

NL Wild Card Series:

Padres vs Cubs

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Wrigley Field

Chicago Cubs

Craig Counsell

Postgame Press Conference

Padres 3, Cubs 0

Q. Craig, what went into the decision to stick with Shota there in the fifth versus Soroka or walking Machado?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Look, the results suggest that we should have done something different. Really just confidence in Shota, plain and simple there. I thought he was pitching well. I thought he was throwing the ball really well, and unfortunately he made a mistake.

Q. Did you consider going with Soroka?

CRAIG COUNSELL: No, we considered walking Machado. I wasn't going to put Soroka in. Considered walking Machado.

Q. Just overall you kind of touched on it earlier, but what did you think of Shota's stuff and his overall command?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I thought he pitched very well. I thought the stuff was crisp. I mean, he was -- there was a couple walks, but I thought that was just giving them his best stuff, and I thought he threw the ball well.

Q. Just for clarity, was Soroka ready?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yeah, there was a couple spots we were thinking about him at, yeah.

Q. Obviously with an opener with no runs scored, it'll come under scrutiny. Just what did you think of Kittredge --

CRAIG COUNSELL: I thought he threw the ball well. I thought they did a really good job in the first inning.



The Tatís hit is a really good pitch. The Arráez hit is a really good pitch. He gets Machado out. He made good pitches. So like sometimes you get really good hitters and they get a hit. What are you going to do? He made the pitches that you'd want him to make in that inning, so I give them credit for putting together a good inning and having good at-bats.

Q. I think it's up to 24 strikeouts through two games for you guys. Obviously a lot of good arms on the other side, but lineup construction, tweaking anything for Game 3? What will you consider there?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Well, I mean, the consolation today was we pitched really well in the back half of the game. They obviously used their -- Morejon and Miller multiple innings and even Suarez multiple innings. So, look, those are good arms. That is what they've done to the league all year.

Those are tough at-bats, plain and simple.

Q. Sticking with Shota against Machado, was the decision based on what you saw during the start, and that's why you stuck with him?

CRAIG COUNSELL: Yes. Yeah.

Q. With Pete's struggles, does it look like he's trying to make something happen rather than the game come to him? It almost seems like he's trying to do too much. Maybe I'm basing that off results.

CRAIG COUNSELL: Well, look, the first two matchups in this series have been pitchers that have done a good job exploiting Pete's holes, which is what pitchers -- that's their job, right, and they've executed pitches really well to do that.

I think they've made a lot of good pitches on Pete. I think clearly today they made a lot of good pitches on everybody.

You've got to get pitches to hit. If players of this talent don't give you pitches to hit, it's tough to get hits. They did



a pretty darned good job of that today.

Q. What about what you've seen from your team all year long gives you confidence that you guys are going to be in the right spot going into winner take all tomorrow?

CRAIG COUNSELL: I think the first two games is really what you expected in this series, and I think tomorrow will be a lot of the same.

I think we're made for that. We're going to have to produce more offense tomorrow; there's no question. We didn't do enough offensively today to really -- three at-bats in a game with runners in scoring position, that's going to be tough to put up more than a single run really. That's going to be the challenge tomorrow.

Q. Who's your Game 3 starter?

CRAIG COUNSELL: We're going to discuss it here.

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