

World Baseball Classic: Pool D

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LoanDepot Park

Yonder Alonso

Daddy Yankee

David Ortiz

Juan Salinas

Press Conference



YONDER ALONSO: I would like to thank you all, first of all. I hope that you had some coffee already. I took my coffee myself, but we are going to switch into English. My name is Yonder Alonso, MLB Network analyst calling the Miami pool D games for the first round.

Welcome to the World Baseball Classic. We're excited to get the action going here in Miami starting with obviously today's workout days and media availabilities. Before we get started with team interviews we wanted to make an exciting announcement to kick off this WBC in Miami.

As a culture creator, game changer, and ground breaker, Daddy Yankee has consistently inspired, impacted, and influenced generations of creators. An undisputable icon, he remains one of the most influential personalities of all time. Bringing reggaeton worldwide for the first time.

Today we're excited to announce that Daddy Yankee will be the global ambassador for the 2023 World Baseball Classic.

(Applause).

DADDY YANKEE: Thank you. Thank you. Appreciate it. Thank you.

YONDER ALONSO: As a passionate baseball fan, Daddy Yankee looks to use the unique opportunity to help showcase and connect cultures that embraces the game of baseball. As part of this exciting partnership, Daddy Yankee will attend many games in Miami, throw out the first pitch before Sunday's Venezuela versus Puerto Rico game and his single Chispa will serve as the WBC anthem for this tournament. Please welcome Daddy Yankee.

If you would like to talk a little bit about your love of baseball, how you connected to the World Baseball

Classic, and the intro for Chispa.

DADDY YANKEE: Number one, good morning, everyone. You know, guys, that I grew up in Puerto Rico playing baseball, so this for me, this is my sport, which is just a blessing being here. I'm looking at you guys and looking at everybody, and I dream of this kind of event and being part of it.

I own a team in Puerto Rico, Santurce Cangrejeros. So baseball is part of my life. Doing this besides being the global ambassador, I just want to share this sport with the entire world, and I'm glad to be part of it. Thank you, guys.

YONDER ALONSO: We are beyond honored to have you as our global ambassador, and if you can talk a little bit about Chispa and we have a little bit of a sound byte for that and just what it means to you.

DADDY YANKEE: Chispa is the game. David knows about that.

DAVID ORTIZ: That's right.

DADDY YANKEE: You know, the passion that we share for the sport and it's a song that I had from my latest album, Legendaddy. I showed it to Major League Baseball, and they loved it and said, we love it. It's the energy that we're looking for the tournament. Esa canción es fuego. I love it.

(Video played.)

YONDER ALONSO: I don't know about you, David, but I want to put the uniform on right now and start going.

(Applause). An absolutely incredible piece. I'm really excited for the World Baseball Classic and obviously thank you for doing everything you've done for the game.

DADDY YANKEE: Thank you, guys. Thank you, guys.

YONDER ALONSO: We also have an award-winning production duo of Play-N-Skillz, and the brothers Juan and Oscar Salinas collaborated with Daddy Yankee on Chispa. I want you to talk about the World Baseball Classic and



what it means to you and your country.

JUAN SALINAS: My mom is Venezuelan. My father is Argentinean. I'm American. Born in Dallas. I'm a Texan. Howdy. Howdy (laughter).

You know, when we started the birth of Chispa, we were actually working on the Legendaddy project, and this is a song that we knew was special. We didn't know where the place, we knew that it would live somewhere someday.

Us and Yankee, we're really good friends. We're constantly talking. When this opportunity came to us with Major League Baseball, it just felt like it was supposed to be for this. You know, maybe it didn't make the original Legendaddy album, but it was going to live somewhere.

So the energy, the message, we didn't have to make a song for baseball because it already fit with the energy and everything else. So it's always an honor working with this man, and he is a huge baseball fan. That's our conversation. We've already talked about our picks for the tournament, you know, and we're excited to be a part of this. It's an honor to be here in front of everybody with these legends here on stage.

I think the song and the energy is what the Classic is going to be about. You know, hard. Hit it hard. When they come to the plate, that's what they want to do, and that's what this song is about.

YONDER ALONSO: I want to thank you for those words. This is the beauty of the World Baseball Classic. We have Venezuelans, Americans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans. This is what it's about. It doesn't get any better than this than the World Baseball Classic. Without further ado, I'm going to thank you for those words, but my man right here, we shared the field together, David Ortiz, Hall of Famer.

You've been in these Classics. You know the players that are here. Can you elaborate about the Classic and what it means to you?

DAVID ORTIZ: Good morning, everybody. I think just going back into time when the World Baseball Classic first began, I think it was an incredible idea. You know, unite all the countries. You have the best baseball here in the United States, but you have people coming from different places, and that's what makes it so good.

So now all of a sudden you have everybody representing their country at the highest level. You know, I'm telling you, it's a feeling representing your country, representing your flag, representing your people, it goes beyond. It's not

even -- I mean, you want to compare with your career and the good bombs, the adrenaline, it's just on another level especially when you have your people cheering for you and wanting you to you win.

I really enjoy playing the World Baseball Classic. Unfortunately, the second time around when they put it together, I was injured. I wasn't able to go, but the first one I really enjoyed. I really enjoyed, and I hope everybody enjoys.

The message that I want to send to everyone, I'm going to take this opportunity to talk about come and enjoy, have fun. This is a family game. This is something that, you know, it's a game that unites people. It's a game that everybody loves. So come here to Miami, have fun, enjoy, and win the best. I mean the Dominican (laughter).

YONDER ALONSO: Uh-oh. Uh-oh. I like this. I like this. We could be here all day.

DADDY YANKEE: It's family. It's all good, but competition is always there.

DAVID ORTIZ: Bam.

YONDER ALONSO: I just want to see los tambores.

DAVID ORTIZ: Alcapurria.

YONDER ALONSO: Cafecito, trompeta, y nos fuimos. Fuego.

DADDY YANKEE: Mucha chispa en este torneo. Like David said, it's all about having fun. Let the best win and obviously, Puerto Rico, let's go.

YONDER ALONSO: I want to thank everybody here. A big round of applause for obviously taking the time not only for you guys but for everybody here.

(Applause).

Any questions, please.

Q. Daddy, we all know that for you it's an honor to be here and when you are invited for baseball, how can you describe that emotion to be here and where you dreamed of?

DADDY YANKEE: Just like you said, this is a dream. I've been dreaming about this since I was a little boy to be next to a legend like David to have this opportunity to share the game with the whole world. We are speaking about different countries together, people from Israel and Japan,

my people from the U.S., our Latino people. It's world baseball game, and whatever I can do to continue promoting this sport, the game, I'll do.

I have my team in Santurce. I support Puerto Rico. I enjoy the game because I have been doing this since I was a little boy. Before singing I played baseball. This is my passion. I feel in place where I am.

DAVID ORTIZ: But you look like a boy (laughter).

Q. Obviously, you made the right career choice, but how do you miss playing the game of baseball? And my next question is, can you still hit the curveball (laughter)?

DADDY YANKEE: I miss it. That is the reason that I own my team in Puerto Rico. Basically besides music, that's my hobby. Go to the stadium, to the field, and share time with my players.

Also, when you invite me to a softball game, I'll be ready, bro. I'm ready. Yeah, yeah, or whatever, you know? I'm ready.

Q. Yankee, over here. When you have the opportunity to share with legends like you are going to do in this event, how do you feel about sharing with so many young players at this level, an international level? You are also an example for them.

DADDY YANKEE: I feel honored and blessed. At the same time, I admire them as well. When I'm with them on the field, I feel part of the team. Maybe because of my mindset and dream of being a baseball player, and I share with them and I feel that I belong to them.

This is something that I have done during my life.

Q. This song is very important for the World Baseball Classic. I would like to ask you, how was the process of adapting the lyrics of Chispa for this event? Do you think this music is going to transcend? David, for you: How important to preserve this event for us Latinos? Because this is the world championship for Latinos.

DADDY YANKEE: About your first question, this song is in the album of Legendaddy for the extension of the album, actually. It's a song that already existed. We submitted it to MLB, and they loved it. "We love it," they said. The music about chispa, spark, energy. It was not designed for the tournament, but I believe that it fits perfectly with the concept of the Classic. It has this energy, this fire.

There is one part when I say "hit it harder, hit it harder with

energy." When you are going to bat, you have to hit hard.

It happened because it was a coincidence, but the song is perfect for this tournament, and it's going to be a part of the single of the album.

DAVID ORTIZ: Whatever you sing it's going to be a hit. Forget about it, my friend (laughter).

The question you asked me, this is the very best event. One of the best events and that MLB has organized. It's a totally different feeling. It's a personal feeling, you know what I mean? Throughout the years this event should be preserved.

In the next few days there will be a lot of people from Latin America coming here to enjoy this championship. I can tell you that I have been spending a lot of time in the Dominican Republic, and in the last two months people always speak about the WBC. MLB should try to preserve this tournament.

And I'd also love that Puerto Rico plays in a different group so that we can face them in the final. Yeah, this is a very important request. They should hear that request.

(In English) I was saying, my man Tony, asked me about how important is the WBC. If MLB should keep on going with this tournament throughout the years, and I absolutely agree on that because you are going to have an avalanche of people coming from Latin America to enjoy this tournament, and it's because the connection we have with baseball and other things.

There's people that they have a hard time in the regular season being able to come and watch their favorite player. When you have the opportunity to watch your favorite player, let's say you are from Puerto Rico, and you had the opportunity to see all your players from Puerto Rico on one team at once, that is something that you don't see that every day. They should continue, you know, doing this tournament throughout the years.

Q. Daddy Yankee, congrats for the music. I would like to ask you about Marcus Stroman. What do you think about Marcus Stroman that played for the U.S. and now for Puerto Rico as a pitcher, where multi-cultural people have double personality. Do you think that this is something important and interesting to preserve in the championship and have Nelson Cruz for David?

DADDY YANKEE: I think it's okay that all the players that come from Puerto Rico that are part of the MLB can represent their families, their country. We are going to embrace them. We respect our diaspora, and they are part

of our family.

DAVID ORTIZ: So about that question, the most beautiful thing I have had teammates that are born in the U.S. However, they have a Dominican mother and a Puerto Rican daddy or two Dominicans or two Puerto Ricans, and that's the connection that you have as a player. You can represent the country where your folks come from, and to us, this is great. I'm very happy about that.

What was your question now? About Nelson Cruz. I have been speaking with Nelson a lot. How can I say? He has a very hard job. Prepare yourself for the season and to be a general manager of a team, in a very important tournament as this.

People want to win, you know? They are not distracted. No, the people from Puerto Rico are rooting for Puerto Rico. People from Venezuela are rooting for Venezuela. When you are in a position such as Nelson Cruz is, I don't know how he shares his time. I was talking to him yesterday, and the players are dedicated.

Q. Who had the great idea of putting together a Big Papi and Daddy Yankee, a link of guasacaca? Who had this idea?

DAVID ORTIZ: Well, I'm going to answer that question. When I was told that I was to see my brother, I had appointments, and I called it off.

DADDY YANKEE: The same here. They told me, David will be with you, and David knows that I love him, and I'm going to be with my brother there, and we're going to have a good time. We speak about baseball and about rivalry, but at the same time we speak about brotherhood, and this is the beauty of this championship.

Q. Question for you, as David Ortiz said, one day want to separate teams in different groups to face Puerto Rico in the final. Is there a reason for which Cuba, with a great community in Miami, always plays in Taichung and other countries, and we have Israel here in Miami?

YONDER ALONSO: Well, I'm not supposed to speak about this, but I can tell you this: My mom told me that the house of Latinos are always open in the world. Even when they play in Miami, you can play in Puerto Rico, in China, or in France. Baseball has no language, you know. Baseball is love, blood. We have all played baseball. No matter if you play in the backyard or in the stadium here with 23,000 people seeing you. Baseball is just baseball.

Q. My question is for Daddy Yankee: Daddy, do you

think you'll be involved in more baseball projects since you are now retired from showbiz?

DADDY YANKEE: Great question. I'm here for you to see the new stage of my career as a manager. We're going to create content and work hard in multiple sports, not only baseball. I also played boxing. We have some projects in boxing, creating content, working with foundations. This is the phase of the new stage of my career as a manager and the things that I am going to be enjoying, looking forward.

Q. Question for both of you: David, Dominican Republic has been described as the dream team, the favorite team for this tournament. How do you feel when you hear that? Do you feel okay, or you are nervous? Like a player playing on the field. And, Daddy, how do you feel that Dominican Republic seems like the favorite?

DAVID ORTIZ: In the years that I played I never liked to be seen as a favorite because everyone wants to apply that to you. And throughout the years when we were champions, we were never favorite. We were always the underdog most of the time. But if you pay closer attention, you can see the PR team, the U.S. team, the Japan team with that animal Ohtani. Venezuela, I mean, the teams are very solid. Almost all of them.

So I would with DR, I would like to be seen as a chihuahua and not as a pit bull (laughter).

DADDY YANKEE: You are being described as a pit bull, but the beauty of baseball, what I have learned is that theoretically all the teams are big, but on the field it's where the game is decided.

That's the beauty of baseball. It's unpredictable. Of course, the DR team should be respected, but just like I said, there was a surprise the last time, people that didn't qualify and they came in, and that's the beauty of the game. You are active.

PR is always an underdog and we like that, and to win. I'm very happy we're going to see team Rubio. We're going to represent the island, and it's beautiful to see the Venezuelans, my beautiful people from the Netherlands, from Colombia, Venezuela. All the teams are very solid. The U.S. team is incredible. They all have their special, unique players, and I'm going to enjoy this tournament. I'm going to be here every day.

Q. Hello, David, Daddy. I'm from Puerto Rico. Speaking about your project, Daddy, now that you have more free time, what are you going to do with the Cangrejeros for next season? For David, Wednesday

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

there is a game between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. We are going to have both countries here and we know their rivalry. What do you think about that day that it's so interesting and important for both countries?

DADDY YANKEE: Well, I'm going to continue active with the Cangrejeros. We're making some changes for the new season. We're working on those changes already, and I can tell you that the tournament here is incredible, amazing. Like I say, Puerto Rico is going to fight. So, you know that Puerto Rico is on fire, but the pit bulls are approaching.

DAVID ORTIZ: What can I say? When I was playing, I believed that I was known in the baseball world, in the Caribbean Series in Puerto Rico. To me that competition with PR and the brotherhood, because people don't understand, you know, that I have brothers over the island of Puerto Rico. When I go to Puerto Rico, it feels like being in the DR. It's just a brotherhood. This is a family game. And when you play with your brothers, you want to win, but your brother wants to beat you as well.

So I sometimes think of a final between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico and if that happens, oh, my God, they will have to build another stadium there because the adrenaline is going to flow. That's normal because we have a history, and I understand that is going to happen in the WBC.

Q. Play-N-Skillz is from Venezuela. You have your Venezuelan heritage, legacy. How important is it for you to be in this tournament knowing that we have a very big Venezuelan coming here in Miami? Another question for Daddy: How do you think about these guys that play your music when they're going to bat?

JUAN SALINAS: My mom is Venezuelan. My father is Argentinean. I'm American. So I'm split in this whole thing. And when my good friend here who we did this music is Puerto Rican, so we have our debates about the teams.

I feel that it's a new time. A lot of people are going to be surprised. I think there's going to be a surprise winner. That's my opinion. I was telling Yankee I think that the powerhouses that everybody has on paper might not be.

I grew up playing. I'm proud that some of the Venezuelan players are getting the light now that we're starting to see that. So to be a part of this is an honor.

The music was very important to us. This is the first time that WBC had a music influence on this, and we're trying to attract people to the sport, including the urban culture as

well that might not be reflected at times with baseball. So this is the first step of many steps. So we're going to be a part of it, and I don't know who I'm going to cheer for.

You know, I'm kind of, like, the American team is tough. They have a bunch of talent, but for Mom's sake and for the Venezuelans, they're representing well.

Q. David and Daddy we're fans of your music. In your latest tour, your answers have been like, this year you're going to be open to the possibility of maybe to be more dedicated to this sport that you love, but how are we going to see this new stage of Daddy Yankee? Are you going to be 100 percent in baseball? Are you going to be more involved in this game? On the other hand, did you place some bets? Tell us the truth, okay.

DADDY YANKEE: Great question, by the way. I want people to understand where my career is heading, not only in this sport, not only the game. This is one of my projects. I am working with the game from Puerto Rico, but I'm going to continue growing the business. I'm going to be working in serious films, creating content for many companies. I'm going to make documentaries, et cetera. This is the time to be the manager that I wanted to be.

I'm still, by the way, working in music, okay? This is my last year. I'm going to end my tour in Puerto Rico, and I'm still promoting the album Legendaddy. We still have to record some songs. That process, I'm starting this new stage of my career, and I'm feeling very comfortable running multiple businesses and taking advantage of my knowledge in sports, in films, series, and the foundations that I'm going to be working as well.

DAVID ORTIZ: What was your question?

Q. About betting. If you placed a bet.

DAVID ORTIZ: Let me ask you a question, my brother. Is it true that you are not going to continue --

DADDY YANKEE: I retired. But tell me about you. You can continue playing baseball. Come on.

Q. Daddy, for us Puerto Ricans, we love that you are the ambassador of this tournament, but not everyone speaks Spanish. Being an ambassador of the WBC, what do you think about attracting other people with your music and about the things you do?

DADDY YANKEE: That's why we have the digital platforms. It is my responsibility when I'm outside of Latin America, when I go to Europe, I use English to

communicate. This is what I'm going to do on the platforms. I'm going to use both languages.

Most importantly, the music has no language. It's a universal language, and that's why they appointed me as an ambassador, to attract people to unite the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, the fans that I have in Asia as well, et cetera. We are going to reunite the people through the music and have a new feeling for the game.

David, for example, he is a baseball player. The young people go out to bat with our music. They are on the field and it is our music that they are playing. When I speak with MLB, I told them, it is time to unify these cultures, the urban culture, with baseball, because this is a natural process that you see on a daily basis.

So we want this to be a big wave. I want to have this great impact. Tomorrow not only the Classic as a tournament, but they continue involving the young people that listen to our music. We, men and women, that are making urban music, because the players, the young players use this kind of music when they go out to the field. We can stress this, and we can explore this area.

Q. I want to know if you have plans to present the music or the song in the stadium, like the end of the tournament? Is there going to be a ceremony or a surprise singing Chispa for the first time live?

DADDY YANKEE: Well, that's something for the MLB to decide, but this is a great idea. I love the question, and I'm ready. But MLB should make a decision.

YONDER ALONSO: Thank you all for being here for the press conference.

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