

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Dominican Republic vs Venezuela

Friday, 10 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Dominican Republic

Julio Rodríguez

Nelson Cruz

Jean Segura

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. Julio, how can you compare this experience of the World Baseball Classic with the one you had in the Olympics with the Dominican team where you got the bronze medal?

JULIO RODRÍGUEZ: I said that this is a very similar experience. At the same time different, however, because we have multiple players that are able to participate here, such as the superstars involved in this competition.

The competition is different because of the talent involved. This is a very important time. We are very proud to represent the Dominican Republic again.

Q. Question for Julio as well: Being around so many players that in previous interviews you have told me how you admired them, how you were dreaming of this moment, have you been able to talk to them? Have they given you some advice for tomorrow?

JULIO RODRIGUEZ: I talk to these vets here, Cruz, Segura, Machado. They have had great experiences. Jose Reyes as well. He is around us in the clubhouse. They have shared their experience with us, and we are more confident now, and we are more aware of what we are going to face tomorrow.

Q. Nelson, we have representation from San Juan, Monte Cristi, Loma de Cabrera. Nelson, how would you define this what you are living today?

NELSON CRUZ: It's a coincidence, right? A coincidence that we were all chosen for this. I'm very happy to be here. More than an honor, it's a privilege to be able to represent your country. All the countries that are involved in this



competition, the best talent from each country is here.

I'm very happy to be part of the team. We have great harmony, great vibes in the clubhouse, and this is going to be reflected in the game tomorrow.

Q. Question for Jean: In 2017 you were called the last minute to be part of the Dominican team. Now from the very beginning you have been part of the team. What's the difference? How are you feeling in both groups?

JEAN SEGURA: I've been able to manage that. In 2017 it was my first opportunity to represent my country in a World Classic. I told Moises (Alou) that I was willing to play if they needed me, and they selected me at the time.

I had fun because I was around players that tomorrow could be a Hall of Famer. This is my second Classic. Thanks to Nelson for this opportunity to be part of this team again together with Julio, Machado, Soto, and the other players. It's more than a pleasure to share the field with them and the clubhouse with them. They are the future of our country.

Q. First question for Nelson: Nelson, you know that Venezuela lost against us in the Caribbean Series, and they have never beaten us in a World Classic. What can you say about that? What's the mindset that you have about that team? Julio, this is your first experience here. What can you say about what you have experienced so far? And, Segura, how can you contribute to these young players that are participating for the first time?

NELSON CRUZ: Everything starts from scratch here. We cannot think about the past. We have to think about what we can control. It was an honor to be in the same bus as our team. It's like an All-Star Game, you know. Seeing all those young players, most of them over 70 percent of the players are in the Classic for the first time and that reflects the capability of our country to develop superstars. I'm very happy to be part of the team. We are going to be focused on the things we can do.

Tomorrow will be wonderful.



JULIO RODRIGUEZ: To me it's been a great experience. As Nelson said, this is an All-Star Game. There are many people with whom we can learn a lot. This is a benefit that I have had being here, to learn with superstars people like Segura, Machado, Soto and the others that are more experienced than me in this game. It's very good to be around them.

JEAN SEGURA: I always urge the younger players to have fun, to go out there and have fun. They should feel like they are playing in their backyard back home. It's a game. They have experience, there playing in the Big Leagues. This is a nice, beautiful event. At the same time, however, you should have fun. You should enjoy, whether playing or not, try to look for the positive side, so that you enjoy the World Baseball Classic because you don't know if you are going to have another chance to be part of this team. This event takes place every four years.

This is the advice that I give to the younger players. To go out, have fun, and smile. This is a beautiful sport, and we have to take advantage of that, and thank God for being here.

Q. Julio, in a very short time all the fans love you. What does it mean to you when the fans, the kids cheer for you when you are in batting practice, asking for your autograph and balls, et cetera?

JULIO RODRIGUEZ: It feels good, you know. We all make a lot of sacrifice and effort in our career, and seeing people motivated by that, seeing fans thanking me for my effort that I have been making and everyone around me, it feels great to feel the love of the fans, you know? You feel like you are accepted by them, and I think that if they can say the same, it feels very good when that happens.

Q. Question to Nelson: Nelson, you have been part of the last three Classics. 2013 you were the champion. 2009 as well you hit a key home run. Now you are a manager and a player at the same time. Is there anything different between this team compared to the other teams that you were involved with?

NELSON CRUZ: Like I said before, we have many young players with a lot of talent. So young that I used to play against Julio's father in the league back home.

But, yes, we have great energy, good vibes. There is no ego. All the players are available and willing to play in different positions for the benefit of the team. As we said on the team, whatever it takes to win, no matter the position, we are willing to do that.

I'm a veteran, and it feels good, and I'm very happy seeing that all the players are willing to sacrifice some ego for the benefit of the team.

Q. Julio, in the last couple of years your career has been awesome. Olympics medalist, Rookie of the Year. Have you thought about this ballpark tomorrow? Because when you won in the Olympics, there were a few Dominican fans. In Seattle the same. Nelson and Jean lived this already, what it means to play in this ballpark with many, many Dominican flags. Have you thought about that?

JULIO RODRIGUEZ: Of course. Of course, I have thought about that. I had the chance to play in the playoffs in Toronto. There was a lot of noise, but, like you said, there were not Dominicans. So I'm very excited to be here and to see the ballpark with many Dominican flags and everyone cheering. I mean, it's going to be very different.

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