

NL Division Series: Dodgers vs Phillies

Saturday, October 4, 2025
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Citizens Bank Park

Los Angeles Dodgers Manager Dave Roberts

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. You often talk about how you can kind of separate yourself from the manager and the fan in different moments. With Shohei Ohtani taking the mound today, his first postseason as a pitcher. When you look at this moment, what he's done for this team, how special is this for a player like him? And how do you kind of take a step back to appreciate that moment, also knowing as the competitor and wanting to win, of course?

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, I think as he takes the mound for the bottom half, I'm going to take a moment just to appreciate him doing something really unprecedented.

He's done a tremendous deal for our ballclub on a micro level -- obviously with the talent, the two-way player -- but much more broad for baseball. He's just a player that people have to see, want to go see. It's just been a huge benefit to our game, which is great.

Q. This will be a first experience for him. He talked yesterday about there might be some nerves, an uptick in velocity. Do you think, just last year as a DH in the postseason and even if you look at the Wild Card, that as a position player can prepare him as a starter in this game?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think -- I just believe that his whole life has been about preparing him for big moments. He never gets out of himself, never lets the emotions or the moment get too big. Seems like he's always under control. He's obviously got a very precise routine.

So I expect him to perform well in the box, on the mound, and just control those emotions. But having him get through the sixth inning in Arizona, as far as usage, I feel good where he's at.

Q. Is Will Smith going to start this series? And how



close is he to that point you feel comfortable catching him for nine innings?

DAVE ROBERTS: He's close. With Will, we just haven't had the chance to do the buildup as far as the rehab, the catching five innings, the six innings, the seven, let alone the nine innings. And he hasn't caught in four weeks.

I mean, you're going to have to -- I'm trying to find a jumping off point that would kind of play the middle, the slice. So there's a chance that he can come into tonight's game and kind of get his feet wet a little bit.

But, yeah, he's close, and I just don't know when. But he's very close, yes.

Q. Obviously you kind of said that Kershaw was going to be on the roster. What went into some of the other decisions putting Banda on and taking Wroblewski and Enriquez off?

DAVE ROBERTS: With Enriquez it was a little bit easier in the sense of the way they construct their lineup. It's heavy left. You've got Glas in the pen for this game. We've got some other right-handers. It's a lot of left-handed lanes.

I think with Wroblewski it's difficult because he's performed so well. And I can't really justify it to be honest with you. I think we just wanted Clayton. Clayton's earned the opportunity to be on this roster. I'm going to use him accordingly.

And also with Banda, just kind of his skill set is to really take down left-handed hitters, specifically. So that was kind of the thought on both of those guys.

Q. With the Phillies rotation being so lefty heavy, how do you envision Max Muncy playing time shaking out?

DAVE ROBERTS: Tonight he's a silver bullet. I can deploy him whenever I want in a leverage spot, which I think is a benefit.

I'm not sure. I talked to Max before this series and said that we obviously knew what we were coming into, and he



is adamant that whatever it takes to help this team win -- and there could be a big spot at any point that could change the game.

He'll be ready when called upon. But I really can't speak to when he's going to start, if he's going to start, because also Miggy Ro's been great, too, against left-handed pitching. I see him getting a start as well.

Q. How is Tommy's ankle holding up now? And how do you see his playing time this series?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think it's holding up. Not getting any worse. Not getting much better. I feel that having him start taking a few at-bats each night against the starter is a benefit to us. And I'll kind of keep an eye on him as the game progresses, if we need to get him off his feet to get him ready for the next one.

Q. What are the challenges of just facing as much left-handed pitching as you guys probably will this series?

DAVE ROBERTS: They're talented. That's the main challenge, that they're really good. The good thing is that the guys that play get the same look essentially. The downside is not being able to run Max out there as much as I probably would like.

But again, in the postseason, I'm trying to go with the best nine guys to start the game. And then each guy should and might have an opportunity to help us win a ball game that particular night. But I guess these guys are just really talented guys.

Q. With your left-handed relievers, how much do you think some of them learned having faced these guys a couple weeks ago and just obviously seeing how dangerous they can be?

DAVE ROBERTS: We learned a lot. You learned that you have to make pitches. You've got to sequence the right way.

Yeah, I mean, they're good. And they're certainly a momentum team, when they get momentum certainly in this ballpark. But you've got to make pitches. They're aggressive early. And I guess it goes both ways because we've got some good hitters, too, and we've just got to make pitches.

Q. You referenced the talent. I was going to ask you separate from that, is there a character trait or two that comes to mind about this team beyond the talent that makes them go as well as they have this year?

DAVE ROBERTS: You know, I think obviously Harper, on the broader kind of city of Philly and kind of wrapping his arms around the city and vice versa, but I think inside the clubhouse you can see it pretty clear that Schwarber's kind of toughness, they feed off that.

Again, they pitch really well. But I think those two guys are sort of the heartbeat of that club. But I don't know much.

Q. You're using 12 pitchers for a five-game series. Do you feel comfortable about it? And you didn't use Hyeseong the last series. How are you going to utilize him in this series?

DAVE ROBERTS: We're going with the 12 because the off days in between the games. We have to carry three catchers because of where Will's at. Obviously with Tommy's uncertainty, Max coming back recently, having the extra infielder Hyeseong is huge.

And as far as how I'm going to use them, you know to run off the bench, to potentially take an at-bat off the bench, but there's a lot of lefties in that lineup. But Hyeseong, it's good to have him on the roster. And I feel he's going to help us out at some point.

Q. You mentioned the starters potentially pitching in relief. It's something you've done before a little bit in the postseason. Are there some general risks or concerns, or maybe have to treat those guys different than a regular reliever when you do that?

DAVE ROBERTS: You know, I think that what I have learned is you've just got to just rip the Band-Aid off. And I think that there's always uncertain -- but I've learned you make a decision and you live with it.

I'm going to go with the best talent, whoever is available that night if it makes sense.

Roki was a starter his whole life. He's come out of the pen and pitched fine. We did it years ago with other pitchers and other teams have done it. We got beat in '18 because A.C. ran a bunch of starters at us.

So it can happen. There's no guarantee. So you've just gotta kind of have to have conviction and bet on the guys that you're going to run out there.

Q. We've talked about Will Smith in the past, and obviously there's always a balance to strike with how much he's catching, and he prefers to catch. (Indiscernible) the DH is no longer an option. I just wonder, with the year he's had -- obviously the hitting

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

was even better than it has been the last couple -- how much harder did it make for you to not play him from day to day? And how do you figure that out for your starting catcher now and going forward with Will, once he's healthy again?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think once he's healthy, it's easy because of the off days in the postseason. The balance is, in the regular season, getting him to the end of the year, the finish line.

And so a lot of conversation with Will trying to figure out what's best for him. And obviously we had Dalton Rushing cut his teeth this year, which was very helpful for him and his growth. But I think once we get Will back and feeling good, we're just going to let him run.

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