

NL Wild Card Series:

Padres vs Cubs

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Wrigley Field

Chicago Cubs

Nico Hoerner

Pregame Press Conference

Q. What's it like playing next to Dansby Swanson, seeing the stuff he can do defensively for you guys?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, Dansby and I were kind of laughing about that yesterday because it was such an emphasis, an exciting part of the game.

But in a way that's kind of what he always does. He has a very high standard, so it's of no surprise to see him show up in big moments like that. But it's also just kind of who he is, and he's so consistent, but also someone who I think really rises to challenges and big moments.

Yeah, those were huge plays for the game yesterday.

Q. Moving on from that win to today's game, just how quickly do you guys have to move on and just start getting ready for Dylan today?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, I mean, that's the nice part about playing at home, I think, is just the routines are a little easier to hold on to that you've been successful with all year. Obviously the stakes are higher and some of the stuff like doing media in this room are a little different.

But overall when you get back on the field, you can hold on to those routines that got you to this place in the first place, and you want to get right back on the field and keep it going. It's pretty easy to get up for these games, so no issue with that.

Q. We've talked plenty about the defense overall and just about how kind of foundationally that's kind of the backbone of this team. How much do you think when it is a playoff situation where every play like Nico's play under the spotlight like that, things are under the magnifying glass, how much do you think the defense kind of sets you up?



NICO HOERNER: Yeah, you watch some of the other games like that, low scoring, tight games with great pitching, and every base is so valuable and out. So when you're able to limit those bases and takeouts away, runs away, it's a huge, huge deal, especially when the games are low scoring and the pitching can be dominant in the playoffs.

Q. Your last at-bat yesterday, I feel like it was just a good typical Nico at-bat. Can you take us through just the intentional swing and your thought process to get that sac fly?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, once the runners moved up, runner on third, less than two outs, obviously contact is that much more valuable. Ideally it's in the air and deep enough to score a runner, and fortunate to get that done.

But yeah, tough grind-it-out runs between Dansby getting on and runners moving up and then soft contact scoring a run. It was a big deal to get an extra run there. So yeah, that felt great.

Q. Yesterday just when the momentum shifted, you guys took the lead, what was the atmosphere like? How did it feel just being in there and feeling that?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, I mean, I think fans are on their feet for like any 3-2 count even with no one on base or anything in the second inning, they're ready to get loud or to celebrate. Even though that was only the middle of the game, it felt like they had just been waiting for any situation to express themselves and get excited, and back-to-back homers to flip the game around was a pretty awesome way to do that. Yeah, that was incredible.

Q. For you and Ian, guys who were able to see that previous core and the energy around the city for them, what was it like for you and a guy like Seiya who helped you guys get back to the post season, Dansby, and for you guys all to come together and have that first playoff win together as a group yesterday?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, it means a lot. It's still somewhat of a newer group, but for those of us that have played for



the Cubs and for each other for a while now, we've put a lot of time and effort into having these opportunities.

It's a special thing to have, and we definitely don't take it for granted, having been close to the playoffs but not having made it the last two years, and now having a chance to play at home and do it together is a really special feeling. Just looking for every opportunity to seize that and keep going.

Q. Craig has talked about how hard it was to tell you you weren't going to Japan, but that positioned you for the season that you had, and he kind of spoke so highly of how many games you played. How much pride do you take in the season you were able to compile offensively, defensively, and just even after missing that event?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, I mean, I think every year you want to improve and add parts to your game and impact the game. At the end of the day, you want to be available and you want to be out there and a good version of yourself in all aspects, and there's going to be ups and downs between that, but if you can provide that consistency every year, it's a huge deal.

So yeah, I missed four games scheduled early in the year between Japan and then two scheduled off-days and ended up playing 156. I'm proud of that. I'm proud of being available and a good version of myself out there.

I feel like if I'm able to be healthy and out there for that many games, it's usually going to be production that helps the team win, and always little differences year after year, but I'll get into more reflection when this is all done, but yeah, thank you.

Q. A lot of your teammates, I remember Boyd specifically, said that you do things to help win on the margins, things that don't show up in a box score. He talked a lot about that. What does it mean that other players on your team can recognize that maybe it's not always the flashiest start, but that you're finding little ways to move towards the win?

NICO HOERNER: Yeah, it means a lot. I think in this sport there's always going to be people's opinions or things you can do better, but at the end of the day, the relationships you have with your teammates and the voices from your peers and kind of the lasting memories you create together are what really stand out as most important and valuable. Those are the opinions I do care about and people I do lean on.

We've got a nice mix of guys that are up and coming, have

done things in other places, have been here for a while, and you get some pretty great perspectives all around. It's cool to talk the game with our group.

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