

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

Monday, 13 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Puerto Rico

### Yadier Molina

#### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. How is the energy on the team for today's game? We are focused on tonight's game, of course, but do you have anything planned for tomorrow? The players are going to have the day off or are they going to train, what?**

YADIER MOLINA: The emotions are at the highest level. We are all motivated, ready. We had a meeting at the hotel. We already have a game plan for today. We are focused. We are going to be strong, attack, and we expect to be successful.

**Q. You have had many big moments as a player. Maybe the most important ones. What would you like to hear from your manager? What would you repeat to your players today?**

YADIER MOLINA: You have to be motivated. You have to keep your heads up. We faced a great team yesterday. We were one hit away from tying the game.

That was my message yesterday after the game. We have a long way to go, and I'm proud of them seeing the way they fought, coming back in the game. It is not easy to face that team such as Venezuela, and we were just one hit away from tying the game.

**Q. Yesterday in the bottom of the third, with Christian Vazquez there was a play first base. We saw you talking with the umpires.**

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, before the first game we talked to the umpires, and we know that we have a person in the clubhouse, and the replay is behind 10 to 15 seconds and how to decide if it's a challenge or not, if we still don't have an opinion from the guy working for us in the clubhouse, but they know that. They told us that they would wait for five seconds more because they knew that the replay was behind or delayed.



**Q. In order to get qualify for the second round, Puerto Rico needs two victories, one today and the second one versus the Dominican Republic. Can you tell us a bit about those two games?**

YADIER MOLINA: We are focused on today's game. Just like you said, two important games. We have to play one game at a time. I can tell you about today's game. We have to be ready to compete today.

And after today we'll be focused on the next game versus the Dominican Republic on Wednesday. Just like you said, two important games.

**Q. What is more difficult, in 2017 you were participating as a player in the Classic and now as a manager. Now you have the experience because we saw you in Venezuela. How are you dealing with that pressure? Even when you said that there is never pressure, but with this kind of atmosphere, with nerves, with these fans, what's the difference between 2017 you as a player and now you as a manager?**

YADIER MOLINA: To be confident, to trust your players, to trust the support of the fans, of your family, and that gives you more peace.

Thinking about that, you try to make better decisions.

**Q. Follow-up question: Just to be clear, tomorrow if there is a practice or not, it depends on the result today?**

YADIER MOLINA: Yes.

**Q. Tomorrow you have the day off. What are you going to recommend to the guys? You are going to be relaxed. You are going to have dinner?**

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, resting, resting. To be with their families, to relax. That helps a lot as well. Usually, yeah, normally rest.

**Q. Regarding the meeting, did you lead the meeting or, for example, a player or a captain?**

YADIER MOLINA: No, I started and then several players expressed their opinions and feelings.

**Q. You're 1-1 in this tournament. You've had experience managing in Venezuela, of course, in the Winter Leagues, but in this tournament specifically, what have you found the most enjoyable about managing, and what have you found the most difficult?**

YADIER MOLINA: Difficult? Oh, yes, every game is difficult. I mean, you are competing with teams that are -- they have many All-Stars on the team. So the games are the most difficult stuff. And the travel, you know, going back and forth with no time, no BPs on time because we don't have time to get on the field.

The most enjoyable is like last night. You see a crowd of 35,000 people. That's joy. I enjoy that.

**Q. They say that the best managers were catchers because the catcher faces the game and knows how to handle the pitching staff. Is this the start of your post-playing career now as a manager?**

YADIER MOLINA: I'm trying.

**Q. The original working plan of Puerto Rico in terms of the pitchers, the starters specifically, is that for the fourth game would be Hamel or Hector, who pitched yesterday, right? So Hamel could be the starter?**

YADIER MOLINA: Hamel would be the starter, until now, but anything could change. It all depends on today's game.

**Q. I know that you don't want to think about the game versus the Dominican Republic, but I wanted to ask you about the rivalry between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, things that we have seen during the history of the World Classic?**

YADIER MOLINA: Of course, we have played a lot. We have had interesting games. We have played hard, and the fans of both teams are excited about the game. We have many friends in the Dominican team. I respect them a lot, but we are competing. Let's see what happens on Wednesday.

Thank you.

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