

AARON JUDGE

about the pride they have in putting on the pinstripes, and that always gets me fired up. I want to do everything I can to represent this uniform in the best way possible. When you see the passion that our fans have and the energy that they bring to the Stadium every single night, you want to play well every time you step on the field, at home or on the road. When you play for the Yankees and you talk to other players around the league, it's easy to get a sense of how special it is to play in New York. This is the mecca. This is where you want to play. This is what every baseball player wanted to do when they were little kids: wear the Yankees' uniform. I feel extremely humbled to have gotten drafted by the Yankees, to make it up to the big leagues with this organization and to be here for as long as I've been.

YM: *As the parent of a baseball player in his teens, I've seen more No. 99 jerseys over the last five years than I ever could have imagined — especially because I can't remember seeing any before you broke into the majors. How does it make you feel to know that so many young ballplayers want to emulate you?*

AJ: That gives me the chills to think about. Some of my buddies tell me that every Little League team they see has one kid wearing No. 99. That's pretty crazy, but it makes me step back and think about the type of impact I have. So many kids out there are watching baseball. They're watching everything we do, the good and the bad. I really try to be a positive role model. I try to play the game the right way and do whatever I can to show kids that if you put in hard work and you have a smile on your face, anything is possible. You could be the right fielder for the New York Yankees. This game has given me so much, and the Yankees have given me so much. It's important to me to give back to the players who are coming up behind me. This was already a great organization before I got here, but I want to make this place better for the guys who come up through the organization in the years to come.



"IT'S A TOUGH COUPLE OF AT-BATS FOR ANY PITCHER WHEN YOU HAVE TO FACE ME AND HIM, ESPECIALLY IF WE'RE BOTH HITTING WELL." —JUDGE ON STANTON [L]

YM: *Shifting back to on-field matters, for the first time since 2018, you and Giancarlo Stanton were in the lineup at the same time for the majority of the team's games in 2021. What did he mean to the Yankees last season?*

AJ: Big G is a special talent and a special person. I don't think a lot of people get to see that because he's pretty quiet, and he sticks to business. But I learned a lot from him last year. I wanted him to hit behind me; it's a tough couple of at-bats for any pitcher when you have to face me and him, especially if we're both hitting well. He's a student of the game and a leader in our clubhouse. He goes about his business like a true professional. He's always talking with the younger guys whenever they want to ask him about his approach, his routine in the cage or

anything else. He's always willing to stay late or come in early to help other guys, including me. When he came here in 2018, I couldn't wait to talk with him about the things he did to be so successful. I wanted to emulate that; I wanted to be the player he was. He's one of a kind, and we're lucky to have him in pinstripes. Last year was especially fun with him out there every night.

YM: *Like Giancarlo did, you've amassed quite a few homers before your 30th birthday. For a statistic that is so celebrated, how important do you feel that part of your game is?*

AJ: It's a byproduct of being 6-foot-7 and 270 pounds. It comes with it. If I make contact with the ball, there's a good chance that it's

