

NL Division Series: Cubs vs Brewers

Saturday, October 4, 2025

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

American Family Field

Chicago Cubs

Manager Craig Counsell

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. Can you just go into the decision to pretty much carry the same roster and the roster breakdown split from position player and pitchers and then specifically the addition to add Ben Brown?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah. Well, we switched out Taylor Rogers for Ben. I think a little bit of a nod to their personnel and they way we thought their lineups would work, a little bit of a nod to the off-days frankly of what the off-days probably do in this series.

Then adding Ben, just a different stuff mix than we think we have out there right now. Simple as that.

Q. Can you document how you ended up with Boyd on three days' rest, the other choices, all that stuff?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Well, I think really since Matthew came out of -- probably since Matthew got to the dugout in Game 1, he was thinking about pitching this game. I think we were thinking about him pitching this game. That's kind of how this all went down.

Obviously he was up on Thursday night, but essentially that served as -- he was also talking about throwing after the game if we want, and we're like, you're not doing that, that makes no sense.

I joked with him after the game that I got you up so you wouldn't throw after the game here.

He didn't make an -- if this was a normal start and he threw 90 pitches we wouldn't consider this, but because he threw so few pitches he knew he was going to be able to recover, and we thought he'd be able to recover quickly.

Q. What has stuck out to you about Boyd like in Game 1 and how he has approached the postseason so far in his career?



CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I think you just want guys to go out there that are going to be themselves, just do what they're good at. Just that. And you're confident that Matthew is going to go out there and do that. That's what he did. He was up for it, got us to a spot in the game where we thought we could manage the rest of the game.

Matthew is going to go out there and be himself. He still has to execute and he's got a good team over there trying to beat him, but he's going to pitch to his strengths.

Q. Obviously you have to manage aggressively in the postseason anyway, but because of the uniqueness of the off-days surrounding the first couple days of the series, do you feel like you can manage more aggressively the bullpen because you know those off-days are built in?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Look, I think the -- there are some of our pitchers that are still feeling the effects of the last series. You have to acknowledge that, right? We had some guys work really hard.

But in general, yes. By the time we get to Monday, yeah. We're good.

But I think today we've got -- I don't think we can maybe do some things that we've done in the past or done in the previous series.

But the off-days do change bullpen usage a thousand percent. They do. There's three off-days in a five-game series. That changes what a reliever can do, no question about it. It changes, like, who your starters are going to be for the series.

Q. A lot of people were thinking maybe Javier Assad would make one of these playoff rosters, seemed to be pitching well at the end of the year. What was the decision not to take him?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I think essentially it was really just what are we going to need from the roster and just some different types of pitchers down there.



I thought Ben's ability to strike somebody out is something that we thought -- it's kind of a little small moment, but it could be something that -- that's something Ben can do.

Whether that comes up or not -- the back end pitchers, frankly, with the off-days, I'm not sure we're going to -- I think the goal was not to get to them honestly because you get enough from your other guys, but Javier is certainly under consideration. He was under strong consideration for this roster, absolutely, and it was a difficult decision.

But we ended up going with Ben.

Q. I'm not sure how much you'll talk about Brad Keller usage things, but the second inning was much different than the first. Did that give you some pause about multiple innings with him?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Well, the second inning, it's the ninth inning, it's to win the series. It was going to be a difficult inning.

I told Tommy, I said, Tommy, we're going to have two guys up immediately because it was just going to be a hard inning.

It absolutely does not rule Brad out from multiple innings at all. He's going to pitch multiple innings, one-plus or two-inning outings again. That's a tough inning. The second inning of closing out a playoff series, I don't care who's out there; that's a tough inning.

Q. Could J-Mo come back on short rest like a Boyd, or is that a different situation? And are you thinking about your Game 2 yet or are you going to wait until after everything?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I think plans -- certainly thinking about plans for Game 2. But we'll tell you with the day off, like not thinking about it as much, right, because the day off I think could change kind of how we think about it and give us some time, too. You know, give anybody who pitched in today's game time to recover for Monday's game.

Thinking about it a little differently because of that and maybe a little less in terms of, like, planning right now.

Q. Would Taillon be available?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Wednesday, that's three days? It's on the table, yeah.

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