

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Nicaragua vs Israel

Sunday, 12 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Israel

Ian Kinsler

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Big day today, of course, first game. What's the lineup going to look like?

IAN KINSLER: It's going to look pretty similar to the first exhibition game.

Q. I saw that your son was the batboy for the exhibition games. What's it like having him around the team and getting him around all these players?

IAN KINSLER: It's great. I mean, it's a good experience for him. He got in front of the bus yesterday with the microphone, so he got his first experience there.

But he is having a lot of fun enjoying himself, yeah.

Q. Do you guys feel like you have any sort of advantage with the extra day of rest before the first game?

IAN KINSLER: I don't think so. I think when your day off is at the front of the tournament or behind the tournament, I don't really think that it matters as much. I think when you have that day off in the middle, you can get your pitchers some rest, and I think that's the advantage. But the beginning of the tournament, I don't think it's that much of an advantage.

Q. With Dean Kremer is the plan to take him all the way up to his pitch limit?

IAN KINSLER: We'll see how the game goes. How many pitches he throws in each inning and how much stress he has in those innings and kind of decide from there.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about why you wanted to coach this team? Just talk a little bit about going from being a player to now managing the team? What was in it for you?



IAN KINSLER: In 2019 this wasn't a thought. Being part of team Israel wasn't really a thought. When I retired, I got a call from Peter Kurz who asked me if I wanted play baseball in the Olympics. Team Israel had won the European Championships and qualified for the Olympics, and so that kind of started the whole journey for me.

Then through that journey and getting to know everybody, meeting people and being a part of Team Israel, it was something that I really enjoyed. It was nice to represent my dad's side of the family and learn a little bit more about my heritage. It was a good feeling.

The whole Olympics experience was great, and then after the Olympics the organization asked me if I wanted to manage the WBC. You know, it was a pretty easy decision for me.

Q. Do you see it as a long-term project?

IAN KINSLER: I don't know. I mean, we'll see how this -- after this tournament how it feels and what's next and where I'm at in my life at that point and make a decision then.

Q. It also seems like you just mentioned discovering your father's side of the family. It seems like you've really discovered sort of your Jewish side through baseball. Can you talk a little bit about that?

IAN KINSLER: Yeah, interesting. You know, my dad grew up in New York, and I grew up in Tucson, so complete opposite sides of the country. So I would meet my dad's side of the family every once in a while. It was once every five, ten years, something like that.

So, you know, we celebrated Hanukkah growing up, a little bit of Passover every once in a while. My mom was, Catholic, so it was Christmas and Easter. No real religion in our house growing up. So having to go to Israel and gain my citizenship was very eye opening. Just getting all the information and everything that country has to offer and the historical background of the Jewish people really and the country of Israel.

It just brings you closer. You just learn more and more



about yourself and your family and how and why all of this is happening. I don't think I even really know still, but the more you learn, the closer you feel for sure.

Q. Does Team Israel have a brand of baseball that they play? Is there a Jewish brand of baseball?

IAN KINSLER: I don't know if it's Jewish, but yes, there is a brand of baseball. I think if you've watched the teams in the past, it's pretty gritty. You know, there's a lot of energy, a lot of enthusiasm, and I expect more of the same in this tournament.

Q. What are you feeling apprehensive or nervous about sections of the team going into this tournament? Least confident and most confident?

IAN KINSLER: I think trying to put together the roster was a little difficult. Really having to do some research and finding out if players are eligible. If they had a grandparent that was --

Q. No, I meant in a baseball sense.

IAN KINSLER: Yeah, trying to figure out who was eligible, it was a flow through the offseason. Yeah, we think this guy might be. That could be a huge benefit to our club, and then we find out he is not.

Then we have to find a replacement, you know, it's trying to find out if these guys are eligible and shaping the roster up really until the last couple of weeks. But I think strength-wise I think our pitching is pretty good. It's pretty solid. We have some guys that can throw the ball. Some guys with some really good experience. I think that will be a strength for us.

You know, offensively we'll swing the bats just fine. I think defensively is probably going to be a key for us. You know, making sure that we catch the ball and play solid defense is going to be a key.

Q. Do you have guys playing out of a position, not their natural position, but out a position?

IAN KINSLER: Garrett Stubbs is playing third base. He is a Major League catcher for the Phillies. But he moves around great over there. He's got great athleticism, a strong enough arm to play there, and I think he is excited about it.

Then other than that, I think everyone is pretty much in position.

Q. I don't know if you saw this, but Team Italy has

been doing some cultural celebrations in the dugout. Is there anything planned for Team Israel to do to sort of highlight their own national identity?

IAN KINSLER: That's a question for the players. I have no idea. I think those things are a little organic. I don't think it's planned. You are going to have to ask Italy if they planned that. I don't know if they planned the espresso machine. We'll see. We'll see what our players bring to the table.

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