AL Championship Series:
Astros vs Red Sox
Sunday, October 14, 2018

Alex Cora
Red Sox postgame 2

Red Sox - 7, Astros - 5

Q. How big a boost did Barnes and Porcello give the team in the late innings tonight?
ALEX CORA: They did an outstanding job and they’ve done it throughout the postseason. We trust those guys. There’s certain matchups we like with them and we’re going to try to go to those matchups.

Barnes hit to Marwin. He made some good pitches. Brazier was able to use his fastball. Porcello, he did it again. That was pretty impressive.

Q. What did you think of Price, and how badly did you want him to get that third out --
ALEX CORA: He threw the ball well, actually. Good velocity. Started mixing up his changeup later on in the outing.

The pitch to Marwin was actually way off the plate inside. Probably was looking to it. But two out hits in the beginning. The one by George, nothing we could do. Everything started with Carlos hustling down the line. So we gotta clean a few things up. But overall his stuff was good. Command was good and he gave us a chance to win.

Q. Do you think he can build off this? Obviously it’s been quite the deal with him.
ALEX CORA: Yeah, coming in he felt very confident. He was ready to go. And, like I said, I mean, today was four and whatever, but he’s throwing the ball well against them the last two years, at least me being around, when I was there last year and this year. So coming into the series I felt confident that he was going to throw the ball well against them.

Q. What did Pedroia see in his delivery that you guys were working on coming into this?
ALEX CORA: Nothing much. It’s kind of like arm angle, but just a little bit of adjustment. Nothing huge.

Q. Jackie’s approach, going the other way and really not trying to do too much with the fastball.
ALEX CORA: I mean, he’s been doing that for a while. Got to the point during the season that we had to actually take him out of the lineup for three, four, five days during the week -- actually right before we went to Houston.

And he worked on his craft. He found a few things that he really liked about his swing. Seems like now he understands who he is as a hitter. There’s not too many hard-hit ground balls into his shift. He’s staying through it.

And since I don’t know when he’s been a complete player -- his on base percentage, driving the ball, against lefties, against righties, going the other way. He’s been very consistent with it.

Q. What did you see in the overall offensive approach against Cole in the first three innings?
ALEX CORA: We were very aggressive tonight, swinging at first pitches, first-pitch fastballs in the zone. Seems like doing that then he started going to his breaking ball stuff.

But we did a good job attacking him right away. Mookie hits a double. Beni first pitch gets a single and there were some good swings early in the count.

Q. Before the game, A.J. called Mookie a ticking time bomb. And he kind of went off tonight. Do you think he was more himself tonight? You said you wanted him to get the ball in the air and he did a couple times?
ALEX CORA: A.J. is a smart guy. He went to Stanford. (Laughter).

Yesterday, like he said, he got a pitch middle-middle and just roll over with the bases loaded. Tonight he was able to stay in the middle of the ballpark and it was good. He walked against McCullers, ran the bases well. And I saw him smiling today, which is always good. When Mookie’s smiling, good things are happening.

Q. What happened with Chris Sale?
ALEX CORA: I mean, I know they sent a memo or talked about it; actually I was walking into the batting cage and on the TV I saw the tweet by the organization. And he was feeling bad and he’s at the hospital.

From what I know, it’s nothing serious, but obviously whenever you have to go to the hospital you gotta be, . . . when all is said, we’re done®
quote/unquote, worried. But he should be fine. Hopefully we get news in the upcoming hours and he’ll join us in Houston.

Q. Could you just expound on Chris and will he (indiscernible) start in Houston?
ALEX CORA: I can't expound on Chris. The organization already talked about it. But Nate will pitch Game 3.

Q. Do you think that had any impact on Sale's performance last night?
ALEX CORA: No, no, he started feeling bad after the game.

Q. Before the game, you said expectations for Price you were seeing a quality start. Obviously he didn't fit the parameters for that. But do you readjust what you characterize as a quality start in these playoffs? Like just pitching half a game and holding on to the lead, is that kind of the things that are adjusted to?
ALEX CORA: Gave us a chance to win. I think we should start that start -- he gave his team a chance to win. And at that point it was Marwin. He put a good swing on him. The last at-bat, actually the previous pitch he put a good swing and he fouled it off. So we felt that that was a matchup that it was positive for us. So we went with Barnesy.

Q. When you say Mookie was smiling, you mean pregame or when did you notice --
ALEX CORA: During the game, during the game. Yeah, that's always good.

Q. Did you have it in your mind that you were going to use Rick over Nate even heading into this series, maybe based on Nate doing well and extra rest and having him in mind for Game 3?
ALEX CORA: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.