

NL Division Series:

Cubs vs Brewers

Thursday, October 9, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Wrigley Field

Chicago Cubs

Manager Craig Counsell

Pregame 4 Press Conference

Q. Is it possible because you were able to perform at the highest level yourself as a player, two different playoffs, multiple rounds, is it possible to raise your game as a player? In other words, can you raise your concentration level, or was that something you were able to do and is that something you've seen teammates and some of your players able to do in these type of series?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I mean, I think that's always the goal is that kind of the atmosphere and the environment can get you super locked in. I think it happens for some players for sure. The guys that have the great postseasons.

The guy I think of that is the Randy Arozarena, 2020, I think he hit 10 home runs in the postseason. That's pretty amazing, right? Something he's probably never come close to doing, but it's been done, right.

I think that's what every player is trying to do for sure, and you've got to let the moment take you there a little bit. You try too hard at it, it probably doesn't get you there, but it happens to someone every postseason.

Q. Did it work for you?

CRAIG COUNSELL: During spurts. Then there were spurts it didn't work. 0 for 20; that didn't work.

Q. You kind of touched on this, but Nico mentioned he saw a sense of calmness from the guys yesterday and then in Game 3 of the Wild Card. What have you seen of your players facing the elimination game that could help them today in another one?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I really think it's stay focused on the things that you always stay focused on, and nothing more than that. The game is too hard and there's too much else



going on. Stay in your own process.

At times that feels like, well, you've got to do something different. That doesn't work. You've got to do the same thing. That's how you keep getting good results, and that's how you get consistency.

Q. Just the decision to start Matthew Boyd tonight, was that an easy one? Walk us through maybe what you weighed there.

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, it was Matthew Boyd -- I think at the start of the series it was going to be Matthew Boyd Game 1 and Game 4. He had a rough start Game 1, but we need him tonight.

Q. He talked about really as soon as he came off from that rough start looking forward to this one. What have you seen in the way he's approached this week and trying to move past that?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I mean, I think that's kind of -- you have to do your routine between starts. You obviously go over your previous start and what you didn't execute. Well, you faced eight hitters, so there wasn't a lot there.

Then you just get back into your routine and physically preparing yourself and mentally preparing yourself for the next start.

But it's really stay in your routine. Of course you learn from your mistakes, you learn from your outings, you learn from your failures. Apply it to what's next. There's not a new pitch coming; this is Matthew Boyd coming out tonight.

Q. Boyd has been particularly good at home this season versus the road. I'm sure some familiarity over the course of the season helps, but is there anything about his stuff, the elements that you think works in his favor at Wrigley?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I think our team has been good at home. We've played well here. I think that's the nature of the ballpark, and hopefully having a little bit of an advantage at home.



I mean, I don't think there's anything stuff-wise for Matthew that makes him home or road better or anything like that.

Q. What is it about Matthew's makeup that makes you feel like he will bounce back tonight?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Matthew is a good major league pitcher. He's just a good major league pitcher. He was an All-Star this year. He put up a very, very good -- he had a very good season. Been our most consistent starter from start to finish.

That's all part of the makeup. He's just a good pitcher.

Q. You stole your first base last night of the postseason. Obviously there's reasons why you don't get a lot or reasons why you do get a lot at times. What are some of the reasons you haven't piled those up in the postseason?

CRAIG COUNSELL: A lack of base runners mostly. It's a lack of base runners. We just haven't had a lot of base runners.

Both catchers we've faced, I think, are two pretty good throwing catchers. You have to create opportunities with base stealing. Sometimes there's opportunities to kind of pile it on, and sometimes you have to say there is nothing here; let's not force anything.

Like anything, like hitting with runners in scoring position, you need opportunity, and we just haven't created a ton of great opportunities.

Q. The mantra with Pete is let Pete be Pete most of the year. Obviously you guys have done your personal coaching with him that he's talked about at length. But last night it seemed like you were really worried he was going to get thrown out of that game. Was that the main worry about him after that swinging strike that wasn't or was?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I mean, I did not want him to get thrown out of the game. Yeah, you're right.

I think you're just a little more -- I think we were all a little more attentive to that. I didn't think he was going to get thrown out of the game, though. That's one where the umpires are going to have a very good sense, and he would have had to be more derogatory than usual to get thrown out of the game.

The umpires do a good job of that in the playoffs.

Q. Just wondering if there are any notable changes to the lineup versus Game 1 for you guys?

CRAIG COUNSELL: There's none. No changes.

Q. We can always pick apart players offensively in the postseason because it's tough to hit, but anything about Ian Happ in particular because the numbers are the numbers?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah. I think this is a little bit -- the same reasons I think Ian has struggled are some of the same reasons that Pete has struggled a little bit. The ball up in the zone has gotten to him a little bit. Especially the San Diego series the ball up in the zone with some starters gave him some problems. That's the thing I'd point to the most.

I think the matchups have been the tough matchups for -- that's why I think you saw Pete and Ian do a pretty good job with their starter in there yesterday. I know it was only one at-bat but they did a nice job with that. It's the east-west and the north-south. That's the scouting report on those guys. That's how you attack them.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports