

# ANATOMY OF A DOUBLEHEADER

have somewhat of a fresher team than the other side.”

Thus, the foundation for the team’s successful record in these twin bills — the reason the Yankees have managed to stay fresh and focused — relies on plenty of preparation, adherence to routine and numerous pots of coffee.

In other words, doubleheaders are a challenge, chronicled below, that test everyone involved, leading to a unique convergence of responsibilities and randomness all made possible by 18 scheduled, clustered innings.

**A** few hours before Adams arrives at Yankee Stadium, clubhouse assistant Matt Nimer is already beginning his long list of chores in anticipation of the day’s two games.

Working under Cucuzza, his morning preparation doesn’t change much from a regularly scheduled day game. He starts by collecting any dirty jerseys from the night before — along with the requisite pants, undershirts, socks and towels — to wash, dry and hang in lockers before players enter the clubhouse around 10 a.m.

Nimer and the rest of the clubhouse assistants set up breakfast for the early arrivers, take care of any equipment requests, then lay out a healthy pregame meal, cooked by clubhouse chefs, that

consists of some lean meats and proteins, vegetables and salad options. “I’ll eat before the players get there, and then I’ll try to eat right when the game starts, when the players are all on the field,” Nimer says. “So, we take a little break.”

The team’s head athletic trainer, Steve Donohue, and his staff work in the back-ground, arriving early to fill whirlpools and stock cold tubs with ice. Rehabbing players begin treatments an hour earlier than their teammates and participate in therapy exercises, stretching, examinations and taping. On long days like this, monitoring hydration becomes paramount, too, and Donohue’s staff makes sure Gatorade and water coolers are filled and being used.

“You have to consider that it’s not normal for a player to play that long or that much in one day,” Donohue says. “So, we have to be mindful of that and do what we can to help them stay healthy for 18 innings.”

Prior to the team’s doubleheader against the Orioles on Aug. 12, outfielder Brett Gardner already knows he’ll be playing in both games. That influences his routine once he arrives at his locker just after 10 a.m., still groggy from the trip home from Toronto the previous night. For the 12-year veteran, hydration remains the most important part of his preparation for a long day. “It sounds silly, but most people think

they’re hydrated, and they’re not,” he says. “So, I just crush a lot of water and take a few different vitamins and supplements.”

In the midst of his team playing 19 games in 17 days, manager Aaron Boone has already planned out both lineups the night before, the product of conversations with his coaching staff held days in advance. “You try and do a little more planning with the lineup,” says Boone, who also confers with analysts to aid in his decision-making. “You’re trying to keep guys fresh ahead of time. Who do I think I want to have a day off, either before or after? Who’s in play for both games? The planning for that is a little more in-depth.”

Gardner won’t get loose in the weight room until 90 minutes before first pitch, when he’ll start to wake up his body and watch some last-minute video on the opponent. “It’s going to be such a long day, I try not to get going any earlier than I have to,” he says. About 30 minutes before the game begins, he’ll move to the batting cage, take swings off the pitching machine, then head to the field to jog and stretch.

The Yankees typically don’t take batting practice on the field on doubleheader days, which means Boone has more time for himself in the morning. After arriving at his office around 9 a.m., eating a little breakfast, then getting in some quick cardio, he’ll fill out his official lineup card. For the doubleheader against Baltimore, the Yankees have designated infielder Breyvic Valera as the 26th man, a decision made based on the number of arms and healthy position players at Boone’s disposal.

An hour before each game, Boone will then confer with Rothschild, bench coach Josh Bard and bullpen coach Mike Harkey for what he calls his “runway meeting.”

“We’ll sit down and map out our pitching plan to some degree: Who’s down? Who’s available? Who do we like in different matchups?” Boone says. That includes scouting the opponent, too. “OK, we’re staying away from this guy, or this guy’s down, or this guy is not. So, we’ll go through it in pregame [after] we have all that information and the lineup and the matchups and everything.”



THE YANKEES HAVE TO BE CREATIVE WITH THEIR PITCHING DURING DOUBLEHEADERS. GREEN [ABOVE L, AT CENTER] OPENED THE SECOND GAME OF BOTH AUGUST TWIN BILLS, WHILE ADAMS [ABOVE, R], SELECTED FROM SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE TO BE THE TEAM’S 26TH MAN ON AUG. 3, SUPPLIED TWO INNINGS OUT OF THE BULLPEN. “WHEN I COME UP HERE, I JUST HAVE TO BE READY TO GO IN ANY SITUATION THEY NEED,” ADAMS SAYS.