

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

Monday, 13 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Puerto Rico

### Yadier Molina

#### Postgame Press Conference

Puerto Rico 10, Israel 0

**Q. So important for Puerto Rico. Two quick questions: The first substitution with Soto, Neftali for some reason, injury maybe, he was substituted, or that's because you had a big lead? And the second question, the fans wanted De León to pitch until the last batter. Why did you pull him out?**

YADIER MOLINA: Those are the decisions of the game. It's the matchup. Neftali did very well. Just liked Machin at that spot.

About the other question, he had 65 pitches, and I had to remove him.

**Q. In that final moment De León kept the ball. What did you tell him, or what did he tell you when he kept that ball?**

YADIER MOLINA: It was a very special moment for him, but especially -- for everyone, but for him. His family was here, and I thought that that would be a great souvenir for him. He accepted that. We are very happy with his performance.

I know José, and he has been working hard to be in this position. He deserved that.

**Q. You don't look for records; you try to win. However, for the very first time in the history of World Classic it was an elimination rule win and a perfect game. Your thoughts about that? And on Wednesday the one who wins will qualify.**

YADIER MOLINA: We are very happy. I'm very happy with the guys. After the game yesterday with Venezuela, we were aggressive and winning this game the way we won is fantastic. I'm very proud and happy with this situation, you know, and now we are going to prepare



ourselves for Wednesday.

**Q. Being one of the best catchers in the Majors and now as a manager and Machete Maldonado playing in the majors, how was the communication between the two of you for this great victory you had today?**

YADIER MOLINA: We always have great communication, but I have to recognize Martin. Martin is a caballo. He is a horse. He is smart. Together with Bones, they put together a game plan, and he applied that plan. I'm very happy for him.

**Q. Regarding your participation in the World Classic, where is this game?**

YADIER MOLINA: In the top, right. In the top. We worked very hard for this. Like I said, after the game, like yesterday we had to turn the page and be aggressive today, and that's what we did.

I'm very happy for the guys. They deserved the victory.

**Q. Do you think the Puerto Rican team will ever not bleach their hair again? For José, like, this was a pitcher who has been in and out of the Majors. Pitched winter baseball for Puerto Rico. What did you say to him? What could you possibly say to a guy like that that just went through this?**

YADIER MOLINA: José, I know him for very long. I know this guy. He's worked so hard to be in this position. Pitch for your country. Pitch in front of your family. I mean, to have this, it's amazing.

**Q. When did you realize that you still had a perfect game going, and how important was it for you and for the team to complete that?**

YADIER MOLINA: When I looked to the seats, I asked Ricky, how many pitches De León had, and he told me it's getting close to 65. When I look up, I knew that something is going on.

About that time I was thinking about that. That's why I get Edwin Diaz ready to pitch the seventh just in case we got



ten runs.

**Q. Why did you use Edwin in the seventh inning?**

YADIER MOLINA: I used him because Edwin hadn't pitched in the first games, and according to the rules of the tournament, if we scored one run, that would be an early termination, and he had to pitch today.

**Q. Three walkoffs, now the fourth in the history of Puerto Rico.**

YADIER MOLINA: Fourth on the list. It could be longer. Yes, I'm happy. I have to thank God for this. Because I'm managing this great team with young players that sacrifice everything. I'm very happy with the achievement.

**Q. Maybe you don't want to get into detail. You said so. How are you going to face the game on Wednesday versus the Dominican Republic? 2-1, tomorrow you have the day off, and the Dominican Republic, now they are 1-1. How are you going to face that game.**

YADIER MOLINA: This is going to be the most important game in the tournament. We are going to be ready for that.

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