

NL Division Series: Cubs vs Brewers

Monday, October 6, 2025

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

American Family Field

Chicago Cubs

Coach Craig Counsell

Pregame 2 Press Conference

Q. Craig, in a playoff atmosphere when you're maybe asking for less outs from a pitcher, can a solo home run be looked at differently than in the regular season when you're getting more length maybe out of a starter?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I mean, look, I think -- I'm not sure exactly what you're asking, but I think runs are certainly -- feel like they're at a premium more in playoff games. It's a lower run scoring environment, so just runs in general, yeah. How they score is how they score. That's just how they score.

Shota has given up home runs. He doesn't give up a lot of hits. He doesn't walk people. Everybody gives up runs some way. That's how he gives up his runs.

Q. With them going with an opener, what all were you weighing as you decided to put Turner up in the lead-off spot?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I think essentially this is maybe -- this is a guy that I think is tough on left-handed hitters, and so as you go through the game, you kind of look, is there a spot for Justin here?

We haven't found one thus far because there's always been more game left than maybe at-bat against a right-handed pitcher remaining that we did not want to take Michael out for.

But we can guarantee an at-bat against a guy and know Michael is still available the rest of the game, so we're going to take advantage of that and use Justin's at-bat right here and then see what happens the rest of the game.

Q. Obviously a lot of the team has spoke highly of Justin, his leadership. What have you seen about his ability at a moment's notice to be ready, whether it's



pinch-hitting or like tonight, being ready to start the game off for you guys?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Justin has got -- he's kind of the godfather of playoff experience for our guys, right? He's got a ton of it. There's no moment that Justin Turner is not going to be prepared for and ready for.

Look, we're going to make a lot of this at-bat, but it's one at-bat against a good pitcher, and anything can happen.

I'm happy Justin is getting this opportunity. He's meant a lot to this team, and it's a good spot for it. He has impacted every single player on this team in a good way, absolutely.

This is the at-bat -- these are kind of the matchups that we signed him for.

Q. I guess the latest on Horton's progress and what's the plan for tomorrow's workout day?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Everything is going very well for Cade. We are going to kind of ramp up activity as we get back to Wrigley tomorrow. Then we'll know more. But this has been -- I don't know what day the news came out, Sunday last week, so like 10 days. It's been all very good news since then, and he's been pain-free. Every throwing session has been pain-free and pushing it a little bit more. So we keep trying to take steps forward, and we'll continue to do that with even more intensity tomorrow actually in Wrigley.

Q. With Shota and the idea that in these games he doesn't need to go as deep into the game, I remember with Cade you would talk about like in that Houston outing amping it up when you don't need to. I know Shota is very experienced and self-aware, but as he tries to use his stuff differently, was that something he learned from the last outing to this one or any sort of conversation with him?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, look, when we say amp up the stuff, I think knowing that you might not throw 90, 95 pitches, we're asking for -- it's velocity, right?



But at the expense of command, that's the balancing act here, right?

I think that's what Shota has to process; know what I mean?

I think we just tell him, you're not saving stuff in the tank for necessarily a full 95 pitches or 100 pitches of a game. Just make sure he understands that, and then he kind of has to process that how he needs to. Adrenaline will help you, no question about it. Adrenaline helps in these situations.

But command is still just as important, if not more important.

Q. Was the decision making for picking out your starter today any different from when you picked out Boyd? In other words, all the information and the groups of people that you talked to, was that any different this time?

CRAIG COUNSELL: No. I mean, it was Shota from kind of the time he came out of Game 2, he was going to be ready to pitch in Game 2 in the DS.

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