

# World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Dominican Republic vs Nicaragua

Monday, 13 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Dominican Republic Rodney Linares

### Postgame Press Conference

Dominican Republic 6, Nicaragua 1

**Q. Congrats for the victory today. The team played much better today. The adjustments you made today, can you speak about that?**

RODNEY LINARES: Great game. We have to recognize Nicaragua's game. Great defense. Great pitches. Many of the pitchers are almost unknown in professional baseball, and they had to make some adjustments during the game.

I'm very happy. I'm proud of how the players responded to the game.

**Q. Were you expecting to find this team playing like that versus Dominican Republic?**

RODNEY LINARES: Of course. From the very beginning before the tournament I said that there are no easy opponents. They played with heart. We have to recognize their game. They almost scored at the end, and that's why we had to use more pitchers.

**Q. Rodney, are what did you like about the game? Can you highlight something that you didn't like today?**

RODNEY LINARES: What I liked was the adjustments made by the hitters. I told Machado that he had to go back to the gym. He was not strong enough, but great swings. Their defense was great in the outfield. There was a ball hit by Soto, and the center fielder made a great play.

César, for example, was not very good at the beginning, but, yes, the result was expected by us.

**Q. In baseball everything is unpredictable. The decisive game will be Dominican Republic versus**



**Puerto Rico, the classic rivalry in the Caribbean. How are you going to manage the pitching tomorrow? Who is going to be starting versus Puerto Rico? How are you going to manage pitching?**

RODNEY LINARES: We have a plan. It was almost perfect today, but everyone is available and ready. We have to win tomorrow in order to get to the next game versus Puerto Rico.

But everyone is ready to pitch. Maybe García wouldn't be available tomorrow. He has a wrap on. But all the pitchers are ready, and everyone will be participating in the game.

**Q. How important was that victory and seeing the guys relaxed and ready for tomorrow?**

RODNEY LINARES: All victories taste good, right? No one is ready to lose, and we were in a good mood. We arrived early. They could practice and warm up. It was a great game.

And tomorrow we're going to have a competitive game versus Israel. As the guys said before, then we are going to have that big game versus Puerto Rico.

**Q. Javier in the first inning allowed a hit, allowed a walk to Nicaragua. They were obviously aggressive. What was your thought process? He started to settle in second, third inning. Was there any process, let me go to my bullpen early? Especially since this game was important?**

RODNEY LINARES: Not really. Javier historically has had rough first innings. He's historically done it. He pitched like Javier pitched - up in the zone, used his slider. Threw a couple of really nasty change-ups. There was no worry about him in that first inning, especially knowing that we have an offense capable of coming back from one or two runs early.

**Q. You mentioned César. I wanted to ask you about him. You said that he is not used to pitching in a seventh, eighth inning.**

RODNEY LINARES: I think he was a little anxious. They

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scored the run. The other team scored a run. When he came out people started screaming, "the Caballo of Licey." He got into some trouble, but he did what he does. He came out shut them down. Great play by Soto, by the way. We didn't have to use Camilo or the other pitchers. We didn't use Genesis, who is the only left-hander on the team.

**Q. Something new that we saw today was the celebration that you did with presidential sash. How did that celebration come about?**

RODNEY LINARES: We had it from the first game, but we didn't use it in the first game. Nelson brought it yesterday. We spoke about that, and I told him, no problem.

As long as they have a good time, that's great. This is a show for the fans. They are seeing the best players in the world playing, and I'm very proud to be their manager.

**Q. Rodney, you said that Juan Soto before the game, you say that because of precaution because of the injury, he was out of the game versus Israel. Can you give us an update about his situation?**

RODNEY LINARES: I'll have the Padres send to you. Typical Juan Soto. The plan doesn't change. There was an agreement with the San Diego Padres. He would be available tomorrow on the bench to be a pinch-hitter, but no, no, unless the situation changes until 5:00 p.m., he wouldn't be playing tomorrow.

Typical Juan Soto, the Padres sent him in shape. He is ready. He can start the season tomorrow.

**Q. Even when the team wins, there is some criticism against your person against you.**

RODNEY LINARES: I said yesterday and today in the morning that I don't listen to outside voices. We are in the States. Of course, people have opinions. People will always criticize. They will say that the Dominican Republic never wins.

I'm a man of God. I'm dedicated to the players, to baseball. If someone wants to admire me, okay. If another one wants to criticize me, I'm okay with that too.

**Q. Your assessment, your opinion about Francisco Mejia's job today with the pitching?**

RODNEY LINARES: Great. Tremendous job. Frankie has a great ability. I see him every day in Tampa. Great catcher. Great job. He stuck to the plan all the way with Javier and the others. Maybe not with César. Many pitches were breaking very early, but he did a great job.

Frankie did a great job.

**Q. After these games that we seen, can you tell us a little bit about the bullpen? You have seen your pitchers now, because this is one of the strengths that we have been mentioning from the very beginning.**

RODNEY LINARES: Yes, even before the tournament calling the relievers since it is a short tournament, we wanted to call some pitchers that could pitch back to back, throw hard and with control of their pitches. Maybe six or seven relievers. The best ones in the MLB, and we're not far from that.

We trust those guys. We will try to avoid problems for them.

Thank you.

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