swing a lot. Like their team doesn't swing a lot. Because he tells them not to swing. (Laughter). Good coaching.

**Q. Sticking with the familiar faces, Colin Rea, you had him over in Milwaukee; he's here in Chicago. What was it -- what attracted you to having him on the team, and what he's meant to the club this year?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, Colin was exactly what we had hoped for and probably more. When I talked to Colin in the offseason and tried to lay out this is what's going to happen and this is what we would like to happen, it's this faith that Colin had to have in us to know that he wasn't maybe in the top 5 starters to start the season but was going to make a lot of starts.

I knew he was going to make a lot of starts, but you can't promise that at the beginning. For him to have faith to join us, I think, was really important.

Man, he's just been the glue -- he's been a lot of glue for us is the best way to describe it. He's glue in the clubhouse in terms of how he treats everybody around the building; his performances have been just that. He's stepped up late in the season at some really important times. He's gotten seemingly stronger as the season has went on. His contribution has been significant.

We made a good decision there, and I'm glad Colin agreed to join us.

**Q. The Wild Card compared to the DS, I would imagine on the pitching front that obviously changes things with a longer series, but I'm curious, pitching and maybe emotions, everything else that goes into it, what do you anticipate being different?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: The first thing that I notice looking ahead is just the off-days. We played three straight games, and I don't want to say there's not time to put your head up, but that's what it feels like.

With this series, there's three off-days in the series. That's significantly different. I think it's going to create a little bit of a different feel to the series.

That's number one. Still, look, three games and five games, man, in terms of win three or win two, that's not a big difference. So it means the gas pedal is down, like, immediately for everybody. I don't think that's going to change at all.

**Q. Earlier in the season a couple of us were talking to Yelich and he suggested maybe the Cubs had more pressure on them in a race with the Brewers because of the budget and the market and everything. They won the division. Do you think that flips? You've been a part of this as a player and a manager. Do players feel that kind of pressure, outside expectations or even inside expectations?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I think we're past that right now. It's gotten so small, man. You do your job, you've got one game and it's everything to win it, and if you don't, you walk away really disappointed. You're going to have another game, but that's where your focus is down to. It's like very small moments. It's tomorrow at 1:00; that's it. There's no outside noise right now. It's tomorrow at 1:00.

I don't even, like -- that's like a foreign language you're speaking right there to me right now. Tomorrow at 1:00. That's it.

**Q. How is Cade Horton doing, and would he be available for the next round do you think?**

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, Cade will not be active this series. He feels good, but we're not doing anything that would -- we're encouraging healing right now, so we're not doing anything that would cause pain. We haven't pushed him to a place that we would test that.

I think as we get into later this week, we're going to have to decide if it's time to do that, and that decision has not been made yet.

**Q. Craig, how Counsell-tough are your players right now? You've made it a point that playing every day and embracing that is a big part of what you expect from your team. How have they embraced that, and how do you think that's helped their play?**



CRAIG COUNSELL: Well, I think they've done it all year. I think they've -- it's funny how quickly, like, three games pushes the young player questions, they're gone. You're not a young player if you survive that anymore.

But I think that just tells you that you're already prepared for it when you enter it, no matter if you've done it or not. That's the goal. That's what you try to do. You try to prepare your players for the situations they're going to be in, for the bad stuff, for the -- mostly for the bad stuff that's ahead of them, to warn them and to take care of them. But they're ready for it. They're going to be ready for this. This is going to be a brand new thing and a brand new environment, and just a little bit different.

Obviously we had three home games, so first experience on the road for some of these guys. But they're ready for it. They proved it, and that part of it is not a question for me.

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