

World Baseball Classic: Pool B

Tuesday, 14 March, 2023

Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Dome

Team Japan

Hideki Kuriyama

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. You just finished the team workout. How do you see the players?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Yes, they have the day off, and once the tournament starts, the four-game series in the primary tournament is tough. Some of them have a lot of pressure on it, but when I see them practicing, a lot of them have very happy smiles, so I think they have a good day off yesterday.

Q. Genda we see having field practice. How do you see the team's condition?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: I'm not sure specifically today. The entire time is improving forward.

Q. A while ago, the replacement for pitcher curry shabby, you named Kuribayashi. What's the strength for Kuribayashi?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: First of all, I wish Kuribayashi remaining on the roster. We tried to do the best, as much as we could, but when I speak, I even talked with the manager at the club in Hiroshima, and we had many conversations, but since curb bash I is a pitcher, we don't want to make the situation worse. That was probably the toughest decision, toughest moment to me, and it's a speechless feeling.

But it's not me. Kuribayashi is also having a better time. So yeah, having Kuribayashi's feeling, as well as Suzuki, yes, we play together. And since Kuribayashi is a pitcher, we replaced with another pitcher, and starting from the day after tomorrow, the game plan is going to be a big change. Last November, we played together and Yamasaki is rejoining to Team Japan and he's going to pitch in many situations I think.

Q. Yamasaki just mentioned that he tried to have as much hustle as Udagawa is doing because Udagawa and Yamasaki are on the same teams.



HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Well, in the game, when he pitched against Japan in Osaka, he had a great pitch. And also, I would like to show a big thanks for them sending us four pitchers.

When I was the manager for the Nippon Fighters manager, if the national team is asking me to send pitchers, it's hard. So I would like to once again thank you very much to the organization.

Talking about Yamasaki, he doesn't have to worry about the organization or national team, roster stuff. What I am asking him is just concentrate on whenever he pitches on the mound, and that makes momentum for the team and trying to be as one team and moving forward as one team.

Q. In the previous four games, Ohtani did a tremendous job. How did you see Ohtani playing?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Yes, not only Shohei but all individual players played hard for me and for Japan, and that's what resulted in a 4-0 record. I thank to my players a lot.

Q. The elimination games the day after tomorrow, quarterfinal and semifinal and you have three games to go. What's the important thing?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Win is the more important thing than anything. In order to get a win, each player is thinking by themselves, and we, the manager, the managing side, is thinking freshly. Yeah, this is an elimination game. It's so unique because we are professional and we are usually playing a league tournament, but it's an elimination tournament that starts, so, yeah, be prepared and yeah, let's go.

Q. What's the impression for Team Italy? I think you are going to have a meeting starting tonight. What's your impression of Team Italy?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: They have a great balance, and they are a very solid team. They have speed. They play small baseball, as well, so they have a very good balance. That's how I see them. That's my impression.

Q. Let's talk about the clean-up hitter, played against



Australia, I think Murakami swings better. How do you see Murakami's condition? In the previous four games, you didn't change any lineup, but is there any plan to change the lineup for the quarterfinal?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: What do you mean, a move? Well, we have another practicing day tomorrow, too. Don't know yet. But moreover, I am not mentioning one individual player, and my approach is to try to make the best batting order to try to get the win.

Q. You mentioned Kuribayashi was one of the most difficult, tough situations. What was the last conversation you had when you sent Kuribayashi back to Hiroshima?

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: It was such a really, really -- well, all of my players are gathered in order to get the World Championship. All players recognize all players have a very strong will, and I knew that. I'm not saying -- I'm not supposed to let you know what's the detailed conversation because it is not mine, but it's theirs. If the player answered, yeah, that's fine, too, but it's not my conversation. So I'm not supposed to let you know.

But until the last moment, we, Team Japan; trying to find a way to find a possibility a way Kuribayashi could be on the roster and try. Yes, until the last moment, we tried to hold up on Kuribayashi if there's a way to keep him remaining on the roster. I feel so strongly for Kuribayashi, but after leaving Team Japan -- once Kuribayashi against well, he is going to show us how he can pitch at Hiroshima.

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