

NL Division Series: Cubs vs Brewers

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Wrigley Field

Chicago Cubs

Ian Happ

Pregame 3 Press Conference

Q. Ian, because a lot of your teammates and in particular you are being pitched to so well during the playoffs here, do you allow yourself to think about other things that you can do to take away the manipulation of them just pitching to you?

IAN HAPP: Yeah, I think the most important thing is just trying to keep guys in the zone. I think trying to eliminate as much chase as you can and force them to throw strikes to get you out.

I think that's been a focus.

I think on a day like today if the wind is blowing in, there's a little bit more you can do on the hit-and-run bunt front if the long ball is not in play at all.

I think when you're chasing runs, that gets a little bit harder. The first two games chasing a little bit to try to catch up and put a spot on the board so you're not playing as much small ball and you're trying to get guys on base to pop them and put up a crooked number to get back in games.

Yeah, I think today as you saw in the San Diego series there will be a little bit more small ball, a little bit more of an effort to do that.

Q. Ian, obviously you guys have a fair number of guys with playoff experience individually, but does it do anything to have faced elimination as a group already once?

IAN HAPP: Yeah, I think so. I think guys that have -- you're right, guys that have experience in situations like this and have experience in playoff baseball is big.

But as a group, I think you continue to build that experience. We got the experience of playing an



elimination game. We got the experience of getting through that as a group.

So I think when you come into coming back home down 0-2, the only thought can be win today, figure out tomorrow.

I think as a group, that's the mentality. Let's get a win today, let's get one on the board here tomorrow, and then figure out tomorrow tomorrow.

Q. How is the mood in the clubhouse? How do you think the young players are taking this atmosphere now that you guys have to win three games in a row?

IAN HAPP: Yeah, I think excited to be back at home, excited to be back in front of our fan base and experience this crowd again.

But I think we have a group that's done a really good job of taking it day by day and just walking in this morning, everyone is excited to play baseball at Wrigley Field and take advantage of today.

Q. Just with how the first innings have gone in the last two games, how big does the first inning feel just momentum-wise and especially in front of a home crowd that might be feeling a little anxious?

IAN HAPP: Yeah, I think scoring first is big. We've been able to do it in the first two games and it hasn't worked out, but scoring first, it's a big thing -- whether it happens in the first inning or not. Top of our lineup has done a great job with those, Buschy or guys getting on base, Seiya popping it, they've done a great job of winning that first inning at the top. For us now, it's going to be, can J-Mo go out and -one, two, three and get us back in here to ease that, I think, a little bit. J-Mo is fantastic against the Padres, he's been great for us, and now we have a lot of confidence that he's going to have a great day today.

Q. You kind of segued into my next question. What is it like to face this type of situation where someone like Jameson Taillon on the mound with his experience level and background and everything?



IAN HAPP: Yeah, I think first and foremost, his experience in the different places he's been, the different atmospheres he's pitched in.

But I think you saw in that elimination game against San Diego what he's capable of. His ability to move the ball around, his ability to throw strikes, his ability to control a game, an atmosphere, and I have all the confidence in the world in him. Have for a long time. He's been fun to watch.

The moment doesn't get too big for him.

Q. Ian, the Cubs have won during the regular season three games in a row -- 15 times more than any other team in the National League. Is there some positivity you take out of numbers? I know you're pretty involved in looking at things like that.

IAN HAPP: Yeah, I think we've done it during the regular season, and one of the other things we've been good at is winning here and winning at home. I think it gives you a little bit of peace or a little bit of confidence that you get two games at home to get this thing even. Anything can happen in a Game 5. That's the exciting thing about playoff baseball.

You've got nothing to lose, and when your backs are against the wall, that's sometimes when guys play their best.

Q. What would you rather face, a starting pitcher getting you for the second or third time and they've got four or five pitches, maybe they've been setting you up, or a fresh reliever with only two pitches at full strength? What's more difficult for you?

IAN HAPP: Yeah, I think the interesting thing about the playoffs, and especially in a three- or five-game set, is it's different from regular-season baseball in the sense that you're going to see the starter probably three times. You have just over the course of your career, you're going to have more at-bats against those guys and more experiences of how they're going to try to get you out.

We're in a situation now where you're facing a lot of guys just one time. You're facing a lot of guys kind of throwing their best stuff, and you're facing some starters out of the pen in situations where you might not have seen them in that sense before, or you might have seen them a lot less.

I think that's a little bit different in this setup, so adjusting to that as a hitter.

The other part of that is there's times when you can get a little passive, especially when you're trailing because you don't want to be chasing, you don't want to be giving that guy an advantage. You want to force them to throw strikes to get you out, and so getting a little bit passive and letting guys get ahead is a little bit different than what you would do in a regular season game, where hey, I'm looking for that one pitch and I'm going to let it eat as opposed to I don't want to put this inning away too quick; I want to let them try to make a mistake.

I think that's a little bit different in this format or in how pitching staffs have been used in the playoffs.

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