

AL Division Series: Yankees vs Red Sox

Monday, October 8, 2018

Alex Cora

Red Sox pregame 3



Q. Can you talk about your lineup changes and what were some of the reasons for them.

ALEX CORA: The guy on the mound has to do a lot with it. You look at the numbers, and they don't look great, but if you look at his numbers throughout his career, a lefty have done better against him. He's still a tough matchup, but the way Brock was swinging the bat, we do feel he can put good at-bats against him. Hopefully, he can get a hanging slider to right field and put it into the stands. That was the reason.

Pearce, obviously, with Mitch -- Mitch is available, but he's not 100 percent, so we went with him. And with Christian, we feel like offensively he can do a few things in the bottom of the lineup that can help us win a ball game.

Q. Steven was seeing the doctor today. Did you get an update from him?

ALEX CORA: No, actually, I haven't talked to Steven today.

Q. Can you explain Nathan's success against the Yankees?

ALEX CORA: I would think about Chris Sale saying no (laughter). I think it's kind of like -- stuff-wise, he's one of the best pitchers in the big leagues; velocity, movement with the cutter, he has that split. And he's been throwing the ball well against them. Not only with us, but he did it against the Rays too.

He's a guy that throughout his career, we all talk about potential and what he might become, and it seems like he's putting everything together this season.

I was telling earlier, somebody earlier in the clubhouse that hopefully he's our Charlie Morton this year, kind of like he's in the spotlight and people can see how good he is. Hopefully, that happens, and he can carry us.

Q. Alex, how significant for him taking the mound tonight can that success he's had against the Yankees be, just for his mindset and his approach this evening?

ALEX CORA: It's probably the same thing with Luis, probably the same way he's not great against us, but here he's been great. It's always good to have success with somebody, and you use that to your advantage.

It's funny because sometimes people feel like, Oh, I was successful, now I have to make adjustments because they will make adjustments, and it's that cat-and-mouse game. But with Nate, he keeps it simple. He knows where to attack. He knows what makes him successful, just like the other guys on the mound, and it's just about executing in the playoffs. We do feel that he can do that.

Q. Alex, with Kinsler and Nunez, how difficult was the decision? And kind of look at it as how much would you like to see a spark and lengthen that lineup?

ALEX CORA: I would like fireworks from these two guys. That's the most important thing. Talking to Eddie, I talked to Eduardo and Ian last night, and their mentality is, Hey, man, whatever it takes.

As a manager, you feel like, Hey, man, veteran guys, you have to call him and let him know, and I did last night, and they were like, Thank you for the phone call, but it wasn't needed. We understand what we're trying to accomplish, and if you need Brock to play and me to sit, I'll be ready to come in and play defense or run or whatever I have to do. And Eduardo, same thing.

I do feel that with this guy on the mound, he's a special one. That slider is a good one. We saw him against the A's. After the first inning, he threw a lot of them, and they were quality pitches. So numbers-wise, like I said before, in his career he's better against righties. Going with these guys tonight, and hopefully we can take advantage of it.

Q. Alex, as you know, the crowd here gets extremely loud. Is it even more imperative that you score early against this team to quiet them down?

ALEX CORA: They don't get quiet here. I saw that firsthand last year.

There's a few things that defensively we have to make sure we have our information in our pocket. We can't rely on the, Hey, move here, because it's going to be impossible. As far as the signs, get locked in. Communication is important. It's going to be loud, we know that, from pitch 1 all the way to the last pitch.

I'm a guy that I always go early to the dugout, and like I

said, last year when I went out there half an hour before the game, I actually enjoy it as a baseball fan, like, This is cool. To see this place this way, it's cool to see. I mean, it's New York City. It's fun to see people get involved with the team again.

That's a very likable group. Young guys, athletes, that if you're a fan of the Yankees, you're like, Oh, man, this is great. It's not like slow and just hitting the ball out of the ballpark. They can do a lot of things.

But our guys are prepared. Just like they went to Fenway. Fenway was very loud this weekend, and they did a good job playing throughout the weekend. Nothing is going to change from our end. We're going to show up from pitch 1 all the way to the last pitch, play hard, play fast, and see what happens in the end.

Q. Has anyone notable reached out to you in the past week or anyone given you advice that has been sticking in your mind for this week?

ALEX CORA: Not really. I think texts -- I got a lot of texts after Game 1, and for some reason didn't get too many after Game 2. I think people get, like, scared that you lost a game. You can text me. There's other stuff in life that we're going through. It's amazing.

Q. Alex, you referenced last year's ALCS with Houston here, and that team was obviously so great, but how do you think the crowd affected you guys in those games, if it did? And have you taken any lessons from that and applied it to this situation?

ALEX CORA: There were different at-bats here with the Astros, throughout the three games that we played here. I don't know if it was the crowd or just the stuff that we saw, but it felt that they weren't able to just like stay in the moment. They get excited about it. I haven't talked to them. I will during batting practice, but they know what's coming. They understand. I think it's a lot different coming here as an Astro than as a Red Sox. We play here in some loud games, and we know the whole rivalry, and we play 19 times. They understand.

But I'll talk to them about it. If it's more about the stuff that, like I said, have your cards in the pocket. Make sure you're locked in with the signs because at one point it's going to be very, very loud, and we don't want a situation, like Jack is playing in the gap that he's not supposed to because he didn't look at his card and he's looking for a sign, and you can't get it to him. You understand what I'm saying?

Q. We don't know yet what the stakes will be. They'll be high tomorrow night. But from a mental competitiveness standpoint, what gives you

confidence in Rick Porcello?

ALEX CORA: We saw it in Game 1, and we saw it throughout the season. He's been actually good against them. At one point of the playoffs, he was going to start, regardless if it was Game 3 or 4. It just happened that he came in relief in Game 1, and we decided to give him one more day.

Over the course of the season, talking to him -- and we have a great relationship, I think. We're very close -- the way he goes about his business and how fiery he is and how he prepares -- well, all of them, they prepare, but I've seen it firsthand in the sense that this guy, he gets it. So I'm very confident that, regardless of what happens today, we have the right guy on the mound tomorrow.