

World Baseball Classic: Pool B - China vs Japan

Thursday, 9 March, 2023

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Japan

Hideki Kuriyama

Pregame Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Within two hours you have the opening game of the 2023 WBC tournament. What's in your mind right now?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Yes. It's not my situation. I'm not saying -- well, I'm not the guy that's supposed to say any comment. I think everybody in my roster is very good mood and for the opening game for the Taiwan pool and also the opening game for the Tokyo game as well. We were watching and we can't wait for our opening game.

Q. Tell us about your game plan, if possible.

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Game plan? Well, this is our opening game, so like to have the momentum. And it's an international match and it's always difficult to get the win at the international tournament. This is how I feel. So all I can say is just to put all effort and try to get a win.

Q. You put the starting pitcher Shohei Ohtani. How is Ohtani's condition?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Of course, well, I haven't talked to him because this is his game day, but I was watching him and, yes, he's okay.

Q. A lot of fans at the stands is expecting you to play well.

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Of course, no matter what will happen, winning is the most important goal. I know that a lot of the audience is looking for baseball. It's a joy myself as well as the players. We are so happy and honored to be representing the team Japan. So like to show some hustle play so that the audience can get some energy by watching our play.

Q. The first skipper of the team Japan I watched Sadaharu Oh talking to you. What was the content?



HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Yes, I met Mr. Oh at Miyazaki as well and he wishes us well. He's so worried about baseball, Japanese baseball. So I got a message from the President Oh and that will give us a lot of extra power and that we are concerned about the future of the baseball. That's what Mr. Oh is always thinking about. What exactly Mr. Oh told me is trust in, trust our player. That's what exactly he told me.

Q. Awhile ago you mentioned that it is so important to get the international matches winning game. What's the key in your mind for today's contest?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Yes. We were watching our first game and probably a lot of the momentum were crossing, and it is okay for our players to feel pressure on. I'm not saying that, hey, I'm not saying to my players, hey, be relaxed. No, it's not. All I can do is just trust my players and I'm going through it.

Q. Your starting lineup hasn't been mentioned yet, and if you could tell us a little bit ahead, tell us about your starting lineup, if possible.

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Well, this morning when I woke up I had some concern. But anyway, it is your time to think our order with your imagination, but I have a lot of reason to put my orders, and we, all we care is about the result. Winning is more important than anything. So sooner you'll see our starting lineup. So enjoy.

Q. Within two hours you have the opening games. The first game, the first previous games team Australia beat the team Korea 8-7. By watching that opening game what's your thought?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Well, yes, we have the WBC rule, original rule, especially for the defense with the pitching regulation stuff. This is something I am double-checking. When I arrived at the ballpark, I spoke with, I went to the umpire and I double-checked, and they let my players to play on focus. Throughout the baseball games, many things happen by watching today's first game, and anything can happen, so I am well prepared so that let my team players play with concentration.

Q. You'll have the opening game soon. You have a special meeting before the game start or last night? Any team meeting?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Yes, before the game start -- or before the game, yeah, I spoke with them to send a brief message, but it's not a big message. All I can do at this stage, at this moment, is I am trusting fully to my players. It's nothing special. No special message to my players. I wish all my players brilliant success. A lot of Japanese fans, if they play well, they will send a lot of audience to many things.

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