

NL Division Series: Cubs vs Brewers

Saturday, October 4, 2025

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

American Family Field

Chicago Cubs

Dansby Swanson

Nico Hoerner

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. For both of you, very familiar with Freddy Peralta. Without giving too much away, what's the key to getting off to a good start here?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, faced him a lot over the years. Like everybody, he kind of has added to his game, changed some, but he's had a great season, and yeah, looking forward to competing against him today.

DANSBY SWANSON: He's obviously, like Nico said, just kind of continued to evolve over his career and continuously gotten better. He's one of those matchups that you love going into face him just because of the competition.

In moments like that, that's all you can really ask for.

Q. Nico, obviously you've played in a lot of regular season games, but between you guys and the Brewers; Dansby, you've gotten a taste of it the last couple years. What do you anticipate a series like this being between these two clubs, these two fan bases, especially with the first time these teams have met in the postseason?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, it gets loud at this ballpark in a really fun way. You have two fan bases that overlap in location, obviously, a lot, and great energy from both fan bases, especially when the roof is closed it's really loud. I think it'll be open today, but I think you expect that with the playoffs and then some, and just great atmospheres from the start.

DANSBY SWANSON: I think I fully didn't realize kind of the rivalry, if you will, that existed. But it's been so much fun to be a part of. Obviously we've gone back and forth so much.



Both of us have had such great seasons this year, so it's fun to be able to continue it during this time of year.

Q. For both of you, you guys got a lot of attention in a positive way because of your defense last round. What are the one or two most important things in preparing to be a very good defensive player?

NICO HOERNER: I think one thing that can be a challenge throughout the 162 is mentally actually expecting the ball to be hit to you every single pitch. It sounds kind of silly, but there's just a level of focus and readiness beyond the skills themselves puts you in a great place to make plays, and I think in some ways the postseason continues to bring that out of you naturally, where the heightened focus and intensity puts you in a really great place to just go compete and make plays.

And the same goes for offensively, too. Kind of have that like eighth, ninth inning readiness the whole time, and that is a really great feeling.

DANSBY SWANSON: I'd say preparedness, whether it's your routine stuff before the game. Nico does such a great job of getting out there and sticking to the things that have made him such a great defender over the years, but also he's kind of referring to the mental preparedness, understanding situation, understanding where the ball can take you, what needs to happen, communicating with guys, and just staying ready.

So you kind of already played out different scenarios in your head and you understand if the ball goes a certain way that this is kind of what needs to happen. If it goes to a different place, the other possibilities that can happen. I would say the combination of those two things.

Q. To either of you, y'all faced Quinn Priester a couple times during the regular season. You'll probably see him at some point during the series. From your perspectives what's made him so effective this year and kept you off balance?

DANSBY SWANSON: I think he's been a guy that I feel



like has always had really good stuff. He's always kind of had a little bit of deception, kind of a quick arm, can hide the ball some, and similar to Freddy, he's evolved his game a little bit, changed the ways in which he's pitched throughout this year, and obviously has had a lot of success doing it.

I know he's kind of moved around a couple times, but has obviously found a home here in Milwaukee and has had a really good year.

Q. Along the defensive lines, can you describe how you guys feed off each other and maybe how that has evolved over the years when you're playing there up the middle?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, I think just throughout our group, whether it's us two up the middle or throughout the defense, there's just a really high standard. There's not one way to go about it. But I think when you're around other people that are doing things at a high level, it brings out the best in yourself.

As we've found more consistency within our lineup as well, you just get a feel for everybody that's around you and how the spacing works and you kind of get in a rhythm as a group, and I think that makes all of us better.

Q. Nico, when you moved off of shortstop when Dansby signed here, was this sort of what you envisioned in terms of how the Cubs should play and how it could work? How do you look back on that moment in both of your careers?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, absolutely. I think the strength of the team often starts up the middle defensively between us two up the middle and then knowing Pete was on the way, and it starts to create a real strong backbone for a defense.

We've got potential Gold Glovers in other spots in the field as well, so you throw that all together and you know you have a really great chance to keep runs off the board. A lot of these playoff games throughout baseball have been so low scoring. Every run is at a premium, so you're able to take a couple away in one game, it's a huge deal.

Q. Dansby, similar thought there. I think Jed really was focused on defense when you were a free agent. Did he sell that to you and did that attract you to the idea of coming to Chicago, how defense was going to be such a big focus?

DANSBY SWANSON: I think it's a part that can often get overlooked when building teams. It's not always, like, the coolest or sexiest thing. But when you convert outs into

outs and convert plays that aren't typically outs into outs, it really can limit another team's chances of scoring.

Like Nico said, runs are at a premium in the postseason, and I think it just really increases your chances of winning when you play good defense.

In terms of coming here, I understood that there were great defenders at every level, at every position, and that this was definitely going to be part of our identity, which is a really good identity to have.

Q. Craig made the comment yesterday like how going into the Wild Card series we could ask about younger players and how they'll respond, and then you win and it goes out the window and you see like, oh, they handle it. I'm curious what you saw just from your team as a whole what stood out to you and what made you successful in that series?

NICO HOERNER: I feel like just as a group we did a good job of keeping the main thing the main thing. There's going to be things that go wrong for all of us individually over the course of three or five games and we might feel stronger in this heightened state that we're in, but I think everyone did a nice job of keeping the focus of just winning the series above all else, and a lot of the individual stuff follows from there.

I felt like our group energy was really pulling in the same direction.

DANSBY SWANSON: I would say just the competition factor. It was just so refreshing just to have a group full of everyone in the dugout, everyone on the field, coaching staff, like you say, focused on one thing and that's competing.

The freedom to just go compete and have the chips fall wherever they may.

Q. We've asked you guys a lot about defense, but I'm curious, the other side of the ball how you would define your group offensively?

NICO HOERNER: I think versatility is a big part of it. We've had stretches of the season where we straight-up out-slugged teams and that's a really simple way of winning, and then there's days where that doesn't show up as much and you have the ability to score with your legs or contact or situational hitting, and I think in the playoffs you're going to be asked to do all sorts of types of winning, and Wrigley Field asks that as well with the different factors we have there.

Yeah, as a group I think we have a nice variety of offensive players that as a whole creates a really effective lineup.

Q. With Craig getting booed every time he does anything here, I feel like this group has kind of taken some joy from that. How do you describe the give and take with him in the dugout as those moments have unfolded over the last couple years?

DANSBY SWANSON: I think Couns has always done such a great job of just being able to handle anything and everything thrown at him, not just some of the crowd reactions here but just in general.

Whether our team is on a hot streak or not playing so well or struggling to find an identity here and there, he's always just been even keeled each and every day and really allowed us to go out and compete to win games and done his best to put us in a position to be successful as a group.

You can't really ask more from a manager than having his players' backs and putting them in a position to be successful. He's always trying to find ways that are going to help us be better and more successful as a team and win more games. There's really nothing you can ask more from the guy that's in charge.

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