

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Nicaragua vs Puerto Rico

Friday, 10 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Puerto Rico

Yadier Molina

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Yadi, I guess it's appropriate to ask you, what's it like dealing with the media as a manager this time?

YADIER MOLINA: Awesome, as always. Great times, like always. It's been good. You guys have been awesome. It's fun, obviously.

Now that you are on the other side, you try to work with you guys. It's been fun.

Q. Were you in charge of hair color this year now?

YADIER MOLINA: No, not this year. No, no. We keep the tradition from the last tournament.

Q. Can you speak about tomorrow's game versus Nicaragua after this preparation? What do you think about the game tomorrow?

YADIER MOLINA: It's going to be a very difficult game. We're focused. We're ready for everything, and the players are very excited. We're all excited.

And Puerto Rico is excited as well. Finally we are playing, and we are ready.

Q. Yadi, you have experience playing in stadiums with and without a roof. All these stadiums are going to be closed in this tournament. It's closed because of the noise of the crowd, of the fans. What do you think about that? And what can you tell the Puerto Rican fans that are going to come to this stadium, to the park tomorrow?

YADIER MOLINA: According to the experience that I have with closed stadiums, it's a great atmosphere. Everyone screaming and supporting us. The fans are about to be excited. It's a very important factor that could help us, and that's why we ask the Boricua fans to come and help us.



Q. You had experience as a manager in Venezuela with Navegantes del Magallanes. My question is, did this help you? What experience can you apply now being the manager of the PR team?

YADIER MOLINA: I loved Venezuela. The quality of the players is very high, and I learned a lot. I had great coaches around me.

There are two different things. The season is longer than this tournament, but every day you learn something, you know, and I learned a lot in Venezuela, yes.

Q. Considering that this is the most difficult group in this championship according to the experts, what's the strength of Puerto Rico?

YADIER MOLINA: I can tell you that it's a versatile team. We have players that can do many things. Pitchers are great. They are healthy, thank God.

We have to play every game. It's a very strong tournament. All the teams are very well prepared, but we are going to play game after game, and we are confident.

Q. Yadier, any comment, any description of the analysis you have conducted about Nicaragua for tomorrow's game?

YADIER MOLINA: Well, we know that the team had two very good practice games, great pitching. We're going to compete with them. We respect all the teams. We have to be conscious of that. They are competing here for everything. We are ready for them. We are ready to face them, and we are just ready for any team.

Q. I would like to ask you about Nicaragua. Of course, there is an emotional part to participate in this very important tournament where you have played with success. How can you balance the emotional aspect that you have to deal with them?

YADIER MOLINA: With them it could be very difficult. Like I said before, all the players want to represent their country, and they have high expectations. The same happens with Nicaragua and the other teams, but we have



to be focused on ourselves, on what we can do and try to leave the emotions a little apart and to be focused on the game. That's what we can do.

Q. How much fun is it to have your brothers on staff with you? Jose as your first base coach, and Bengie says he is your assistant general manager; is that right?

YADIER MOLINA: That's right. Yeah, it's always fun when you have your brothers around. Bengie knows baseball. Jose knows baseball. I learned from them, so it's fun.

Q. Do they talk to you a lot about stuff and make suggestions that they want you to adopt?

YADIER MOLINA: Yeah, yeah, of course. We talk about baseball probably 24/7. They're prepared. They watch video, and they give me some advice.

Q. I'm going to ask you the question in Spanish and in English. You and I have talked about this throughout your career about your aspiration to be a Major League manager. Do you see that experience in Venezuela and now WBC maybe transferring in a couple of years or just as an audition for a little bit of a job? Is that important for you?

YADIER MOLINA: Yes. I learned about different culture, and about different type of game over there in Venezuela, so it helped me a lot. Basically right now I'm looking for this tournament, but in the future, yes, it's going to help me a lot.

(In Spanish) Yes, of course, going to Venezuela helped me a lot. I learned a lot about the culture, about the kind of baseball they play over there and, of course, this is going to help me in my future.

Q. What can you say about the lineup Melendez and Rivera. We saw them yesterday. Are you going to keep them in the lineup?

YADIER MOLINA: Of course, they are going to be together. We have to decide that, actually, for tomorrow, but I would say that 90 percent they will be one after the other in the lineup.

Q. Speaking of there are two practice games. What were you able to see about batting and pitching? Are there any adjustments that you are going to make, maybe what you practice or train today?

YADIER MOLINA: Exhibition games are different. You know? I don't mean that the energy is not at 100 percent,

but they are different games, you know?

For example, some hitters are going to wait for a pitch to hit, et cetera, so they are not 100 percent in that. What I can tell you, what I could see today in the practice is the enthusiasm and the energy in the clubhouse. Very different from the two previous games, so I am looking forward for tomorrow's game. Players are going to be ready.

Q. Yadier, a while ago we heard David Ortiz here, and he said that he didn't like being considered as a favorite, as the dream team. That he liked to be considered as the underdog when he played. Do you see the DR as the favorite of this group? Would you like to be considered the underdog or it's okay if you are considered as super favorite?

YADIER MOLINA: As professionals, we are -- you go out to play every day, try to win the game no matter the opponent. We respect all the teams. All the teams are strong, solid, and prepared for this tournament. We recognize the talent from Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. They are great teams.

But we have to be focused on ourselves. You decide if we are underdogs or favorite, but we don't think about that.

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