

# 92nd MLB All-Star Game

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

Los Angeles, California, USA

Dodger Stadium

## Commissioner Rob Manfred

Albert Pujols

Miguel Cabrera

Commissioner Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everybody, and with welcome to the presentation of the two legendary All-Stars that were selected earlier this month but MLB commissioner Rob Manfred who is here with us today. Throughout baseball history there have been only three men who have been able to accomplish 3,000 hits, 500 home runs and 600 doubles. One of them was Hank Aaron, and the other two are with us here today.

To my right is Albert Pujols, an All-Star for the 12th time, who in case you had not noticed based on his necklace has reached his 600th milestone, and to my far right is Miguel Cabrera, an All-Star for the 12th time who reached the 3,000 hit milestone and the 600 double milestone earlier this year.

COMMISSIONER ROB MANFRED: Every single year when we think about the All-Star Game, start planning, we try to find something that's going to make it better for our fans. And I think one of the best ideas -- and I have to tip my hat to Fox on this because it originally started with them -- was the idea of these legacy picks; that we ought to have an opportunity to have two players like these players who have made great contributions to the history of our game and give our fans a chance to enjoy them along with our young stars and all the other great players in the game.

I have to say, two of the best phone calls of the year that I've made was the two I made to Albert and to Miguel. And it's kind of interesting, when you think about our game, they had one thing in common in the course of both phone calls, each of the men suggested that it would be great to come to the All-Star Game at a point in time that their children are old enough to enjoy the game. And I think it speaks to the family aspect of our game. It also speaks to what great human beings both of these individuals are.

So with that, I'll turn it back to you.

THE MODERATOR: Let's just open it up for questions if anybody has any.

MIGUEL CABRERA: I want to say thank you to you, the Commissioner, and the League.

**Q. First of all, both of you, congratulations. Both of you are the only ones in the Latino MVP awards, 32 years, that you, Albert have won it eight times and you, Miguel, have won five times. The other one who is not here is Big Papi who won it four times. The fact that you guys are so great and you get to this path, what are you going to do now after you retire?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: For me, it's first of all, travel. Spend time with the family. You know, I think maybe a year and a half ago when we were dealing with COVID over the summer, that was the only time that I got to spend the summer off with the family. I think I'm looking forward to giving back to baseball, I don't know, whatever doors open to me. Both Miguel and I have a lot of wisdom that we can give back to baseball, especially to this country, to the Latin players that are coming up right now.

I know myself, I can be probably a mentor to so many Dominican players coming up. They are the future of Major League Baseball, these young athletes. You saw it last night, the display in the Home Run Derby, what Julio did competing in the first round of the Home Run Derby at this stage is pretty amazing, and Juan Soto. I'm just humbled and honored and privileged to have this blessing to do that for these young athletes right now.

I can't speak for the future, but what I can speak is for tonight. The Bible says tomorrow is not guaranteed for us. I think when that time comes, I can hopefully sit down and hopefully get a door open and just pass the wisdom that I learned in this game.

MIGUEL CABRERA: I don't know yet. I want to be around in baseball for my whole life because it's something I love. But right now I've got to focus on this year and next year. After that, we'll see what happens.



**Q. Albert, yesterday, Home Run Derby, having everyone come out and mob you, what did that feel like, and what was said in that moment when everyone surrounded you and the players joined you on the field?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: That was pretty special. That was something I shared inside about 20 minutes ago when I had a chance to address the team, the NL team. You know, there's been a lot of cool moments in my career, a lot of great games and big stage, but to be able to be in the All-Star Game like this and seeing these guys that you compete against through the course of the season for 162 games, and you come together for a couple of days just to have fun.

And you know, being in the Home Run Derby, it was pretty emotional. I tried to hide it because I was still an athlete needing to go out there and compete, but it's probably going to be one of the top moments in my career, to tell you the truth. It's just pretty special, and to have it -- to see that happen with my family, I want to thank the Commissioner for giving me that opportunity for my family and also for my friends that were in the stands to experience this special moment of my life, my last year here in the All-Star Game.

Like I said, it's probably going to be one of the top moments in my career, which I had a lot of great ones, but that one tops it yesterday.

**Q. This is an important achievement for both Albert and Miguel but how important is it to give relevance to the longevity, the greatness of these people, and also the character aspect of the game as well?**

COMMISSIONER ROB MANFRED: I tried to say it in my opening remarks. Let me try and say it better.

To have an opportunity to recognize two players that perform so unbelievably on the field. I mean, I was thinking about it the other day. I think I gave you the MVP Award in 2012. That was a long time ago, the first one. But great performances on the field year after year.

But more than that, representing the game here, in their home countries, being mentors to young players as they have come up; this is what our game is about, and to have a chance to recognize two gentlemen like this, a real highlight for me.

ALBERT PUJOLS: Thank you.

**Q. The Dominican Republic and Venezuela, they live a**

**lot off baseball, a lot of people make a living off baseball there. Do you see a future where Major League Baseball can be in the communities at a deeper level than just the academies?**

COMMISSIONER ROB MANFRED: Yeah, I do. I think that everywhere where we develop players, where we have fans, we should make an effort to bring our game live to those locations. I think television is a great thing. Broadcast is a great thing. Our live game is special, and we need to continue to work to bring live games to markets like those.

**Q. David Ortiz is going into the Hall of Fame this weekend. What can you say about what David has meant to the game of baseball and to you guys, both during his career and after it?**

ALBERT PUJOLS: Pretty special. I mean, back in the Dominican Republic, I get in a lot of trouble with my parents because I used to skip school to go watch David Ortiz when nobody knew David Ortiz. He used to play for Seattle and it was in my backyard. David was like a big brother to me. I had a chance to spend some time with him last night.

Just forget about the numbers and forget what he did in the field. To me it's what he does off the field with his foundation and the impact that he has made and the life changes that he has made for others. That's what I admire the most about David Ortiz. He's humble and never forgets where he comes from. That's something really special and that's somebody that I can respect so much. I can pick up my phone and call him anytime; he can pick his and call me anytime, and every time we talk, he's just full of wisdom.

So I'm so honored, humbled, as a Dominican player, and I can speak for all the Dominicans, I think we are so proud to see another Dominican player getting inducted into the Hall of Fame.

So I know our country is going to be partying next week, maybe for months, but just really excited just to see David and everything that he has accomplished in his life and his career.

MIGUEL CABRERA: To me, he's like my big brother. When I first come into the big league, they hold me like they are family.

Him being to the Hall of Fame, it's everything, because it's like Albert say, he brings so much to this game and outside of this game. We want to follow his steps. We want to be like Big Papi. Everybody loves Big Papi. At the same time

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

he's Big Papi, but he's our friend. He's like our family and it's a great honor to say he's like my friend after baseball.

**Q. To follow up on a colleague's question, when it comes to the Dominican Republic and doing further things, aside from the academies, what about maybe forcing or obligating the kids out there to finish their education as they would have to do here in the U.S.?**

COMMISSIONER ROB MANFRED: We have made real strides in each of the academies in terms of educational programming to try to make sure that young men who are in those academies go as far in the educational process as possible. We've also had ongoing conversations with the Dominican government about working with them to ensure that kids involved in the development process, young men involved in the development process, continue their education. We will continue those efforts with the goal being that the young men that are participating in the system, at least complete their high school education.

**Q. I just wanted to ask, please, Miguel and Albert, if they could restate what you eloquently said in English about David Ortiz for all of the media here in Spanish, because I think if you can say it in Spanish, and maybe if the at end the Commissioner can speak about what David Ortiz has meant to baseball.**

COMMISSIONER ROB MANFRED: I'm in the linguistically challenged group that he referred to earlier, so all I have is English, I apologize. I really do apologize.

I think that when I think about David, I harken back to what I said about each of these two gentlemen. I think that he was not only a great player on the field, but what he did in the community, what he meant to the Boston community in times of crisis, those sorts of public things. But maybe more importantly, the little things that he did throughout his career through his foundation, he's the kind of player that makes our game what it is.

I'll also borrow a word from Miguel. I think after I was elected, one of the first players that I formed a relationship with where I really could say he was a friend was David. You know, he was really helpful to me. Always willing to give you honest advice, and that's the best kind of friend you can have.

THE MODERATOR: Rob, Albert, Miguel, everybody here, thank you very much.

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