

Nats' Cavalli apologizes for telling Contreras to 'sit down, boy'

BY KEN POWTAK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — Washington Nationals pitcher Cade Cavalli apologized Wednesday for shouting "sit down, boy" at Boston Red Sox first baseman Willson Contreras while instigating a benches' clearing scum a night earlier.

"I'm extremely torn up about the way that things were perceived," Cavalli said. "Obviously, there was no ill intention behind that."

Cavalli shouted at Contreras after striking him out looking with a full-count pitch in the fourth inning of the Nationals' 8-1 victory over the Red Sox.

The term "boy" has a racist history in the U.S. Contreras, who is Venezuelan, demurred

when asked after the game if he felt there was a racial component to Cavalli's word choice.

"My teammates know me, my family knows me, this organization knows me," Cavalli said. "I couldn't sleep because of it. It hurt my heart, knowing that, if there's a 13-year-old Black kid in D.C. that sees that — that looked up to me and thinks that he perceived it in a way that wasn't intended the way that it came out, and then he's not looking up to me anymore — that hurts my heart."

When asked, he said he understands the meaning behind the word used.

"There's a history behind that word, and that's just something that as a competitor, like in football or basketball, playing whiffle

ball with my brother, you don't understand it," Cavalli said. "And then it gets perceived in a way that was not my intention, and then you learn from that. It'll never happen again."

The 27-year-old right-hander said he didn't realize the public outcry on social media until he got back to his hotel room.

"I looked at my phone, and I saw what people were saying about me. Saw how torn up my wife was. It hurt my heart," he said. "I couldn't believe it. I really couldn't. Because I know that people know me, and they know my character, and that's not me. So, it was hard. I truly didn't sleep last night."


Contreras was walking back to the dugout after striking out and yelled back at Cavalli: "Are you

talking to me?" A few words were exchanged, and he charged the mound. He was stopped before he got to the pitcher. He tried to throw his helmet over a group of players at the

rightly. Things settled down quickly after that, though the brief dustup ended with Contreras, Boston interim manager Chad Tracy, Red Sox outfielder

Nate Eaton and Washington pitcher Miles Mikolas being ejected.

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