

MLB World Series: Dodgers vs Blue Jays

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Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

John Schneider

Pregame 7 Press Conference

Q. It must not have been easy for Ernie and Addison, the way the game ended yesterday. What can you tell us about the veterans in that locker room and what they can do for those guys in order to make sure that they come out today and play the baseball that they're able to play to help you guys win and not be a little bit gun shy?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, we've been doing that all year. It starts with the veteran guys, whether it's putting your arm around 'em or giving 'em a kick in the ass, really. They have been doing that all year. So last night was no different. Today was no different with how they're going about it getting ready. You have to flush it. There's going to be a whole new set of circumstances and challenges that are going to happen today, but have all the confidence in the world that they're going to be ready for it.

Q. Were there any players today that stood up and had a message for anybody?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Last night, not today. They always talk kind of throughout the day. But George said a few things last night about -- which he's said all year, just go play your game. It's another opportunity to just go play your game and out-team another team. So you have to move on. I mean, this is, you know, seven games for a reason. There's been story lines in every single game. So not really focus on that. Focus on what we got to do today.

Q. With Shohei Ohtani, what are the challenges of -- or how unique are the challenges of preparing for him, whether it be as a hitter or a pitcher?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, different. I think you got to treat him as such. Like, our pitchers get ready for the hitter, our hitters get ready for the pitcher. It's unique that he's doing both, right. But I think that these guys are really good at just focusing on one thing. So our hitters will be



ready to focus and compete against the pitcher, and our pitchers will be ready to compete against the hitter. But it's unique what he does, for sure.

Q. Curious what the process of planning your pitching for a day like this is. Are you guys meeting, scratching out notes, like, what if, or what does that look like?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, it's similar to what we do every day, really. Game 7, obviously a little bit different. There's a few more road maps to kind of hammer out. But it kind of -- it starts with Max. You got to kind of see what he's doing, see how hitters are reacting. There's definitely certain guys that we want to face certain parts of their lineup, and you got to just figure out when those spots come up.

Again, man, these guys are the ones that are going to go execute the pitches. There's so much focus on pitching in Game 7. I don't want to let that be the overall theme. Yeah, it seems to be, but I think we have to just continue to find ways to score too. I look at it as, like, a team effort, not so much exactly a pitching effort.

Q. Addison doesn't seem like the kind of guy who would let a play linger with him, but does moving him up in the lineup, does that help give him a bit of a boost going into today?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I don't know. Ask him. I think he's really good at just going out and playing. I'm just watching the way he's swinging the bat, and I think he's having a really, really competitive at-bat. So if that gives him a little -- I mean, I talked to him briefly after the game and just reiterated my confidence in him. So I think that's all he really needs, if he even needs that. So I'm just kind of watching his at-bats right now.

Q. As far as Ohtani goes, I guess, in the starting on short rest, which means he's probably not going to be around long, you faced that same thing in your last Game 7 where you knew the Mariners were just going to throw everybody at you. Is that how you're preparing for the Dodgers, and how much does that experience a week and a half ago help with that?

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JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, I think that's probably their plan. I'm sure Doc has guys that he trusts in certain spots. I think you just have to react to the situation. It's impossible to predict what is going to happen a few innings down the road. So I think just looking at each spot and the importance of each spot, really, if you're going to make a move or if you're not. But we're expecting everyone for them to be ready.

Q. You're giving Max the ball for Game 7. What have you learned about him? You would have seen him from afar for a long time. What have you learned about him maybe you didn't know and what's he meant to this group?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I've learned a lot I didn't know about him. When this series started, we told him he was Game 3. He immediately said, Okay, so 3 and 7. So he's been preparing for this since the start of the series. What he's meant to this group has been a lot, not just from a pitching standpoint, I think from a -- you know, like, a culture standpoint, and not being afraid to share his opinion, not being afraid to have tough conversations, not being afraid to raise the expectations that are here, whether it's with a hitter or a pitcher.

So he's competitive as anyone I've ever seen. He really supports his teammates. I think you guys saw that when Trey was pitching in L.A. But he's been awesome for us. I think that personality is kind of something that we needed this year, and you trust him in spots like this because he's -- I walked past him last night after the game and it looked like he was ready to kill somebody. So that's kind of where he's at. So you trust him to be ready for this environment.

Q. Jeff Hoffman's been terrific all postseason. What have you seen from him that has him on top of his game, and is he, like, a two-inning option if it presents itself?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, definitely multi-inning option, as are a lot of guys. But I think Hoff is -- he's pitching. Life of a closer is really hard. There's ups and downs. But I think he's pitching, he's locating well, he's sequencing well. That's a sign of a really good pitcher. It's one thing to do it, but then to do it in kind of like the biggest moment is another thing.

But I just think he's executing at a pretty high rate right now.

Q. Have you looked back at the decision of intentionally walking Shohei Ohtani yesterday?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah.

Q. And do you think that maybe you should have pitched at him?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah. It's a tough question because in those spots, if he hit a two-run homer, the opposite question comes. Why the hell did you pitch to him with a base open? So I think -- we talked about it before the series started. If there's a chance to take the bat out of his hands, you do it. And when you're convicted in a decision, you do it and you leave it behind. It's tough because they have really good hitters behind him. So I didn't lose any sleep over that one because of the caliber of player he is. And in this situation, like I said, that exact question would have been presented differently if the outcome was different.

Q. You and Chris both mentioned how Max is very inquisitive and asking why and questioning a lot of things. On his start day, do those questions stop, and do you kind of appreciate the enhanced piece and quiet that might come on your end?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: They kind of don't stop. When he starts his prep and how he's going to pitch and where he wants guys positioned behind him, it stops at a certain point, but it's probably still going on right now. He's still doing his work and doing his asking Pete, asking Kirky, asking other pitchers. But once that stops, I appreciate just the competitive nature that comes out.

But I think that's why he is who he is. Being curious is really, really important in this game for everyone. I think that's part of the reason why he's going to the Hall of Fame.

Q. So Trey is part of the plan tonight and he's got some experience with it, right?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Yeah, he did that in the minor leagues, came out of the bullpen a couple times. Yeah, he's definitely available, just don't know when. We kind of have targeted spots in the lineup that we want him to face, and you got to kind of see when that is. It could be early, it could be late. I think it's cool that he's a little bit versed in it. Obviously, different stage tonight than it is pitching in Triple-A, but I think he's shown he can handle it, so he'll be ready to go.

Q. Thinking back, just how special was this season for you and the rest of the team?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Oh, good question, man. Before you get locked into this whole day, I think you have to kind of take a step back and reflect of what we've done not just



from a win-loss record or where we are in Game 7 of the World Series, but how we did it and the things that we got better at. We've raised the standard and expectation of this organization a hell of a lot this year. I think as a manager, you always want a team that any other team, any other coaching staff, any other person that is in the game you can look at a team and say, that's what they stand for and that's what is important to them, and I feel like we've accomplished that this year.

So that's what I look at. There's so many moments throughout the regular season, postseason, that you're going to remember forever, but the fact that this group, a huge group, players, coaches, front office, support staff, have taken the Toronto Blue Jays standard and expectation forward is something that I'm most proud about.

Q. With Trey, would you try to bring him in at the start of an inning, or with the right matchup, would you consider bringing him in with men on base?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I'm going to try to give him a clean inning. I'm not sure it's going to happen, with anyone really tonight, but that would be ideal. I think whenever a guy is used to starting an inning, you kind of want to do that with him, but I think he understands that that may not happen tonight.

Q. A couple questions ago, you said something about, like, that's what we stand for, that's what's important to us. What did you mean by that?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: I think whenever you're trying to build a winning organization that is sustainable and real, there's certain things that are important. I think with this team, it's cohesiveness, toughness, respect for the game, respect for your opponent, respect for your teammates. If you can have that, you're usually starting off in a good spot, and I think that that's what you try to do every year, and then it kind of just gets contagious year after year.

So there's still things we can build on and get better at, but I think when you go about it the right way, when you are prepared and you play the game the right way, you play for your teammates, and you just respect what you're doing and how hard it is, I think that that's what we wanted to establish, and I feel like we did that this year.

Q. Springer in the leadoff spot tonight. How did he come through yesterday's game after missing 4 and 5 in L.A., from a health perspective?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Fine. There's probably some uncomfortable swings or movements, but he came through

it fine. I thought his at-bats were fairly normal, and looking for him to have a moment, if you will. He's had a few of those in these settings. So I think he'll be tired tomorrow no matter what the outcome is, but he'll be ready to go tonight.

Q. You talked a lot about the hitting group with Pop and Lou and Hunter. At what point during the season did you kind of realize how well that group was meshing, and what do each of those three kind of bring individually?

JOHN SCHNEIDER: Spring training, to be honest with you. I think with -- they're a good trio of personalities. The way they communicate to players they're all a little bit different, but they all kind of -- they all know their strengths. I think the biggest thing was defining their roles with a lot of clarity to start the season and having them really dive into that. I think that's just an easier way to work. I think that we could have done a better job of that in years past. I think them understanding kind of what they are responsible for has been really important. They all bring energy, I mean, endless energy, endless prep, endless content it seems like at times. But the way that they kind of -- you know, they're aware of what they're good at, too. And they're not afraid to ask for help. It's worked out really well.

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