

QUOTE
OF THE DAY

'All the other horses were screaming their heads off. It's like they were greeting him.'

— **Bob Baffert, racehorse trainer, on Triple Crown hopeful Justify's arrival Wednesday at Belmont Park**



NEWSDAY / J. CONRAD WILLIAMS JR.

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the Mets' runs over their last four games, with only one game in which they allowed more than two

New court for Chase

NBA vet Budinger now a volleyball pro

BY ANDREW COHEN
Special to amNewYork

Back in January, at a coffee shop near Hermosa Beach, California, Chase Budinger was pondering his professional basketball future alongside his friend Sean Rosenthal, a two-time Olympic beach volleyball player.

Budinger, who played eight seasons in the NBA before playing overseas in Spain for the 2016-17 season. Rosenthal had joked around with Budinger for the past couple years about switching sports.

Now 30 years old and skeptical about playing another year internationally, Budinger obliged to spend three weeks practicing with Rosenthal before agreeing to fully pursue a career in beach volleyball, effectively ending his basketball career.

"It was a tough moment in my life, but it was good timing too," Budinger told amNewYork in a phone interview Wednesday. "Most guys in beach volleyball aren't in their prime until their mid-30s, and some play into their 40s. I still have a lot of time to work on my craft and, hopefully,

one day become one of the best."

Budinger and Rosenthal will compete in the AVP New York City Open this weekend at Hudson River Park's Pier 25/26. The tournament spans Friday through Sunday, consisting of 16 main draw teams for men and women.

The AVP is the top U.S. pro beach volleyball league, in which Budinger and Rosenthal are partners for the current season. The sport is not new to Budinger, who was voted the 2006 Volleyball Player of the Year as a high school standout in southern California. His older brother and sister also played the sport professionally.

Budinger, who harbors Olympic aspirations alongside Rosenthal, says the hardest part about leaving basketball is the brotherhood he'll miss in the locker room.

Still, going from playing in an indoor gym to the sunshine of the beach has been made it an easier transition.

"One thing I've been enjoying the most is being able to ride my bike down to the beach every day, and you get to practice in good weather," he said.



Chase Budinger played eight NBA seasons before switching to beach volleyball.

MPU DINANI

BRIEFS

Source: Mets mull Reyes' release

Jose Reyes' time in a Mets uniform may be coming to an end.

The idea of releasing the struggling Reyes has been discussed, according to a source. But the Mets are hesitant to do so at the moment because Reyes is still popular in the organization.

He is much less popular with a vocal portion of the team's fan base because of his .141 start to the season.

Earlier last month, the Mets thought they could give him a chance to maybe start clicking. But with the team sliding, carrying him has become more of a problem. Given Reyes' longtime connection to the Mets, it's been a difficult decision.

Reyes, 34, signed a one-year, \$2-million contract to return to the Mets after leading the team in plate appearances in 2017. Rookie Luis Guillorme has proved to be adequate as a backup infielder and the Mets will eventually need roster spots when Yoenis Cespedes and Wilmer Flores return from the disabled list.

Reyes appeared as a pinch runner in the ninth inning Wednesday.

(NEWSDAY)

No. 1 Halep reaches French Open semis

Top seed Simona Halep fought back to triumph in a bruising French Open quarterfinal against Angelique Kerber.

The Romanian, who lost in last year's final at Roland Garros, defeated Kerber, 6-7 (2), 6-3, 6-2, to book a clash with Garbine Muguruza in the last four in pursuit of her first Grand Slam title.

A title at Roland Garros would bring redemption for Halep, who lost in the 2017 final in Paris against Jelena Ostapenko after leading by a set and three games.

(REUTERS)

Anemic Mets shut out by lowly Orioles at own ballpark

It can't get worse for the Mets after Wednesday's 1-0 loss to the Orioles at Citi Field. Or can it?

Oh, right. The Yankees come to Flushing for the first round of the Subway Series on Friday night.

The Mets were swept in the two-game series by Baltimore, the team with the worst record in baseball. The Mets' next three games will be against their crosstown rivals, who have one of the best records in baseball.

The Mets were five-hit by Dylan Bundy and two relievers. Zack Wheeler was their latest hard-luck starter as he got a no-decision despite throwing seven shutout innings.

Manny Machado's eighth-inning sacrifice fly off Jeurys Familia drove in the game's only run.

ORIOLES (19-41)	1
METS (27-32)	0

at Citi Field

The Mets have lost six in a row (eight in a row at home) and 11 of 13 overall.

"You know what?" Michael Conforto said. "We're not happy. It hasn't been a good homestand for us."

More? The Mets have scored seven runs in 59 innings on this homestand. They have scored two runs in their last 39 innings.

"I think guys are [angry]," manager Mickey Callaway said. "You could see it after the game today. I felt like the whole game everybody thought we were going to win the game and then we don't and I felt like everybody was mad. They weren't down on



Jay Bruce reacts after flying out to end the fourth inning.

JIM MGSAAO

themselves, they were mad. Going into an off-day, I think they're going to have some time to reflect. We have a big series that we have to focus on next and I'm sure everybody's going

to get pumped up."

The Mets, who didn't get their first hit until the fifth inning in Tuesday's 2-1 defeat, were held hitless for the first three innings by Bundy (4-7). Asdrubal Cabrera

led off the fourth by snapping an 0-for-16 skid with a double off the rightfield wall.

Wheeler had the Mets' second hit, an infield single in the fifth. And the game was still scoreless in the seventh when the Mets loaded the bases on a two-out double by Kevin Plawecki, an intentional walk to Adrian Gonzalez and an unintentional walk to pinch hitter Jose Bautista.

Bundy geared it up for the next batter, striking out Amed Rosario on three pitches.

Bautista had pinch hit for Wheeler, who was out after 93 pitches. Wheeler allowed three hits, walked a batter, hit two and struck out five. In their last 18 games, Mets starters have a 2.36 ERA. The Mets lost 13 of those games.

(NEWSDAY)