

# World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Venezuela vs Puerto Rico

Sunday, 12 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Puerto Rico

### MJ Melendez

#### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. Venezuela beat the Dominican Republic, so this game is going to be very important today for you. How did you prepare yourself mentally now that you have a little bit more of pressure?**

MJ MELENDEZ: I'm going to speak in English. I'm excited. I'm excited for the game today. I think every game is important. Every game is a must-win game. Not really a lot of pressure. I think we're going to go out and play with the same passion, pride, and joy like we normally would every single game. So we're going out and doing the same thing that we did yesterday.

(In Spanish) We'll try to do the same game plan we played yesterday. We played strong, with passion, and we want to win this game.

**Q. In yesterday's game you had great swings. What adjustments did you make when you got that hit? Two-RBI hit because you made great contact, but a ball was high.**

MJ MELENDEZ: That at-bat we had the bases loaded, and I tried to make the swing to the outfield to drive in one run, and he threw a cutter, and I hit it, and it fell in the outfield, as I wanted.

**Q. Yesterday's game brought many emotions. Your whole family was here. It is the first time you play here in Miami as a professional player. How did you feel? What emotions did you have considering that your family was here?**

MJ MELENDEZ: I had a lot of emotions. I was going into the stadium for the first time in front of all the fans, in front of all the Puerto Rican fans. Obviously, my family too.

But, more importantly, I think like everybody, I felt the love, the passion. Like any other feeling, I can't really explain it. For me, I told my dad it felt better than when I made my



MLB debut.

**Q. MJ, a lot of players probably in your position with Spring Training, you know, trying to get in form for the season and, you know, being that last year was your rookie year, you know, would have probably considered the possibility of just staying in Spring Training and passing up the World Classic. Did you have to think too much about it before you made the decision?**

MJ MELENDEZ: No, no. This has been a dream of mine ever since I can remember watching the World Baseball Classic. The one I remember the most, of course, was 2017 when I was a senior in high school. Being able to watch it on TV here, you know, I remember Puerto Rico playing, and it was something that I was dreaming of ever since. I know I told myself if I ever got the opportunity, I would 100 percent do it and play with passion, pride, and do everything I can for the island to bring home this championship.

**Q. Pablo Lopez is going to be the starting pitcher today from Venezuela, and you might face him in the Major Leagues against you. Have you studied him? What do you know about him?**

MJ MELENDEZ: He has a great change-up, and his fastball reaches 95, 96. Stays down in the zone, and I will try to hit the ball in the middle of the field.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

