

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Venezuela vs Puerto Rico

Sunday, 12 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Puerto Rico

Yadier Molina

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Yadi, can you explain to us the lineup changes and the game plan versus Venezuela?

YADIER MOLINA: Greetings. Good afternoon, everyone. God bless you. Martin moved to the bench. Eddie was moved to the sixth spot, and we lowered Soto. Why? Because we are facing Lopez, a great pitcher, and that's why we made those changes because we think that they are the best matchups.

Q. You're going to play Venezuela. Venezuela beat the Dominican Republic yesterday. The Venezuelan manager moved his pieces very well. How important is this game for you, and personally for you playing Venezuela, how are you prepared mentally with the team?

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, Omar and I know each other. It's going to be a very competitive game. We both know what we are doing. He has a great team. So do we. The best team will win.

Q. I don't know if you had a chance to see the game Venezuela-Dominican Republic. What do you think is the key or will be the key to win? What do you think will be the key versus Venezuela?

YADIER MOLINA: Just like I said, to have good execution, make good contact, execute the plays we have planned to take advantage when they make a mistake. We know that Venezuela is powerful. Any mistake that they might make, we will capitalize on that.

And, also, the execution to score a couple of runs.

Q. You as a player, Yadier, you were a catcher, and now you are a manager of a team. What differences have you seen in this World Classic? You have reached the final of a Classic, previously.



YADIER MOLINA: There are two different positions. Being a player, being a coach, the preparation is different, and that's what I am doing. I had a great experience in Venezuela, and I feel comfortable. I have two other coaches supporting me. I listen to them a lot. You have to learn on a daily basis day after day.

Q. Yadier, good afternoon. You were a great catcher during your career with the St. Louis Cardinals. Maldonado and Christian Vazquez have a great career, that same position as well. How is your communication with them speaking from catcher to catchers? How do you approach the preparation and choosing the pitches for each hitter if they feel free to choose? Because you also have the knowledge of the pitching staff because of all the years that you played in the Majors.

YADIER MOLINA: It is great to play with two catchers that are champions. This is an advantage that I have. Being on this side is great for us. They have great experience. They are world champions, and to me the job is easier because I trust them a lot. I trust them a lot.

Having two great catchers like them on the team, that's great.

Q. You spoke about this, you have seen Venezuela before. How important is it for Yadier Molina, managing Venezuela before the Classic?

YADIER MOLINA: It was very important. I didn't have an idea of what I could find, and I found high-quality baseball people that helped me. I learned a lot. It was very motivating, and I think that it was a great decision for me.

Q. I know that you are playing Venezuela, but tomorrow who is going to be the starting pitcher tomorrow?

YADIER MOLINA: De León.

Q. What's your impression of his job?

YADIER MOLINA: De León's job, yes, we know he is a great pitcher. He is very competitive. He knows how to



pitch. He is very well-prepared for this tournament, and we trust him.

Q. Tomorrow you play Israel, one of the teams that are not considered favorites. We know how the game was of Nicaragua versus Puerto Rico. How difficult is it to face that kind of team that are not considered favorite?

YADIER MOLINA: Once again, all the teams are good. If you think that way, that's your problem. We play game after game. We trust the talent, respect all the teams we face, and that's it. We are prepared for that, to try to win.

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