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

A.J. Hinch 
Astros postgame 2 

Red Sox - 7, Astros - 5 


Q. What did you do with Cole? 
A.J. HINCH: You know, early, I thought he was a little over-amped. He was pretty excited. A lot of energy. Wasn't making a ton of pitches. 

And then he found it. I thought he settled in nicely. He got into a little bit of a weird inning, ground ball base hit. A little unlucky on the near-great play by Marwin, a little bit of a pitch-around on Devers. He gets the punch. And then Jackie Bradley hits one up on the wall. 

The line's going to indicate a little bit tougher on him than he pitched. I thought he found it at the end. 

Q. Before the game, you talked about Mookie Betts' (indiscernible). And what did you see from him today? 
A.J. HINCH: Mookie? 

Q. Yes. 
A.J. HINCH: He ignited them from the very beginning of the game. This place, the energy of this place when he comes up to bat is really electrifying. When -- you try to minimize as much as you can in front of them, we didn't do a great job of that today. But from the first bat on he set the tone from the very beginning. That's why he's very much an MVP, at least candidate. 

Q. What happened with Marwin on that play, A.J.? Hit the wall really hard looked like. 
A.J. HINCH: He got back to the wall. He's played a couple of balls off this wall almost like a home player. He's pretty good out there. He banged his back, upper back and neck. We went out there to make sure there was no issue with his head. And there wasn't. 

The ball, the wall, he's back pedalling. He's got to make a decision on whether or not to concede the wall and try to play it off the wall or try to make a catch. It's not too dissimilar to what he's got to do at home, at our place. But it's a well-placed hit. 

Q. The insurance run they scored in the seventh with Mookie going around the bases, how unusual was it to see that with Maldonado? 
A.J. HINCH: He went around the bases and didn't have to put a ball in play. Those are tough in this type of series, these types of games. It's a little uncharacteristic. Obviously I brought McCullers in to try to keep it a one-run game with the way that this series can go. It's almost like a tie game for me. 

So Lance threw a couple of nasty breaking balls. Looked like Martin either lost it in the people in center field or just got a little bit, got a little bit, I don't want to say lax back there, but just had a tough time. And Mookie went around the bases, first the walk and then no ball in play and ends up scoring. 

Q. Obviously you're managing that game with the bullpen to try and win the game, keep your team in the game. But is there any part of you that's also managing looking ahead in the series in terms of your bullpen and how you're handling it? 
A.J. HINCH: Like which part -- just by using all the guys? 

Q. Yes. 
A.J. HINCH: It's a hard team to match up. I said at the beginning of the series, we had guys in the pen to try to give guys different looks. And I'm going to use our guys when we have the extra pitcher at least compared to them, and we're just going to keep trying to find the matchup with the lefties, with Sipp, with the righties -- I got a lot of different guys. 

James got his first playoff appearance which was good in hindsight because I'm glad I got him in the game but you have to manage to win. And certainly having the day off tomorrow you can manage a little more aggressively and try to use a lot of guys, and I was trying to going batter by batter to just try to keep the game close given the fact that we can score at any time against anybody. And we did. But we just -- they stretched the lead. 

Q. The Red Sox bullpen, not that they would catch you by surprise, but generally speaking maybe they've been a little underappreciated. What have they shown you? 
A.J. HINCH: The only time you notice a bullpen is when they blow it, right? We don't talk a lot about...
bullpens after games unless they're incredibly dominant or give up runs. I'm talking as a home manager.

They're not going to catch us by surprise. They've got good arms down there. It's just a matter of them coming in executing. We just couldn't find the hits until the ninth inning. We found a couple walks. We had pressure on them a lot tonight, and it felt like a game where you were going to have to capitalize on more opportunities because of the nature of the game.

So I think this series, the bullpens are going to be talked about a lot. I think in playoff baseball there's a lot of innings and a lot of outs that you've got to get. So buckle up.

Q. Can you talk about the job that Porcello did tonight?
A.J. HINCH: We knew that was their strategy. They're going to be very creative with him. He comes in and a little uptick in velocity. He's got a lot of energy and noise. And he's got kind of the "it" factor to come in and try to soak up the crowd and the atmosphere and the opportunity.

So we almost saw two Pesky homers in a row. I've only seen one, and I almost saw two in two days. Tony Kemp hooks it foul. Maybe it changes if that ball's fair.

Q. You talked about Gerrit being a little amped up. Was there anything else you saw earlier on? And was there any thought of taking him out before then and it really mattered I guess that he was able to settle down?
A.J. HINCH: No, I did get a guy up early just because it was going pretty fast for him in the first inning. Really the first inning, just his own error really created that. If you can just get the outs when you're supposed to get the outs the inning can change a little bit.

With the first two hitters they ambush him a little bit we're down 1-0. But he just didn't have feel for his breaking ball early, and then he had a really really good one. So as he started to pitch -- I almost sent him out for another inning. At 90 pitches, that's how good he was getting as the game was going.

The number looks big on the scoreboard, and it really was a ground ball base hit -- the near-good play -- kind of a designed walk and then a two-out base hit by Bradley, the fly ball off the wall.

He didn't pitch poorly at all. He just had a hard time getting into the game execution wise and then he was good.

Q. Did they handle that review of Bradley's foul ball as you thought they should?
A.J. HINCH: Yeah, I guess. I mean, I went out to ask them what they were doing. They were doing a rules review, which was where -- initially it looked like he called the ball fair and out, which means he didn't see him get hit. And then after they convened, he determined that it hit him but it hit him potentially in the box. And where he was in the box, if he had started going out of the box -- it's a judgment call for the umpire. So I was a little confused as to why they could go to replay. Once I went out there, they told me it was a rule review. And then I knew what they were going to come back with.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.