

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Dominican Republic vs Venezuela

Friday, 10 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Dominican Republic Rodney Linares

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. The first question for you, up until now 5:00, 6:00 is Juan Soto already here in the park? That would be question number one. Number two, are all the 30 players of the team on the roster, are they all healthy?

RODNEY LINARES: First of all, good afternoon. I'm sorry I'm late. The traffic was difficult. Venezuela just left the park.

For your first question, Soto is already with us. Like I said before, yesterday he took the red-eye flight. He arrived, and he is already here in the park. He is available to train with us.

For your second question, if all 30 players are healthy, as far as I know, yes. We had some problems with the food in Minnesota. A couple of guys felt that too, but after that everyone is okay. Good health. Juan is already here, and we were expecting him.

Q. A follow-up question: Is Rafael Montero already in the ballpark?

RODNEY LINARES: Rafael Montero was not in the bus, no, but they told me that he would be here for practice.

Q. Gregory is safe for the second round?

RODNEY LINARES: Gregory Soto is not sure.

Q. (Question off microphone.)

RODNEY LINARES: First of all, Vladimir won't be in the second round if he has an injury. This is part of the rules and regulations of the Classic. He called me personally, and he asked me about that, and I told him that was the only way to move to the second round. We don't want anyone to be injured.



I want you to know that when Vladimir was injured, he was playing against us on Friday, and he left after the second inning. I was at the game. I asked, and then I called him. It was not Vladimir that left the Classic. I want to repeat that. Toronto Blue Jays decided.

Q. About the pitching rotation and knowing that Venezuela is a team that makes a lot of contact, good hitters. Do you have a strategy for them?

RODNEY LINARES: Strategy for the hitters?

Q. How to pitch against them, considering that Venezuela has very good hitters.

RODNEY LINARES: We have very good pitchers, so what?

Q. The Dominican team has been described as a powerhouse, a dream team. I would like to ask you, how do you feel about that, that the Dominican Republic is considered a favorite and being described like that?

RODNEY LINARES: Well, I can tell you that we don't feel like the favorite. We do know that we have a tremendous team. We are not going to minimize the other teams. All the teams are very good.

We had a meeting today with the leaders and the pitching coaches of the different teams. We spoke a lot. We have a good team, of course, but this is baseball. Let the best team win. We are not going to minimize the other teams, but if you ask me if I'm confident in our team, of course, I am.

Q. You said in Fort Myers that Juan Soto would have some restrictions. Juan Soto is already here. What kind of restrictions is he going to have? Can he play two days in a row? Where is he going to play?

RODNEY LINARES: Juan Soto is going to play. In terms of restrictions, we have to take into account the health of the players. And because of the law, we cannot disclose that. He will be in the lineup tomorrow, and he will be an outfielder.



Q. An infielder such as Machado, Wander, Ketel, and the others, Jeimer for example, Adames for the first game, do you have an idea about the lineup?

RODNEY LINARES: With the infielders, no lineup. Nothing until tomorrow.

Q. My question is the following: You just said that the lineup will be disclosed tomorrow, but Martin Pérez will be the starting pitcher from Venezuela. He knows very well the Dominican players. How can you use that information so far?

RODNEY LINARES: As I said before, it's a process. The lineup, a process. It's something that I did when we were putting together the team and the operation department. I asked Tampa guys to give me our analyst. He helps us with the lineup. He gives us the best predictions and the best matchup for the games.

Martin is a great pitcher, and he does better against right-hand hitters than against left-hand hitters. We're speaking about the lineup, but I want to see the practice. I want to see the guys on the field. I want everyone to be okay. After that we'll decide the lineup.

Q. After the two practice games, first game, great offense. Second game was more difficult, 2-1. What's your idea about that?

RODNEY LINARES: It happened what we wanted to happen. The starting pitchers pitched for three innings. No injuries. They didn't go over the pitch counts. Castillo was one of the players that had some stomach problems. I don't know who ate the meal, but the meal was not good.

Many people ask in that kind of game, we can't let the players play nine innings. They don't do that in their Spring Training. Thanks to Atlanta and Minnesota that gave us some Dominican players from the minor leagues. Celedonio, the young player, hit a home run. To us it's something special to see those young players there, and they were part of the Dominican team.

But regarding your question, everything that we do was done. We didn't have any injuries. The pitchers got to pitch and everything was okay.

Q. We have seen that you are a quiet guy as a leader. So far what has been the most difficult thing that you have to face in terms of injuries maybe, some things that you as a leader can say, wow, this is difficult for me?

RODNEY LINARES: The most difficult thing in this process in this six, seven months of this process to recruit the players, et cetera, has been the restrictions by the teams. When I got off the bus, a team representative told me, I haven't talked to you, I don't want you to do this or that with the players. And I told them, I will do the best for the player and also for the Dominican team, and there is a lot of misinformation.

There has been a lot of misinformation in terms of putting together the roster. I mean, for the fans, et cetera. But after that the players have been great, all of them, during the process. The recruitment and the activities we did in Dominican Republic, meetings with Nelson, etc. Everything has been okay.

I don't have a captain yet, okay? So don't even ask about the captain.

Q. Sandy Alcantara before the game yesterday said that he is willing to do everything that you request, even relieving.

RODNEY LINARES: At some point he was told he could be a reliever? Whoa. I never thought of using Sandy as a reliever. Once again to me as a leader, as a manager, you don't know how I feel when I hear these players speaking the way they do, yesterday in the activity, and they spoke about everything they were willing to do. But no, Sandy is a starting pitcher, and he is going to start at least two games. The first one and also the fourth one in the qualifiers.

Thank you for your time.

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