

MLB World Series: Dodgers vs Blue Jays

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Los Angeles Dodgers Dave Roberts

Pregame 7 Press Conference

Q. When you left the room last night, it seemed pretty obvious that Ohtani was your starting pitcher. What went into the decision, and how many innings you got for him, what's your setup behind him?

DAVE ROBERTS: As far as innings, not sure. It depends how he comes out, how he looks, how he's throwing, how he's feeling. So I just kind of want to withhold kind of expectation and kind of read and react.

As far as pitching plan, everyone's available, and so how the game plays out, I just can't predict. I don't think anyone can. So we'll see how it goes. But it starts, obviously, with the way Shohei's throwing the baseball. And, yeah, last night we talked to him, and he said he was on board for starting. To be able to start him, it allows for us to kind of let him run as long as we can versus having him on the back end of the game.

Q. Last night, as the Blue Jays relievers came out of the bullpen, they all had written 51 on the side of their hats as a tribute to Alex Vesia. Obviously, the stakes are very high right now in the World Series. What's it mean to you and your team to have your opponents recognize the very real-life stuff that's going on with him?

DAVE ROBERTS: It's everything. I didn't learn that until after the game last night. I think it really speaks to the brotherhood of athletes, Major League baseball players, that they'll all say that baseball is what we do, but it's not who we are, and for these guys to recognize Alex and what he and Kay have gone through, it's -- heartbreaking is not even a good enough descriptor.

But for them to acknowledge that, it just speaks to how much respect and love they have for one another. It's a huge, huge tribute to Alex, yeah.



Q. Yamamoto was moving around a little bit. Is he available tonight as well?

DAVE ROBERTS: We'll see how he is in catch play, but he said that if he feels good, he is definitely interested.

Q. The rotation has been so big for this team all postseason. How much confidence does it give you to have so many of them and possibly Yoshi too available tonight?

DAVE ROBERTS: It's amazing. But, you know, pitching is tough, it's as tough on the mind, the body, and for each one of these guys to want to take the baseball and raise their hand and say, Pick me, I'm available, is pretty remarkable for a manager to look out and say, everyone wants to take part.

So they have been the backbone certainly for the second half of the season for our club, and they all want to participate, which is amazing.

Q. Yoshinobu, especially you saw this in Game 3 when he got up in the pen and warmed up, but he hasn't even really gone on regular rest. What does it say about him that he's trying to be part of these important games?

DAVE ROBERTS: Character. Character, compete, all of the above, you know, because it's past the physical. This is the mental part of it where he's as strong mentally as guys I've seen.

Q. You've been in a lot of Game 7s, a lot of elimination games, a lot of winner-take-all games, but as far as managing a World Series Game 7, you have that 2017 against the Astros experience. What did you learn from that game that you can apply to this game?

DAVE ROBERTS: You know, we got behind early, I think it was the second inning. I still felt that there was a lot of baseball left. I think this is going to be a different game. I hope it's going to be a different outcome. But I don't know. I do think that you got to manage with urgency, but we gave up a two-out double, and that's kind of what was the tale of the game, so I wouldn't say I learned anything about

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that particular game.

It's a different team, it's eight years from then, we have a different group, so I'm going to watch and read and react and do whatever I can to put players in a position to win.

Q. Was it a long conversation with Shohei?

DAVE ROBERTS: No. Shohei, we don't have long conversations (smiling).

Q. And was there any kind of debate about trying to use him in relief later or was, like, starting always the thing that just kind of made the most sense?

DAVE ROBERTS: It just made the most sense, given what it allows for the runway.

Q. And what do you expect from him even on short rest just the way he's going to handle this moment given the way he's kind of risen to previous big moments in the past?

DAVE ROBERTS: I expect him to show well. I just don't know how long, but we got to wait and see how it looks, and then if he's rolling, he's going to keep pitching.

Q. Was the rule and the way it's written kind of the decisive factor in using him as a starter rather than relief, knowing that if you brought him in relief, you might have to manipulate the batting order and put him?

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, that's part of it, certainly, yes.

Q. Was that the decisive factor?

DAVE ROBERTS: No, that's a factor, but also just, again, having him start, it gives you an opportunity to kind of see -- you don't kind of pigeon hole him in his usage or what -- the game is 0-0, and you can have him start and then give him a runway to see how the game plays out.

Q. Everybody knows that the Dodgers spend money, but a lot of teams -- a lot of other teams spend money too, a lot of money. What do the Dodgers do beyond that that has brought about such sustained success that maybe eludes other teams?

DAVE ROBERTS: Yeah, I think that people just overlook the fact that every year we probably have the top-5 farm system in baseball. This year I think we probably have the No. 1 or No. 2. We pick at the bottom of the draft every year, towards the bottom, and we still have young guys, whether by way of trade or development, that continue to

help contribute.

So on the business side, I think that we do a great job of marketing our organization. So it's pretty buttoned up. I think we have great people and obviously great ownership too.

Q. I'm sure you've heard the expression that the two best words in baseball are Game 7. I wonder if that is true.

DAVE ROBERTS: That depends, yeah, who you ask.

Q. Is it true for --

DAVE ROBERTS: I wouldn't say for a manager. As a sports fan, which I am first, yes, I agree with you. But as a manager, there's just a lot of decisions that are made that aren't made. But, yeah, it's bananas and there's nothing like a Game 7 in all of sport.

Q. I'm sure you recognize how epic and memorable Game 7s always are, but as you go into managing one, do you feel the weight of that?

DAVE ROBERTS: Not until this question. I felt pretty good. No, you know what? I love our guys, I love our players, and we got to go out and play a good baseball game. So, yeah, we're going to use more players. That's just kind of the way, the nature of a Game 7. You've got to manage on the margins, manage with more urgency than even in the regular postseason game. But outside of that, you got to play good baseball.

Q. Have you come to any conclusions about what makes Kiké such a good postseason player?

DAVE ROBERTS: Next-level focus, a high baseball acumen, ability to manage the heartbeat, not afraid to fail. So those are probably a few things that make him a consistent postseason performer.

Q. He said earlier when he was in here that he was 7 feet away from where the card told him to be on that play last night, but he kind of had the instinct that it might be a little shallow. Did you see that developing as you were watching it?

DAVE ROBERTS: I didn't see it developing, but it's not surprising, and I do encourage our guys to be humans and not robots and not be beholden to a card. It's played by humans, and Kiké is a heck of a baseball player with great feel, and that feel helped him double off of Barger last night.



Q. You opened the season in Tokyo and you're finishing in Canada and you have so many players from so many different countries, like Japan, Korea, Cuba, Dominican. Do you think how this World Series mean to the baseball world, and also how much impact given to the sports itself?

DAVE ROBERTS: I think baseball, the interest is at an all-time high worldwide. I think that we've traveled from starting in Tokyo -- we've logged a lot of miles this year, the Dodgers. But, yeah, we're a very diverse team. The baseball industry is very diverse as far as accounting for a lot of different countries. The brand in baseball has been fantastic. I think it's certainly fitting that we are playing a Game 7 where there's going to be a lot of interest. But, yeah, I'm proud to be a small piece of this and hopefully we can put on a show tonight.

Q. Having battled for six games, what has stood out to you about the Blue Jays as an opponent compared to maybe before the series started?

DAVE ROBERTS: They're gritty, they're tough, they play the game the right way, they're coached well, run well. A lot of respect for them.

Q. You were talking earlier about the things you guys do above and beyond the payroll, and part of that is -- you've got three future Hall of Famers at the top of your lineup, which a lot of teams would love to have, but that isn't necessarily always cohesive, stars playing together. What is it about this group, why has that worked so well?

DAVE ROBERTS: It works because of the character. There are stars on every team. But when you have your stars that value the little things, that value practice, that value oneness. Unselfish, whether it's in the order, batting order or days off, whatever it might be. Trying to make people around 'em better. Very selfless guys. Just consistent performers in how they go about it.

So it makes my job a lot more fun and, yeah, I think that the talent is one thing, but when you're talking about 162 and winning year in and year out, it's a character thing and not just talent. Because there's talent all over. But we've identified some special talented players, but also their character for me exceeds their talent, it really does.

Q. How do you compare this World Series to the ones you managed in the past, talking about level of intensity?

DAVE ROBERTS: So, yeah, I mean, the Astros 2017 was pretty intense. Yeah, the Red Sox, that was intense. The

bubble was different, but certainly intense. Last year playing the Yankees was pretty bananas.

It's right there with 'em. They're all -- you know, you're one of two teams left, so they're all intense in their own right. They're all different. But now you're talking about Game 7 for everything, and there is no tomorrow, so it's probably as intense as it gets.

Q. You going to give a pregame speech?

DAVE ROBERTS: No, no need. No need. These guys are on auto pilot right now. They don't need me.

Q. Kind of expounding on that one. Kiké was in here, he had the "Believe" head band, and he had the, "Failure is not an option" T-shirt. I think he was trying to be a walking inspirational billboard. But are there guys on this team that will do something rah-rah before the game, or will at least talk to guys and remind them if needed of what's at stake here?

DAVE ROBERTS: Not what's at stake. I think that Kiké and Miggy Ro are probably the guys that are kind of the emotional leaders on the team though. Emotional vocal leaders.

Q. Would it maybe be though, rather than firing guys up, maybe calming guys down?

DAVE ROBERTS: I don't think our heart rate's up. I think our guys are pretty calm to a man. I really do.

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