

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Dominican Republic vs Venezuela

Saturday, 11 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Dominican Republic Rodney Linares

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Many months of organization, of work to get here. Was it difficult for you to put together this group? And how are you feeling being the manager with so many superstars around you? How has this coordination been? How is the chemistry?

RODNEY LINARES: That's not one question. It's like three questions. I will try to answer in that order.

First of all, the harmony is at 100 percent. The players are dedicated today, Dominican team. Yeah, it's been many months of work. Not only in my work, but also the operational staff led by Nelson, the scouts. Many people involved in the construction of the team, in the building of the team.

And how I feel, well, I'm honored, I'm happy, and very proud. Maybe the highest prize that I have received in my professional career after my children, of course.

Q. Ketel said yesterday that Arizona asked him to play only at second base. Is that an important change in your plans? And how much could Ketel be playing?

RODNEY LINARES: I could not tell you about how much he will play. Ketel is like the others. 30 players are part of the roster that are willing to play and to be champions. I found out yesterday, I believe yesterday, yes, I was called by their staff, and he gave me the news that they didn't want him in the outfield, but in the infield. That's a very important restriction in terms of changes, et cetera, but we are happy to have Ketel.

Many people don't know this, but he is one of the best hitters against left-handed pitchers. Maybe we could face that kind of pitchers, and that's why he is so important to us.

Q. What plans do you have the things go south or



don't work out? Is this game for you one of the biggest challenge in your career?

RODNEY LINARES: The game itself is not one of the biggest challenges. We have a plan in place. I'm not going to think about plan B now, okay, but we are ready for every situation.

Q. You are playing with Adames on the bench. Marte said yesterday because of Arizona's restrictions, he is only able to play in second base, so we don't have a utility player. How could that affect the team?

RODNEY LINARES: Did you all listen to me what I said before? First, again, yes, the restriction affects us because we don't have versatility of Ketel, but we have a talented team. Willy, Ketel, Wander, Jean Segura, and they are willing to play in any position. I cannot play two shortstops, so we have that luxury, we have two of the best young shortstop in the Big Leagues, and they will be sharing with the other players around second base.

Q. You know Omar Lopez a lot. You know him when you were playing with the Astros. What can you say about him? The rivalry, but also the friendly rivalry and the discussions that you have had for this game.

RODNEY LINARES: We didn't have so many discussions about the game. Omar and myself, we are brothers. We were raised together in baseball. We have been friends for 22 years. I know his family. I have slept in his house. He has slept in my house. We're brothers.

When the topic is baseball, forget about it. He knows that. I saw him in the morning. And the same goes for the players. We're all friends. We are going to put on the best show for the fans and may the best team win.

Q. The restrictions imposed on the players by the Major League organization to participate in this event, in your opinion, do you think that it should be normal so that we have a better event?

RODNEY LINARES: When you speak about restrictions, the restrictions are imposed on players that are injured. I haven't received any call about Franco, Peña, Willy



Adames. When you speak about restrictions, you mean the rules of the tournament, and they are like Olympic rules in terms of pitching the first round, the second round, the quarterfinals, et cetera.

These rules could be improved, yes. There is always room to improve. We can always improve our work as well.

In terms of restrictions to the players, if your question was about restrictions of players when they are injured, of course, we should restrict them because you are investing \$100 million in one player. Of course, there will be some restrictions in that regard. And we're going to say what MLB says. At the same time put the best team on the field.

Q. Sandy Alcantara has only 65 pitches to throw. Do you have an idea who could be the next pitcher as a long reliever?

RODNEY LINARES: Well, in this tournament we are going to go treat every game as game No. 7. Sandy comes in, and then the next pitcher comes. We even have the day off tomorrow. We could maximize the practice of the pitchers.

Yes, we are going to use everyone. They are all ready to pitch. We're not speaking about multiple innings right now. We are speaking about Alcantara and his 65 pitches, and then the next man, next reliever. We have a well-prepared bullpen.

Q. Were you stunned that Venezuela chose Martin Perez to start? We know that Sandy wanted to face his former teammate, Pablo Lopez. What would be the game plan that the Dominican Republic has versus Martin Perez?

RODNEY LINARES: Sandy knows that not everything in life is like you want. We all know that.

I cannot tell you about the plan, sorry. Martin is a fantastic, competitive pitcher, and we have to respect him. He was tough because we thought that it was García, not Pablo, the starting pitcher. But, like I say yesterday, Martin is pitcher who is better against right-handed batters than versus left-handed batters. And they have very good left-handers, such as Alvarado and others.

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