

NL Wild Card Series:

Padres vs Cubs

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Wrigley Field

Chicago Cubs

Craig Counsell

Postgame Press Conference

Cubs 3, Padres 1

Q. Craig, what did you like from Matthew Boyd's outing out there today?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Well, I think that the big thing for Matthew was that he made some huge pitches really with Matt on third base. The second inning to get out of that inning without another run scoring, nobody out, man on third, we made a great defensive play -- a couple of great defensive plays to help that.

But making those zeros after having Matt on third and no outs, man on third, less than two outs, that was a real key.

Q. How would you describe the bullpen today? They've been so good all season. Just to take it to another level?

CRAIG COUNSELL: It was perfect today. That's what it was. Let's see, 13 -- there's 14 outs, and I've talked a lot about them helping each other and how that group is connected, and today was a great example of it.

They get their outs and they make their matchups, the right matchups, and so just a brilliant job. Everybody just made -- executed pitches, made pitches. Can't say enough about what they did today.

Q. Last couple days we've asked you about Seiya and the home runs we've seen from him at the end of the regular season. How would you describe him rising to the moment and him and Carson in their first postseason game doing that?

CRAIG COUNSELL: As much as anything, Pivetta was pitching so well. He's a guy where you know what's going to happen. He's going to put the fastball at the top of the strike zone and when he clips the top of the strike zone



consistently, which he did an excellent job of, it's difficult. It's a difficult pitch to hit. That's why he's had so much success.

Bushy got a ball down early in the game. Dansby just missed one. Then Seiya got one. Those I think in the postseason maybe hits just change the stadium. It changes the energy of the stadium completely. It's just about that, and I'm really happy for Seiya. I know he was very, very excited to take part in this and to play in this, and happy he had a big role in it.

Q. You made reference to the pitches Matthew Boyd made out in the inning, but the plays by Dansby, how did that change the whole dimension of the game?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Well, we've got a bunch of guys that can do that, that can contribute in all phases of the game.

The first play we're down 2-0. They've still got things going. We might have to get the bullpen up, and so it was absolutely a huge play.

The second one is almost a harder play. It's not a play that you make a lot, and it's just great athlete, great instincts. The wind probably helped us a little bit there and held the ball up a little bit, but it was a beautiful play.

Q. You've always believed in out getters as opposed to roles when it comes to your bullpen. For Palencia there in the fifth inning, comes in with a runner on, how confident are you that he gets one of the best hitters in the game who is no stranger to these big moments despite the fact that you've never put him in a position like that before?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, I think to me, that's the outing of the game that was critical. You need outs from your starters in these games. You can't do that every day. But him throwing up five outs in five hitters and going through the top of their lineup, the game made sense after that to me; know what I mean? There was a real path right there.

Credit to Danny for putting the game back together. Those are five tough outs. He did it efficiently, which is what



we're always -- that's the kind of added bonus to this stuff.

You're right; he went on the injured list with a shoulder, had a couple outings coming back, and he was closing. This is the same to me. The way that outing happened and what was the result is like closing.

Q. I actually had a Palencia related question. Was that the plan to go from Boyd to Palencia no matter what, and also, has a Game 2 starter been named?

CRAIG COUNSELL: No, no Game 2 starter is named.

There's ideas, not firm plans is how I would describe it. I thought Danny was one of the options to be the first guy out of the bullpen. But just an idea.

Q. Going back to the bullpen, Brad Keller is a guy who transitioned to the bullpen in the past year, Palencia has had his struggles. The resiliency of that group kind of showed today. What have you seen from them, how they've handled the successes and pitfalls of the season?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I think any bullpen guys, the tough part is when you pitch later in the game, oftentimes the game is on the line, so when you don't pitch well, your team might not come out on the right side of it. That's what you've got to bounce back from, and that's what you train to bounce back from, kind of the mental training of it.

They've all had those moments, but they've also all been very good. We feel like we can really pitch them in a lot of spots, and that gives us a lot of flexibility and hopefully puts them in better spots to have success.

Q. Taking Matthew Boyd out before he faced their lead-off hitters for a third time, was that something you saw -- was that decision based on something you saw from Boyd today, or was that kind of your plan heading into the game?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I think it was can he get enough outs where we can put the rest of the game together, and I thought he did.

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