

Yost: Home field should help Royals finish ALCS

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

TORONTO — The Kansas City Royals beat out the Toronto Blue Jays for the best overall record in the American League on the final weekend of the regular season.

ALCS NOTEBOOK

Manager Ned Yost hopes that result pays off in the back end of the American League Championship Series.

Kansas City could not close the deal Wednesday in Game 5, as Toronto avoided elimination with a 7-1 victory to send the series back to Kauffman Stadium.

The Royals lead the series 3-2, and they will play Game 6 and, if needed, Game 7 at Kauffman Stadium, where they won the series' first two games.

"We knew it was going to be a tough series," Yost said after Wednesday's game. "But after winning the first two games, in reality, your goal is to come to Toronto and in kind of a foreign environment, a hostile environment, and at least win one. Then you get to go home and win one there and the series is over."

However, after trouncing the Blue Jays 14-2 in Game 4 on Tuesday, the Royals seemed poised to wrap it up Wednesday with right-hander Edinson Volquez pitching.

Blue Jays right-hander Marco Estrada had other

ideas, and he came up with a huge performance to shut down the Royals and extend the series.

"Now we're going back to a place where we're completely comfortable," Yost said. "That's why home field was so important to us. We really wanted to play four games in our park. And we're taking a three-games-to-two lead back to where we're comfortable and back to our home fans that support us and are fantastic."

The Royals will send out right-hander Yordano Ventura (13-8, 4.08 ERA regular season; 0-1, 6.57 postseason) in Game 6 against Blue Jays left-hander David Price (18-5, 2.45 ERA regular season; 1-2, 7.02 ERA postseason) at 8 p.m. Friday

In a historical note, in the 1985 ALCS, the Blue Jays took a 3-1 lead over the Royals, then dropped three in a row. Kansas City went on to win the World Series.

Price will get another chance at that elusive first winning postseason start of his career.

Price has two career postseason wins, both in relief, including Game 4 of the AL Division Series this season, when he pitched three innings against the Texas Rangers.

The left-hander is 1-2 with a 7.02 ERA in three postseason outings this season, including two starts.

He started Game 2 of the ALCS against the Royals and was pitching superbly



JOHN SLEEZER | KANSAS CITY STAR | TNS

Toronto Blue Jays' David Price pitches in the fifth inning against the Kansas City Royals during Game 2 of the ALCS at Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City on Saturday.

until the seventh inning, when a ball to shallow right that should have been caught by second baseman Ryan Goins dropped for hit and started a five-run rally. Price, who had not allowed a run in the first six innings, took the loss.

Price wound up charged with five runs on six hits in 6 2/3 innings.

He is 2-7 with a 5.24 ERA in 13 career postseason

games but is 0-7 with a 5.43 ERA in his postseason starts.

Price warmed up in the bullpen during Game 5 on Wednesday, but Estrada never was in enough trouble to come out until the eighth inning, when the Blue Jays led comfortably. Price was not used.

"That really worked out perfectly," manager John Gibbons said, "the fact that

we didn't need David tonight so he could throw Friday."

The Blue Jays face another elimination game Friday, but they also needed to win three games in a row in the best-of-five ALDS after losing the first two games at home.

Toronto is playing well in elimination games so far.

"Obviously, you try to carry this over to Kansas

City," said shortstop Troy Tulowitzki, who had a key three-run double Wednesday. "It's not going to be easy. They have home-field advantage. Our backs are going to be against the wall."

"But you look at it, you've got to win two games. In the grand scheme of things, it's possible, and that's how we're looking at it. Win the next game. Get to Game 7 and anything can happen."

Dodgers part with manager Mattingly

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Don Mattingly is out as manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Mattingly and the front office mutually agreed to part on Thursday as the team that bounced the Dodgers from the postseason, the New York Mets, prepared to represent the National League in the 2015 World Series.

The fact the Dodgers aren't there — and haven't been since 1988 — was a factor in the team's decision to move on from Mattingly, who survived only one year under the new hierarchy headed by Dodgers president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman.

According to ESPN, Mattingly was offered a contract extension last week. He has one year remaining on his existing deal. However, Mattingly turned down the new deal, per the report.

Mattingly led the Dodgers to three straight playoff appearances but the team's total payroll over those seasons was \$800 million.

The Dodgers lost in the first round of the playoffs in 2014 and 2015.

With Mattingly out as manager, speculation has quickly focused on him as a prime candidate to become the next skipper of the



JAYNE-KAMIN ONCEA | USA TODAY

Los Angeles Dodgers manager Don Mattingly reacts following the 3-2 loss against the New York Mets in Game 5 of NLDS at Dodger Stadium on Oct. 15.

Miami Marlins.

That possibility surfaced in early September even as Mattingly was leading the Dodgers to their third consecutive National League West title. The former Yankees star first baseman is known to be a favorite of Marlins owner Jeffrey Loria, a New York native.

The Marlins have been moving slowly in their search for a manager to replace Dan Jennings, who has returned to his role as general manager. They have interviewed four candidates, but no apparent favorite for the job has emerged, and there have

been indications Marlins officials were waiting for Mattingly's future with the Dodgers to be resolved.

Jon Heyman, of CBS Sports tweeted Thursday, "Marlins have serious interest in Mattingly. Their search appeared to be on semi-hold, waiting for this."

A year ago, the Dodgers' failure was almost identical and the front office was overhauled as a result. There are likely to be even more significant changes this winter as Friedman continues to implement his vision.

After the Dodgers were

eliminated by the Mets, first baseman Adrian Gonzalez was asked if he had confidence the same group of Dodgers could finally get over the hump in 2016.

"If this is the exact same team next year, yeah," he said. "But I doubt it's going to be the exact same team."

The Dodgers won just one playoff series in those three postseasons under Mattingly's leadership (the 2013 National League Division Series against the Atlanta Braves).

The Dodgers' shortcomings in 2015 — a rotation that dropped off severely behind Clayton Kershaw and Zack Greinke, a thin bullpen and an offense that ran hot and cold — were not necessarily Mattingly's fault.

Yet, the Friedman-led front office showed no hesitation to move players either and that figures to happen again this offseason.

Most prominently, Greinke can exercise an opt-out clause in his contract and become a free agent. Greinke, a NL Cy Young Award candidate, would be forfeiting the final three years and \$71 million of his deal with the Dodgers. On the free agent market, however, he would almost certainly be able to double the total amount.

Sox manager Farrell's cancer in remission

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Tests performed Thursday display that Boston Red Sox manager John Farrell is in remission from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, the team announced.

Farrell, 53, completed chemotherapy treatments earlier this month. He

took a leave from the Red Sox on Aug. 14 when doctors discovered the cancer while performing hernia surgery.

"I am extremely thankful for the outpouring of support I have received from the Red Sox, my family, friends, and fans throughout this process," Farrell said in a statement. "I am also especially thankful for the talented doctors who

cared for me in Detroit and here at (Mass General Hospital). I look forward to getting back to work and bringing another championship back to Boston."

The Red Sox announced earlier this month that Farrell would return to his post when healthy. Bench coach Torey Lovullo served as interim manager in Farrell's absence and recently decided to return to the club in his previous role for the 2016 campaign.

"We are thrilled to hear the great news about John today," Dave Dombrowski, Red Sox President of Baseball Operations said in a statement. "Foremost, we are extremely happy for him and his family, knowing what he has gone through over the past two months. We all admire him for his strength and courage, and look forward to having him back as our manager."



Farrell

NLCS

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history. His five extra-base hits in the NLCS are tied for the second most by a Mets player in a single postseason series, trailing only Carlos Delgado's six in the 2006 NLCS. Murphy went 4-for-5 in the series clincher, giving him a .529 average (9-for-17) in the NLCS.

Cespedes OK

Mets center fielder Yoenis Cespedes left Wednesday's

game in the second inning due to left shoulder soreness, and he received an injection in the shoulder. Collins said Cespedes should be OK for the start of the World Series with some rest and treatment.

Matz solid

Left-hander Steven Matz started and worked 4 2/3 innings but had no decision. He allowed just one run on four hits, walked two and struck out five while throwing 76 pitches, 46 for strikes. After going 4-0 with a 2.27 ERA in six regular-season

starts, he is 0-1 with a 3.72 ERA in two postseason starts.

Catcher, first baseman tie record

Catcher Travis d'Arnaud hit his third home run of the postseason Wednesday night, a first-inning solo shot. D'Arnaud has six RBIs this postseason, tied for the third most by a Mets catcher in a single postseason, trailing only Gary Carter's 11 in 1986 and Mike Piazza's eight in 2000. Paul Lo Duca also had six in 2006.

First baseman Lucas

Duda belted a three-run home run in the first inning as well as a two-run double in the second inning, finishing the game with five RBIs. The RBI total tied the franchise's single-game postseason record. It is the fifth time it happened and the second time this October. Curtis Granderson had five RBIs in Game 3 of the NLDS against the Dodgers. Entering Game 4 of the NL Championship Series, Duda was 3-for-24 with one RBI in eight games this postseason, but he went 3-for-4 Wednesday night.



MONTY J. RAND

UMaine head coach Red Gendron talks to his team during the annual UMaine Hockey Blue/White scrimmage at Alfond Arena on Oct. 4.

Hockey

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have played all five games and are pointless.

"We haven't executed at the critical moments on offense," said Gendron. "We haven't been getting enough pucks to the net, we haven't been screening and, when we have good shots, we haven't been putting them on net."

The problem for the Black Bears is that they don't have

any game-changers. They are a blue-collar, lunchpail type of team that has to outwork its opponent and play solid defense to be effective. They aren't talented enough to win if they get outworked.

Goals won't come easy. Nobody has scored more than 12 goals in a season. They will need a scoring-by-committee approach.

They will not only need their primary offensive weapons to produce, they will have to get something from their defense corps and third- and fourth-liners.

Poll

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UMass Lowell (19) and UMaine.

"Expectations have to be higher," said UMaine senior forward Till Gloger. "Nobody plans to have a season like last year."

"I really believe in the future of this program," he added.

UMaine is building around a group that includes four of its top five scorers from 2014-15, led by America East All-Rookie pick Kevin Little, a sophomore guard who averaged

12.5 points per game, and the 6-foot-8 Gloger (11.5 ppg, 4.8 rebounds per game).

Other veterans include sophomore guard Aaron Calixte (7.3 ppg, 3.4 assists per game), sophomore forward Marko Pirovic (7.1 ppg, 4.8 rpg), junior guard/forward Garett Beal of Beals Island (6.5 ppg, 4.4 rpg) and junior guard Troy Reid-Knight (4.8 ppg).

"We like our work ethic," Gloger said. "It changed from last year, because everybody knows what the standards are for the program. I think this year the expectations are clear to

the veterans."

Senior guard Shaun Lawton (9.6 ppg, 4.3 rpg, 2.8 apg, 1.9 steals per game) is currently suspended from the team.

The Black Bears have experienced significant roster turnover, adding nine players to a nucleus that includes four returning starters.

"The new guys that have come in are hard workers, have a lot of energy," Reid-Knight said. "Practice has been a lot more competitive. They just want to win and get better."

The arrival of the newcomers has helped re-energize the veterans, who are

battling to maintain their roles on the squad.

"It's basically like a dogfight every practice," Reid-Knight said. "Everybody's trying to get playing and minutes in practice, so they're giving their all every day."

UMaine plays a Halloween exhibition game at the University of Southern Maine in Gorham and takes on Husson University of Bangor in a Nov. 7 exhibition contest at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor.

The Black Bears' regular-season opener is Nov. 13 at perennial national power Connecticut.