

NL Division Series: Cubs vs Brewers

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Wrigley Field

Chicago Cubs

Craig Counsell

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Craig, when you look at J-Mo's last performance in another elimination game, what most impressed you, and what kind of bodes well for tomorrow?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Well, I think what you want from all your players is just best version of themselves and to, as much as you can, be yourself and kind of let the moment elevate you. I think that's what J-Mo did. He pitched like he pitches, didn't try to do something different than he's good at, and that's what makes you successful.

I think he did let kind of the moment take him to another place, and that's exactly what you want.

Q. I guess hindsight is 20/20, but how much would you say Cade Horton's injury kind of put you in a situation where you're pushing guys more than you want to or would have liked to over these last five games of the playoffs?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I mean, you want your best players to be able to participate, and your best players help you win games. Injuries to anybody, Justin Steele, Cade Horton, yeah, they all hurt.

Q. As a fan of sports and the game of baseball in particular, how interested are you to see how your guys respond to an elimination game and respond to the pressure of it because obviously you performed at the highest level during that yourself, and you've managed teams that have done that. Do you allow yourself time to look at that part of it?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I mean, look, we've had experience with it. We just did it on Thursday. And now we're going to have to do it three times.

But in the end, it boils down to just taking care of pitches, taking care of the moment, and not getting past it. That's



all you think about. Win the moment and then move on to the next one. We're going to have to do it a whole bunch over the course of three games.

That's the challenge, and it's a big one, and it's a fun one. But that's the one in front of us. We get to tackle it tomorrow.

Q. With your starters not going long the last couple games, would you be inclined to let Jameson go longer, or is it just different because it's the playoffs and you have your plan already set?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I mean, I think we're open to whatever. It's a read the game, and we understand that it's an elimination game, and that means you're not saving anything. It's not because our starters haven't gone long, we should just let them do it this game. It's what do we gotta do to win this game, and that's how we'll think about it tomorrow.

Q. What kind of things are you and maybe the hitting people diving into, examining some of the offensive issues or low run scoring totals or whatever?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Well, look, when you're just trying to get guys in the best position tomorrow to have success, and that's really mostly on an individual basis, is just trying to get people in a spot to have good at-bats, and that means get on base in whatever way, to be confident. Those are the things you're after.

Obviously you dig into the opposing pitcher and the scouting report on that and try to come up with a plan to have success there. But most importantly, get our guys in the best position to have success tomorrow.

Q. Going back to J-Mo, what he has meant during his Cubs tenure, especially to this ballclub in 2025.

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I mean, I think J-Mo is one of those guys who's -- he is the veteran major league player that takes a lot of pride in kind of like the process, and that's what he's always talking about and sticks to and is very disciplined to, tried to teach to others.



It never waivers, and I think that's what -- from your older players and your experienced players, that consistency of never wavering no matter what's going on around you is something that's always admired. It's the calm in the storm that I think J-Mo has always been really good at providing.

Q. We've remarked a couple times about this being the first postseason matchup between the teams, but there was game 163 in 2018. Regardless of the outcome or the details of the game, is there anything from the buzz of that day that still stands out in your mind as you think about kind of where that game stands in this rivalry?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I mean, look, Wrigley is a special place, and I think moments here are remembered. That's the biggest thing.

What I've learned is that this place, like when you think it can't provide more, it provides more. I think it did it for us last week. I think that game is a great example of why you remember it so well.

But I think it's just the place. The place has a wonderful way of doing it.

Q. Craig, with Pete Crow-Armstrong, given his capacity to learn and his level of engagement through the whole season, what do you think this October has kind of done for him, being in these environments, and when you talk about the moments and meeting the moment and things like that?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I think it is a -- I think we'd all consider Pete a pretty emotional player, and I think we'd all say that October ramps that up even more. Those are great lessons for, I think, a player to learn is kind of what it does to you, and you learn about how it helps you.

I think Pete is still learning how emotion really helps him, how does it hurt me sometimes. I think moments where it's heightened, even better teacher, even a better teacher for things like that.

I think Pete is -- everybody goes through that, too. Pete is not, like, unique to that. Everybody goes through it. And they're learning experiences, and they're great learning experiences for sure.

Q. Craig, no matter what anyone says, you guys are trying to put the best team, the best version of the Cubs out there each game. As far as not getting the best version of some of your pitchers, how do you and your coaching staff internalize that and move by that,

just deal with the outcome and move past it?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I mean, we've got the outcome, and now you immediately start trying to prepare them to succeed the next time they go out there and pitch. You don't just get to sit there and cry about it. You've got to go out there and perform the next time.

So our job as coaches, and for the player, too, is to -- you take what you learn, you try to come up with a plan for the next time to have success because you've got to move on. You've got to move to the next moment. That's what a lot of this is about, the playoffs are about, sports are about, move to the next moment.

If you get stuck on that thing behind you, the next moment ain't going to work out either. So that's what we're doing right now, and that's what we're going to continue to do, to prepare those guys for the next time they take the mound.

Q. You just talk about all the adversity and stuff that you guys kind of have to go through now with backs against the wall. What have you learned from your group and how they've handled adversity already this season?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Oh, man. Again, it's a lesson that the athletes are taught every day, right, is that you don't get a result you want, and what are you going to do about that result. How do you process it moving forward? It's kind of the same question, frankly, and it's part of it.

You're disappointed in results; all right, what's next. That's how you do it. And that's the best way to turn the page. Do you learn from your result? Do you go over the result and figure out what could I do better, what could I change, could I have handled the situation differently, and then you start looking toward the next moment. That's how we have to do it. That's what this group does. That's what every team does. That's what great athletes do.

Then you get into a battle tomorrow where the other side is going to try to kick your tail, too, so you've got to be ready for the same things to happen.

But part of being great at this is responding to the bad stuff and running towards it, man. That's part of this. You can't be afraid of it. You've got to look forward to it. It happens sometimes.

We put ourselves in a hole this series; no question about it. We get to decide how the story ends.

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