

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Dominican Republic vs Nicaragua

Monday, 13 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Dominican Republic

Rodney Linares

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Rodney, yesterday you held a practice without media. How was it? What's the mindset for today?

RODNEY LINARES: Good morning, once again. Yeah, the practice was great. The guys were able to train. As you know, this is the kind of tournament for us that haven't been participated here, it's fast. We get to the game the previous day. Then we had to wait for 45 minutes.

Then we had to be fast in BP. Only 45 minutes.

Yesterday we had a practice of about two hours at Columbus High School, at a school here in Miami. The guys had batting practice. The pitchers did their workouts, they went to the gym. It was a good day, and good food as well.

Q. Can you speak about the changes in the lineup? And during the exhibition games against the Braves I asked you if it was a failure if the Dominican Republic didn't make it to the final? How did you feel after the first game?

RODNEY LINARES: Well, the changes in the lineup are based on the analytics. We believe that with Juan there was the best opportunity to score runs early. I come from a team, Tampa, where we use analytics a lot.

The change with Eloy, I don't know if I said before with Juan with some restrictions, he cannot play two days in a row or back to back, so Eloy could have two days to be in shape. We want him to be in shape.

Teoscar is okay. Willy and Jeremy, according to the analytics, they said that with Willy at shortstop today, we could have more opportunities to win. It doesn't mean that Jeremy is not going to play. Teoscar could play later on in the game. So some changes that we made. As I said before, I want all the players to participate in the World



Classic.

When you speak about failure, yes, to me and for all of us it could be a failure not making it to the final.

Q. (No microphone).

RODNEY LINARES: Like I said before, there are no easy games here. I have to congratulate Venezuela, the way they played. We had chances to score early in the game, and we couldn't.

When you have 15 strikeouts and seven walks, for example, we have to respect them. García dominated us, but things are in the past. We turn the page, and today we're going to play.

Q. What do you think about the group after the practice and the day off yesterday? And in the case of Cristian Javier, you have seen a couple of games of Nicaragua. Do you have an idea of how to face them today?

RODNEY LINARES: The team was great yesterday. We had yesterday practice, good practice, good mood. It was at the high school without the media. The guys were relaxed. We had a meeting with the team. I don't like meeting a lot with the players. I think that the players are more free when you let them be, when you let them go and do their job.

In terms of Cristian, Cristian is always Cristian. Sandy is always Sandy. We are speaking about Big League pitchers with a lot of experience.

We talked to them, of course. We are going to have a meeting today between pitcher and catcher. Things that are done usually before the game.

Q. Speaking about changes and the pitcher Cristian Javier, the starting pitcher today, you made a change with Mejia in the lineup. Is it because he feels more comfortable in that position?

RODNEY LINARES: Not that he feels more comfortable. Once again, every time we make a change, we follow a



logic. With Francisco, since he is a better pitch framer than Gary, we have more chance to steal more strikes with Javier. You all know that he doesn't have many secrets, but he controls the zone, and we try to explore that.

We have a working plan with Francisco, Javier, and it's going to be more successful with that combination of catcher and pitcher.

Q. Have you felt some pressure because the Dominican Republic being a favorite and the criticism received after the first game?

RODNEY LINARES: I don't read any comments. You know, I don't read comments on social media, and everyone has their right to express their opinion, but I don't let those opinions affect me.

I'm calm. As long as my family is okay, as long as my children have food, I'm calm. Of course, the Dominicans will be frustrated with the loss, but we haven't lost the tournament. It was the first game. Venezuela was great. The energy in the ballpark was great for both sides, the support of the fans.

But, no, that kind of criticism doesn't affect me a lot.

Q. You spoke about the restrictions of Soto playing back-to-back days in the field. What do you mean? Or he cannot play two games, how is that?

RODNEY LINARES: The restrictions provided by San Diego were that. He can play the first game. That was perfect because he could play, off the next day, and then play today. Day off again.

Depending on how he feels, he could play two days in a row, but he came from Arizona with a trainer. These are the restrictions he has. So he will have the day off tomorrow, not totally off, but he won't start in the outfield. I don't think he is going to bat as a DH. He is going to have the day off, but he will be available off the bench.

Q. How do you see the energy on the team? I know that yesterday's game versus Venezuela was very important to us.

RODNEY LINARES: It is a tournament where we have to play game after game. The energy is very good. The harmony is very good. The players went yesterday to the practice. It was optional, but everyone wanted to participate. Everyone wanted to be together. Once again, they had a great attitude the previous game versus Venezuela. Not yesterday, but the day before.

Again, it was a good game, and we are trying to turn the page. That's it. We have to look forward now.

Q. We have spoken about anxiety because we realize that in timely moments --

RODNEY LINARES: Not in timely moments, actually. In the conversations we had, my message was control whatever you can control. Try to control the situation, not let the situation control us. As it was the case in the first game, yes, some of the guys were anxious, but we are speaking about those players that haven't been in a World Classic coming here after finishing a game.

This is not an excuse, you know. I'm repeating, this is not an excuse. Venezuela deserved the victory the way they played, the way they pitched.

Like I said yesterday, we have to know how to turn the page. This is baseball, and this is a very short tournament.

Thank you.

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