

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Nicaragua vs Puerto Rico

Saturday, 11 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Puerto Rico

Francisco Lindor

Marcus Stroman

Postgame Press Conference

Puerto Rico 9, Nicaragua 1

Q. Marcus, I'll talk to you first. What was your game plan going into today against Nicaragua? They seemed like they were really aggressive going after your strikes in the first three innings?

MARCUS STROMAN: Yeah, definitely were aggressive. I'm someone who pitches off my sinker aggressively in the zone, so, like I said, I usually focus on my strengths. I don't study lineups too much. I know what the lineups possess going into starts, but like I said in this type of tournament you have to get ahead and pound the zone early, and I trust my sinker more than anything. I got that pitch going, and obviously with these guys behind me, it gives me more confidence to throw my sinker because I feel like any time they put IT in play, it's going to be an out.

Q. Congrats for the win, Marcus. I want to ask you, obviously, you played the last World Classics with the United States. I want to know how do you feel with the people with Puerto Rico today?

MARCUS STROMAN: Yeah, the energy is definitely different. The passion, it's a whole other level, so that's kind of why I was so excited to come out here and play with my guys because I knew that the passion was as elite as you can get in the league, and that's kind of how I am.

That's how I pitch. That's how I go about my things. I always tell my mom that part comes from her, as far as my flash, my on-field persona. I love being around a group of guys that are similar to myself. It just brings out the best in all of us.

Q. What do you feel the first game as the captain of the team, of Team Rubio?



FRANCISCO LINDOR: It felt very good being around with the guys. I told Stroman that his mom should be very proud, and the guys with energy and the fans, that was unbelievable. It was beautiful. I'm very, very, very happy to be in this position.

Q. What do you think of how Stroman pitched today?

FRANCISCO LINDOR: That was great. I told you I'm very proud of him and his mom should be very proud of him as well. Stroman went out on the field today, and he did everything well. All his emotions, all his feelings were on display for everyone. It was great.

Q. What did you think of the atmosphere? At either point did either of you look in the stands and see the flags, the dancing, the bands? What did it feel like? What did it look like?

FRANCISCO LINDOR: It was amazing. I looked around, at exactly the moment when the ball was going to be thrown, I'm paying attention. I'm talking to Javy and looking around. Then I just, I feed off that, you know. We feed off that, you know. Like I said in the press conference before, it's such an amazing feeling when everyone in that locker room has similar backgrounds, when everyone around feeds off that, we have similar things, and like I said, the swag, we all imitate each other. We all go out there and put up on a show.

Q. Lindor, congrats for your victory. I would like to know what you think about the prospect of the Mets, Ronny Mauricio. It's been two years as a top 5 prospect for the Mets, and this year he started very well. What do you think about him for the future, and what do you think about the new rules of the Major Leagues for the next season?

FRANCISCO LINDOR: To me he is a future player of the Mets, future star of the Mets. He is a very important part of the success we are going to have. We want this to be this year.

And about the rules, well, some rules are some dumb, but they are the rules. I don't like, for example, that I cannot touch the grass before the pitcher starts for move, and the



other rules are to improve the game, so we are going to get used to that.

Q. Francisco, that play between you and Machete, it compared to a play I remember with Javier and Yadier. It's a beautiful play. Do you remember that moment?

FRANCISCO LINDOR: Yeah, the out made by Machete. That combination of Javy and Yadi was a great moment.

Today it felt great. You know, when you look around everyone is celebrating. I feel great when I see and hear the Boricuas saying "wow."

Q. Paquito, congrats. Two things: Today you had a great hitting, great contact. What do you think about that? What do you say to Stroman after the inning? After your play, after Pulpo's play, what did you say to Stroman when you were going back to the dugout?

FRANCISCO LINDOR: About the hit? We were looking for good pitches today. We were lucky. We were focused on doing the fundamentals, the small things, you know, and help each other. I told him you are a dog, my man. You are a dog. You are different.

Q. Marcus, is your mom here? And Paquito, what do you think about having Stroman in the team?

MARCUS STROMAN: Yeah, my mom is here. My family is here. My baby boy, a couple of buddies. But, yeah, my mom is definitely my rock. She's my best friend, so she's pretty much present at anything big I have going on. My mom is always there.

Q. (Off microphone).

MARCUS STROMAN: She was excited. She was excited. She loves this atmosphere obviously, and to put this uniform on means a whole lot to her. So, like I said, I love my mother more than anything, and to go out there and represent her means the world to me.

Q. First, Marcus, pitch 64, you were an out away to finish the fifth inning but Miranda hit the homerun? Did it feel bittersweet for you to not finish with a strong fifth inning? And for Francisco, 21 players of Team Rubio come from the little leagues in Puerto Rico as well as the leaders. How about the importance of the minor leagues?

MARCUS STROMAN: Yeah, I didn't think it was bittersweet, to be honest. I haven't pitched in nine days. I'm a little off schedule, so I thought I threw the ball pretty well considering.

And I had only thrown 2.1 innings, so to go out there and make it into the fifth having nine days off, I think that's a pretty good accomplishment. So I knew these boys were going to get hot sooner or later. So I just had to limit the other team. I knew if I kept them to one, two runs or less, I knew that we were going to bounce back and score runs at some point.

FRANCISCO LINDOR: About the little leagues in Puerto Rico, well, so that the whole world to see that we have very good players in Puerto Rico. The minor league is the start of everyone. People like Alomar, Beltran, Yadier, inspired us. They all inspired us. We were there, and we grew up seeing them. We made it, and we are here. Now we are inspiration for those boys.

The little leagues in Puerto Rico to me is one of the best starts throughout the world, and I urge all those coaches working in Puerto Rico to help the boys to have fun, to learn the fundamentals of baseball, and to have fun. Have fun. Compete, but respect the game.

Q. This could be for either of you, but obviously you have already talked about the atmosphere here, but there have been fans here and also back in Puerto Rico there have been over 200 people who have dyed their hair blonde to match the team. What does it mean to have that kind of support and know that you have become this rallying cry for people to support?

FRANCISCO LINDOR: It's such a huge honor, and such a fun experience whenever you see everyone and their grandmas with blonde hair. They don't care how bad they look. To me that is special, whenever guys like us that come from the ground up can inspire not just the next generation, but inspire grandmas, grandpas, cousins, uncles, dads, moms, that's what it's all about. That's what it's all about.

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