

MLB World Series: Dodgers vs Blue Jays

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Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

John Schneider

Workout Day Press Conference



Q. Since we saw you last, what can you tell us about what Bo has been able to do?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Hitting, continuing to make progress. He's going to do that again today, hit live. He's taking ground balls, running. He's going to do more of the same today. So you guys will see him out there. He's feeling good, which is nice. Still a few more boxes to check.

Q. If he checks those, between short, second, and DH, what feels likelier to you right now?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: We'll see. We're kind of coming right down to the wire with it. I could see all three of those things happening, to be honest with you. Just kind of have to talk to him after the workout today, see how comfortable he felt doing everything and make the best decision.

Q. The first third of the season you guys were scuffling a bit to try and find who you were and what you were going to be. The last game of a series in Texas, Bo hit a pinch-hit home run in the 9th inning to win you a game and it was almost like the lights came on then and the season started. What do you remember from that night and what happened right after that and how important that hit was to what was going on at the time?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, there were a few moments over the course of the year, I think, where you could kind of feel some momentum gathering, if you will. That night, I think -- we had come off a terrible series in Tampa, getting swept there and not playing well at all. So I think that night kind of reset us a little bit.

I remember thinking it was both of us weren't scoring a lot of runs at that time, us and Texas, so every run was kind of at a premium. So that kind of gave the room a deep breath a little bit. I think that it was Bo kind of made everyone rally

around that a little bit, and then for whatever reason we kind of got rolling. I look at that game, I look at the Yankees series here, the summer, the four games, that kind of -- we always had confidence, but then I think you start looking around and you start saying, okay, something's moving in the right direction here.

Q. To the question about Bo at second, short, or DH, we've talked a lot about how long you've been here. Bo hasn't played second base since 2018, and you saw him there. You were his manager. I know he's been taking ground balls, but how much of a leap is that to ask someone in the World Series to play a position that they haven't played in seven years and have barely played?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I mean --

Q. What did he look like then?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: He looked more than comfortable then. I've always said, if you can play shortstop, you can kind of play anywhere. First base is maybe a little bit different. But he looked good then. I think that where we are now, there's going to be emotions and thoughts and feelings that these guys are going to feel that they haven't felt regardless of if they just played in Game 7 or if they haven't played in a while.

So it's a little bit of a leap, yeah, for sure. Again, I think just in conversations with Bo, he's pretty realistic about how he feels and how he will feel if he's out there. So it's something we got to continue to work through, really. I think that if he feels comfortable doing it, I'm going to listen to players and trust them. I've known Bo for a long. So we'll see how today goes.

Q. This is the only uniform you've ever worn, this organization. This is a quarter century for you in here. To have this team in the World Series when -- you're a Blue Jays lifer, what's that connection say, what does that mean for you?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I mean, for me -- I try to take me out of it. But for me, it's really special. Managing the rookie ball Gulf Coast League team and playing 10:30 games on

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a Saturday at the complex is a far cry from this, right?

But I think you think about the work that you've done, the people you've met, adjustments you've made, this was always the end goal, right, with this organization. Did I think that it would happen? Probably not because of how this game works and how there's a lot of movement to this job.

So I'm really excited about this. But I'm just as excited for guys that I've known for a long time, for Bo, for Vlad, for guys that have been here for numerous years. It's just really cool for the organization, and I'm just thankful and humbled that I'm the one doing it, leading them into the World Series.

Q. What can you share about your plans for the starting rotation?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I can share that Trey Yesavage will pitch Game 1 and we will announce Game 2 probably a little bit later today. And I'm sure I'll talk to you guys again at some point today or tomorrow and we'll go from there.

Q. Is Chris Bassitt a part of those discussions or is he more a leverage relief like we saw in the CS?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Most likely Chris will stay in the bullpen and figure out the best spots for him. But he's, I think, thrown the ball really well and is in a good spot physically and mentally.

Q. Going back to Bo again for a moment, specifically Bo and Vladdy, that tandem, you've watched them since the very beginning. Can you reflect on their relationship and what they have meant to each other all these years?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think they have both said it to where they kind of feel like brothers at this point, right? I remember getting them in A ball in Dunedin and doing a big photo shoot with Baseball America, and they had this back-to-back picture, and we made fun of 'em for it, and here they are.

I think that they bounce ideas off of one another. They know each other really well. They know what their swings should look like. They know what their attitudes should look like. It's pretty unique for guys to be kind of tied together from the beginning of their professional career. It's fun to watch. It's fun to watch 'em go from kids to adults. It's fun to watch 'em go from minor leaguers to big leaguers and big leaguers to superstars. Not everyone gets a chance to do that -- I mean, from my vantage point, that is.

So it's been really, really fun to watch them grow, and their relationship is one of the closest ones I've seen in the game.

Q. How did Kevin come out of the inning Monday? Does he need an extra day and is that leading in part to the decision to go with Trey in Game 1?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, we tried to talk to all the guys and see how they're doing physically, see what we have done historically in terms of rest, what it may look like later in the series for certain guys, and then how each one of 'em matches up against the Dodgers.

So wanted to kind of get everyone's feedback, everyone's input. We have all of ours as coaches and medical staff and game planning, but I want to see how they feel. So I think just in talking to all those guys, it made sense to hold Kev off for a day. Again, still kind of working through when that will be, whether it's 2 or 3. But I think that it kind of was the best possible outcome for everyone in terms of matchups and rest.

Q. Just with Bo, if you do end up carrying him, does that make it perhaps a bit more likely to go to a 14/12 split just to have some extra options on the bench in case something is going on with him or you just need to run for him later in the game, something along those lines?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: We're talking about that. I think we'll know more today and kind of how he responds to a little bit more activity and kind of think about how we're going to use our pitching staff, how we're going to use our bullpen.

So those are conversations we're still having, whether it's 13/13 or 14/12.

Q. How does Don Mattingly help you do your job and what has he contributed to the team these last couple years?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Man, I could sit here and talk about Donnie forever. When I first hired him, I think it was more so wanting someone who had been through the game more than me next to me. We have developed a really cool back-and-forth over the years. You know, last year, him being more involved with the offensive side -- he's done almost everything here, but what he provides me -- him, DeMarlo, and Pete are kind of my inner circle of guys that I talk to about strategy, conversations with players, but what Donnie has done, kind of along with DeMarlo, is the communication to the players has been elite in terms of how we're going to try to use them, what they should and



shouldn't be ready for, and then just bouncing ideas off of him for my own sake, you know, talking to him before Game 7 and getting his take on what that's going to feel like.

Again, Donnie was my favorite player growing up. I think everyone kind of knows that. So to have him here in his first World Series with me is unbelievably special. But he's done so many things behind the scenes to help get the staff prepared and to really help the players get prepared for how we're rolling out our lineup.

Q. We asked you about pitching to Judge in the DS and then Cal Raleigh last series. How different is Shohei from them and how do your lefty relievers kind of mesh in the puzzle of Shohei?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think they will all kind of be part of the puzzle. Elite talent, obviously. I think you have to be very mindful of when the top of the order is coming around, right? We've talked at length about how to treat it, we've talked at length about when to do this, and you got to read the situation. I mean, they have a great team. They have three Hall of Famers at the top of their lineup.

So you got to pick your poison a little bit, but you also have to understand that, I think -- you look at Game 4 of the NLCS, I think we're talking about a totally different kind of animal here that can do things on the field that not many people can do, with all the respect in the world for Aaron Judge and Cal Raleigh.

So we'll be mindful, I do know that, and we'll try to give him as many different looks as we can.

Q. This is your third semi-extended layoff of the playoffs. How different or similar do you treat this to the previous two in between rounds?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: This one is similar to the last one. First one after the division, obviously, a little bit different with some simulated games and crowd noise. This one, very similar to before the CS. It's a regular workout yesterday with some live ABs, today's going to be a little bit of the same with a little bit more attention to detail from a defensive standpoint, and then some more live ABs that we'll try to recreate some situations.

So I think all of the fundamental stuff, you feel good about. We have just done it in real time. Just trying to keep the rhythm and timing of guys in the batters box.

Q. What does this look like for Louis? After throwing so many times in the first two series, what has his last couple of days been?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think he's been in the float tank with cucumbers on his eyes getting a foot rub. (Laughing.)

These were good off days for him. Again, that Louis is a unique guy to where he is not going to back down from a challenge. He knows how we're going to be asking him to be used again. What he did so far, 10 out of 11 games being in, is remarkable. So these off days have been good for him. He hasn't gotten off the mound, I can tell you that. So he'll be ready to go tomorrow.

Q. I think you would agree that not much has fazed this team throughout the season. Tomorrow night the lights will be brighter than they have ever been. How does that translate?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: We'll see. I think that there's a lot of firsts for a lot of these guys, myself included, staff included. I want them to enjoy it. Again, I think that players are going to feel certain things that they haven't felt before. Once you get that initial kind of shock and awe off you, I think that this team is really good about focusing on what they need to do. So we'll see.

Again, I'm going to take on a few seconds to enjoy it. I'm sure they will. And then when you get into compete mode, hopefully it slows down a little bit. But it is going to be a pretty electric atmosphere here tomorrow.

Q. With Bo, is it just a question of how you're using him or do you still have a question of whether you'll activate him?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think a little bit of both. And Bo's been so open and realistic about how we have been playing and how -- if he is active, how he's going to be a part of it, not trying to come in and do anything that we're not capable of, right?

So looking at him, first, in particular his health, how he's feeling, how we can predict he'll perform, and then from there, how it affects other people and how we're trying to roll out the roster on a given night. So those are both things that we're still working through. Neither one is a slam dunk. I can say that we're close on probably one way or another, but just need to kind of see how today goes.

Q. Looking across the field at Ohtani, how close do you think two years ago you guys were, in your mind, to possibly having him in a white uniform tomorrow?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: You never know. When we met with him, you felt good about it, and you felt good about the feedback he was giving about our organization and an



opportunity here. But you never really know what a player's feeling in free agency, and there's a lot of things that have to line up for them personally, too. You can't really think about what if. You think about the 26 that we have.

He's a great player. I'll say it again, I hope he brought his hat, the Blue Jays hat that he took from us in our meeting, I hope he brought it back finally -- and the jacket for decoy, you know, it's like, give us our stuff back already. But he's a great player. But that aside, I think that we have a great team and just an unbelievable cast of characters and players. I think things worked out the way they're meant to work out.

Q. Speaking of your cast of characters you've had George, you've had Max, Seranthony have been to the World Series before. But I wanted to talk about some of the guys that maybe were looking at trying to just get on this roster, period. Nathan Lukes, Ernie Clement, and Myles Straw. Talk about those guys.

JOHN SCHNEIDER: The glue guys, you know. Again, I think that's what forms a good team. It's talent and it's players, but it's people. I think that we've done such a phenomenal job of creating a culture where people are just welcome. Whether it's guys coming up from the minor leagues, guys we acquired via trade, it's been really, really fun to watch it unfold. So it's kind of what we've grasped on to, kind of the standard we've set. Not just the type of player we want, but the type of people we want in here, too. And those guys all fit the mold.

They all got valuable experience last year in a down year to make this year a little bit easier. As we've continued to go, there's different things that are new for everyone, and they have done a phenomenal job of leaning on veteran guys. So it's really cool for them to get the recognition they deserve the Ernies, the Myles, the Nates, Barger, these guys that are just baseball players and they're getting rewarded for it.

Q. How capable is Springer of playing the outfield at this point?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Very, I think, if needed. Again, Georgie's the old man, we joke about it. He's 36. Everyone's tired, everyone's feeling it, everyone's at the point where whatever I'm going to ask of 'em they're going to be ready to go. Again, I don't want to take people out of their comfort zone too much, and you're trying to piece the puzzle together the best way you can for everyone to feel comfortable. But just in talking to George the last couple days, and even yesterday during the work out, if he needs to go to the outfield, he'll be ready to do that.

Q. Some of the pundits have called this a David versus Goliath series. How do you see it?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Sure. Two best teams left standing. Again, built differently, have different strengths. There's a reason we are here and there's a reason they're there. I think the one thing we cannot do is look over there and say that is Goliath. That is a beatable baseball team that has its flaws, and that has its really, really good strengths. How we expose each of them will determine who wins the series. And I got all the confidence in the world in my guys.

I'll say it until the day I die with this group: I'll put this group of 26 up against anybody. And they're looking forward to taking on what is on paper the best team in baseball, that is playing really well right now, and I don't think they would have it any other way.

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