

World Baseball Classic: Pool B - Korea vs Japan

Saturday, 11 March, 2023

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Japan

Yu Darvish

Kensuke Kondoh

Postgame Press Conference

Japan 13, Korea 4

Q. Yu, this was the first appearance right after the 2009.

YU DARVISH: Yes, I'm not focusing on today's game as WBC, but this was my first game pitched in Japan for a long time.

Q. When you say "special," how is it special? Can you explain?

YU DARVISH: Well, this is my hometown country, I was born and grew up, and this might be the last opportunity for me to pitch in my home country.

Q. You pitched three innings today, gave up some runs. How was it?

YU DARVISH: This was my actually first game. I've got good velocity, although my command is not good, but I'm okay with my first appearance of the season.

Q. You just mentioned that the velocity is good. If there's anything else you felt good? Also your first inning, second inning you've got the one-two-three innings, but third inning you gave up a couple runs. What was the difference?

YU DARVISH: Other than the velocity, slider worked well. Talking about the third inning, the hanging slider, that's the reason why probably I gave up runs.

Q. Question to Mr. Kondoh. You got a great RBI double, and you got a great home run. How did you evaluate yourself?

KENSUKE KONDOH: Well, I'm at the second spot as a



hitter, so I'm satisfied with, but when I look back at today's game, I've got some adjustment. I have to adjust for the defense, especially the third inning as a right fielder.

Q. You're in the second spot. Nootbaar is a leadoff guy, and in the 3 spot we have Ohtani. How do you feel in between those two guys?

KENSUKE KONDOH: Yes, the guy in front of me is always on base, so the guy behind me, Shohei, is great, as well as Murakami and Yoshida, as well, so I'm always trying to work what I can do for my team.

Q. You got the extra-base hit, double and home run. Let's talk about the double at the bottom of the third.

KENSUKE KONDOH: Well, when I hit the double towards the center, I was at least trying to hit a sacrifice fly. I was trying to hit a high ball.

In the bottom of the fifth I was the lead-off guy, and that at-bat I'm trying to hit an extra-base hit, at least a double.

Q. To both players, you've got two games in a row. How do you feel about your team's atmosphere?

YU DARVISH: Today's contest right after we scored four at the bottom of the third, the atmosphere is so great. The best, I think.

KENSUKE KONDOH: Yes, for the hitters, we -- our lineups worked well, and we tried to keep on continuing for tomorrow, as well.

Q. Mr. Kondoh, let's talk about the offense, the bottom of the third. That was the inning Yu Darvish gave up three runs. The question to Mr. Darvish, your offense got the go-ahead run right after you gave up the runs.

KENSUKE KONDOH: Got a base hit, so I was at least trying to hit an extra -- well, a sacrifice fly. Although we gave up three runs at the top three, thanks to my lead-off guy.

YU DARVISH: Me, I gave up three runs, so I was wishing please score at least one. We are so proud.



Q. Question to Yu Darvish. The seventh inning, Udagawa, your boy, he pitched, and also at the top of the eighth, Matsui got a one-two-three inning with cleanup hitters. How did you evaluate Udagawa and Matsui, such young pitchers?

YU DARVISH: Well, although both of them struggled, but it's been for two weeks, and they are so adjusted. Everybody is so professional.

Q. For both of you, let's talk about Nootbaar. Both offense, defense and also the personal things, as well, if you could mention to us any stories.

YU DARVISH: Yes, he is such a player, playing away from his home country, but he's so dedicated to this team and how I felt, as well. He's brave. He's so brave, and through his attitude we got a lot of energy from him.

KENSUKE KONDOH: Yes, my opinion is pretty much the same as Darvish-San. He's such a hard worker. Playing here in Japan away from home, away from his home, not only he's a player, he's a great communicator, and he's such a positive person to have on the roster.

Q. Yu, you mentioned earlier that this is your home country and this might be the last chance you get to pitch in your home country, so I just want to ask, what has this whole experience meant for you, because you were in camp from day one with these guys and you were able to get to know them and let them get to know you. What has this experience been like for you leading up to this day?

YU DARVISH: Yes, I decided to join the Spring Training from day one because I'd like to get along with my teammates as well as it's always difficult to join during the middle of Spring Training, so I thank to the Padres organization, and I'm so happy that I could join from day one.

Q. Question to Yu Darvish. You mentioned to us a while ago that you pitched well as the first appearance of the season. At the same time, you pitched the first time in 13 years. What was your feeling right after you pitched in your home country, first time in 13 years?

YU DARVISH: Yes, this is my home country, and this was where I was born and grew up. A lot of Japanese fans are watching, including me pitching.

This is such a special opportunity because I pitched in the States for the past couple years. Without playing baseball in Japan, there's no way that I could make my career, so I

pitched with gratitude tonight.

Q. Question to Yu Darvish. You didn't have an opportunity to pitch -- you pitched only game situation BP. I think that was tough. How did you adjust without having an enter squad game?

YU DARVISH: Yes, this is the very first game of the season, and I pitched -- I think velocity was 95, 96, so I felt comfortable, good, and also, after I pitched, I had a communication with the Padres organization people, and they were so satisfied, so I'm all ready.

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