

NL Wild Card Series: Reds vs Dodgers

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

Los Angeles Dodgers

Kiké Hernández

Pregame Press Conference

Q. The good news is, of course, you're back in the lineup today. Dave Roberts shared you were experiencing some back tightness. When did this start, and how are you feeling?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: It started when I was on load management all year, and then I had to play the last four games of the season and I played again -- no, first ground ball I took during BP yesterday, it kind of locked up on me. And then I didn't want to have to come out of the game but since we took the big lead, took Thomas two innings to convince me to come out. First inning didn't come out. The second inning, he came back, and I said, all right, I guess I'll come out.

Q. You guys attacked Hunter Green very well last night. Did you guys have any specific game plan against Green's fastballs or sliders, if you can tell?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: I mean, it kind of went the opposite of how our meeting, our plan was. Our plan was to be on the fastball. He threw a season low percentage of fastballs last time he pitched against us. We thought this time around he was going to come attack us with more fastballs. So the plan was to hit the fastball. He made some mistakes with his sliders, and we made him pay for it.

Q. Yoshinobu was talking about the conversation you had with him last October, (inaudible) the confidence back in him before Game 5. What differences do you see year to year in Yoshinobu, and how much more confident does he look this year?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: I mean, he looks, obviously -- I mean the answer -- it answers itself by looking at the season he had. He just seems like the guy that knows what he's doing on the mound and not trying to see who he is. He's not trying to figure out who he is. He knows who he is. He's attacking. He has a game plan and he's executing.



And his command is impeccable, and hopefully he's that way tonight.

Last year, it was a little bit of, he was trying to adjust to the league, when you don't need to adjust to a league you haven't failed at. This year it's just I'm going to go with my game plan, I'm going to throw my game and let it play out. That's what he did all year. And he had a great year.

Q. The feel amongst the group has been it's just about the final six weeks, how you guys closed out the regular season and, of course, looking into October for a deep postseason run. As you go into this one tonight, what's the feel amongst the group looking to close out this Wild Card?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: I mean, I can only answer for myself, but they have a very young, hungry, talented team on the other side. And we gotta get on top early and we've got to keep adding on to the lead.

I feel like last night, maybe, even though they lost, they might feel like they regained the momentum by scoring a couple of runs at the end of the game.

But we just gotta go on the attack early and let Yoshi do his thing on the mound. And hopefully we can put some runs on the board for him. And hopefully we can close this thing out tonight, because a lot of us could use the extra day off.

Q. The team has talked so much about how much they trust you when you get to October. When you go through a year where you're dealing with injuries and other stuff, does that kind of help knowing that you just gotta have to figure it out at some point, and when you get to this spot, if you're feeling good, the opportunity's going to be there when you're building up to it?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: Yes and no. I wasn't really sure if I was going to be playing, like what role I was going to be taking part of. It wasn't until Muncy went down four days before the season ended that I was able to consistently play against right-handed pitching.



I know they brought me here for these type of moments. It sucks for 162 games it didn't go well. But once we get here, it doesn't really matter.

The beautiful thing about the postseason is that once we get to the postseason, everything starts at zero and nothing really matters about the 162, because if you can have a bad year and you flip the script and you start over in the postseason, you have a good postseason, help the team win, we win it all, and nobody ever remembers what you did in the regular season; everybody remembers what happened in the playoffs.

It could also happen the other way around -- you could have a good regular season and have a bad postseason, and people talk about what happened in the postseason; nobody really cares about what happened in the regular season.

For me, it was trying to stay ready, trying to figure out a way to stay ready. And whenever my name was called upon, and it happened a little earlier than I thought this time around.

Q. There was a lot of highs and lows in September -- that trip in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Clayton announcing his retirement. How did everything in September bond the team together?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: I mean, September kind of felt like it was the whole year. It was just up and down. We were very inconsistent. And it was all about trying to survive and get to the postseason. And then once the postseason started, forget about the regular season and understand who we are as a group and understand that everybody's coming for us. We have a target on our backs, so we had to play like it.

At times it felt like we were kind of checked out during the regular season. Here we are now and these are the games that really matter.

I think it was experience and age has a lot to do with it. We have a lot of young guys, but I think we have a very salty team as far as the age, especially the position players side of it. We have a lot of experience.

We know that it's not that easy to turn it on and off. But we just need to find a way, and here we are; we found a way last night and hopefully we can find a way tonight.

Q. How much pride do you take in that reputation as being a good October player? And what are some of the things that make a player good in October?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: Getting hits. Repetition feels great. I've been blessed to be on the right team at the right time. Being a good postseason player is kind of an individual thing, but not really. You're on a team that doesn't make the playoffs, you can't be a postseason player.

I just happen to be on a lot of really good teams, and I've been fortunate enough to get a lot of chances, and things have gone my way.

But like I've said before, I've had some postseasons where it hasn't gone my way, and it feels terrible. You go into the offseason and you think it over and over.

Repetition is repetition, whatever. I embraced it. So hopefully I keep getting hits.

Q. Andrew said yesterday that your October history was a big factor in bringing you back here. Just a mindset standpoint, how do you handle those expectations of just being one of the best postseason players of your generation?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: The hardest thing to do is taking it one day at a time. But the reality is, you're only living today, and what's done yesterday is already paid for, it's already done. Nothing matters but today.

You try to take it one day at a time. Once the game starts, you try to take it one pitch at a time. During a game, you never know which run is going to win you a game.

In the postseason, I feel like you never know what pitch will win you a game. That mindset of taking it one day at a time, one pitch at a time, is what allows me to quiet the noise and do what I have to do.

Q. You mentioned the podcast. That moment you had with Rich Hill before the Cubs series where you hit the three home runs, have you tried to impart that on your teammates to make them feel more comfortable in the postseason, just inspire them a little bit?

KIKÉ HERNÁNDEZ: It's kind of part of understanding what your role is within a clubhouse, within a locker room. Even though I feel like I'm still 12 years old, I also understand I'm one of the veteran guys, one of the older guys. But it's just finding a way to recognize who needs the pep talk or whatever it is they need and picking and choosing the right time to do it.

Yeah, I've had my moments with certain teammates, and it's just part of your role within the locker room.

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