

NL Wildcard Game: Reds vs Dodgers

Monday, September 29, 2025

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

Cincinnati Reds

Manager Terry Francona

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Tito, do you know how you want to go forward with the starting pitching, beyond tomorrow?

TERRY FRANCONA: Yeah.

Q. Would you like to elaborate?

TERRY FRANCONA: Yeah, we can. There's no reason not to. Littell is on his day -- tomorrow, you said?

Q. After tomorrow.

TERRY FRANCONA: Got bad ears. Littell is on his day. And then Abbott will be on his day, if there's a Game 3. We'll put Lodolo in the bullpen. And the reason being is not because we don't want to start him because actually a really good starter, but because of what our record was going into yesterday, we pitched him. So we want to be really cognizant of him and how much we can ask of him. So he'll be in the bullpen.

Q. Obviously you don't have to have your roster in until tomorrow morning, but are you pretty close to figuring out what you want and who is going to make it and who's not?

TERRY FRANCONA: I think we've talked to everybody. So we're good to go.

Q. You've talked about how you see a lot of bullpen games in the playoffs. What went into the digs to make Littell making Game 2 a bullpen day?

TERRY FRANCONA: Well, it's Littell's day, and there's no mandatory limit on how much he has to pitch.

Q. You've been playing some of your hottest baseball these past couple of weeks. How much of that momentum is big in the postseason, from your



experience, as far as catching that wave and kind of riding it?

TERRY FRANCONA: I've been on it both sides. You feel like you're just ready to go get 'em, and you look up and you're down 0-3 before you can even take a breath.

This is a whole new season. And it's funny, because even in a short series, you'll see most of the -- you'll have ups and downs, and they just happen quicker. So, again, you try to have urgency without panic. Sometimes that's a hard one to traverse. Get that word in there, too. I got that in a crossword puzzle today. (Laughter).

Q. A lot of excitement for everyone over the last couple days. But after everything Elly has battled through this season, what's it been like seeing him smile, hitting well and have this experience?

TERRY FRANCONA: Did you see him in that clubhouse yesterday? That was pure joy. To me that was like sitting back, watching them do that, that's the best because it doesn't matter where you're from, what language you speak, what color, it doesn't matter. If you have our uniform on, that to me is what makes everything worthwhile.

Q. What was that from Brent Suter in the clubhouse yesterday? We're still trying to figure out Suter's dance. Do you have any reaction to that?

TERRY FRANCONA: I asked him today, I said I've got -- normally this time of year you get a lot of texts. I believe I've got more texts about him dancing than I have about, like, hey, way to go.

He is unbelievable. He is more than worth his weight in what he does in that clubhouse. It's real. Sometimes people in the media, you see stuff and you think it's real. Like, before a game, he'll walk down through the dugout. He touches everybody, myself included, and he's got something for everybody, and you never see guys roll their eyes. It's, like, it's welcome all the time. He's real. He's phenomenal. I think he's a phenomenon.



Q. With Espi, he's been there when you needed him. What's he meant with Elly and Noelvi stepping into the spotlight like they have?

TERRY FRANCONA: When we made trades at the deadline, he lost significant playing time. When I told him, he goes, I get it. And he's been a solid teammate the whole way. And that's appreciated, because it doesn't always work that way. And he's been really good, really good.

Q. I'll ask you a question I asked John Schneider last week, to compare your Spring Training speech that I know you worked so hard on to the speech you gave when you clinched. Can you give me the breakdown?

TERRY FRANCONA: I spent a lot on that one in Spring Training because I care about it so much. The one yesterday was -- that was just emotion. It was just emotion. I would be too nervous to try to make up something ahead of time -- if somebody hits a grand slam for the Mets you can throw that speech away.

It's just raw emotion because that's probably what the moment calls for. Everybody's -- we all kind of blacked out anyway. I'm not sure they're going to remember.

Q. You take the moment to celebrate in the clubhouse yesterday. What are the next couple of hours like for you getting everything in order and kind of making playoff decisions?

TERRY FRANCONA: It's kind of funny, because as much as I love what we did out there, after about 10 minutes, I'm like, okay, I'm ready to go -- first of all, it's cold. And when you don't have hair, it's really cold. Like, it's actually awful.

But I went in my office -- I sat on the side for a while and watched everybody jump around and got a big kick out of it. I smoked a cigar. Then I went into my office and kind of just kind of sat there and enjoyed it.

And then Brad and Nick came in and we started talking about, okay, when we get on the bus, we get on the plane, here's what we're going -- and it's, like, what's next? And that's what we did. That's kind of how I always have been.

Q. We've talked to you a lot about how you experience a game in game, the nerves and all that. And genuine curiosity, does that get ratcheted up in the postseason at all?

TERRY FRANCONA: Weirdly enough, not usually because the preparation is so that I actually get kind of relaxed and enjoy it. At least that's the way it's been.

Again, you never know -- I'm sure the way the game's played dictates some of that.

But in the past, I've actually really been able to enjoy it and just because I know -- once our preparation is ready, that doesn't ensure anything, but it gives me a little bit of a comfort level.

Q. I want to ask you about Shohei Ohtani. What's been the key to facing him?

TERRY FRANCONA: I can't tell you that. You'll go tell him. (Laughter).

You don't want to let him get those arms extended. You make a mistake, and it goes a long way, a long way. And he can beat you with his legs. He can beat you with his arm. He's one of the very best. He's a generational player.

Q. How did (inaudible) yesterday?

TERRY FRANCONA: Pretty good. I want to wait and see how he gets through this workout tonight and talk to him a little bit, too. With a lefty pitching, he's a perfect guy to play left field, but I want to be fair to him. I want to make sure he's okay. I'll go check on him here in a few minutes.

Q. Yesterday Connor Phillips threw for the third straight day after kind of a rough outing the night before. Was that just a check, or ...

TERRY FRANCONA: It was twofold. One, we were kind of getting a little short there. And Hunter was probably next. I really didn't want to do that for obvious reasons. And I thought getting him back out there had a chance to really help him after the day before. And he threw the ball really well, because this kid has come so far, and I didn't want one game to get in the way at all. It didn't look like it did. That was really good.

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