

# World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Nicaragua vs Venezuela

Tuesday, 14 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Venezuela

**Omar Lopez**

**Carlos Hernandez**

**Andres Gimenez**

Postgame Press Conference

Venezuela-4, Nicaragua-1

**Q. Omar, two things. Can you speak about Andrés and how decisive he has been at the plate, his defense, running bases? And also can you talk about the final hug with the Nicaraguan team after the game?**

OMAR LOPEZ: Andrés, since The All-star Game in L.A. -- no, after the home run, the next day, we were speaking, and I told him, are you sure? It's playoffs in March. Representing Venezuela is not easy in the playoffs.

I wanted to tell him you are going to be the shortstop of the team, but I couldn't promise that. He earned that position. His effort on the field. I saw him with the New York Mets. I saw him in the cage and in Spring Training. He has earned this position. The Golden Glove, batting against left-handers and right-handers. The most important thing, his hunger, his thirst to play ball. He is able to contribute a lot to the team.

Nicaragua is in the World Classic. The players told me they wanted to do that greeting, that embrace amongst the teams. This is a brotherhood. This is the first time Nicaragua participates in a World Classic, and they left a very good impression. Maybe the lack of experience in terms of international competition could have affected them, but if baseball continues developing in Nicaragua with those talented players, they will have a more competitive and much better team in the professional leagues if they develop baseball in their country.

The players brought that up to me, to give that final hug, and that's their culture as well. We wanted to break that paradigm of professional baseball.



**Q. Omar, I would like to hear from you, Carlos, as well. One doubt was the bullpen of team Venezuela. I wanted to hear your opinion about the performance of the bullpen.**

OMAR LOPEZ: Many people can analyze the bullpen of any team, and our bullpen that we put together for this team. I believe in them. I trust each of them. Many of them could have their own opinion why didn't he use me today? Will he use me tomorrow? I have a plan, and I talk to them when I'm going to use them. But I'm very satisfied, and I trust them because we continue advancing.

When I call on them, they will take advantage of that opportunity and do their best in order to move forward in this championship.

CARLOS HERNANDEZ: You said everything. I don't have anything to add. But I'm excited. You have to trust in what he is doing. We have to be ready for any situation. Every time you go out, you have to do your best. That's the key.

**Q. Omar, two quick questions. Number one about Nicaragua: After playing Nicaragua, do you think that the Caribbean Baseball Confederation should invite Nicaragua to participate in the Caribbean Series? And, number two, your assessment of the job done by Cabrera so far in the World Classic?**

OMAR LOPEZ: The Caribbean Confederation and not only that confederation, but all the leagues in the winter system because the confederation is a body, but all the other leagues should support each other in order to develop baseball in the Caribbean.

We haven't faced the U.S. or Asian teams, so why couldn't we take our experience, our knowledge to those countries that are developing baseball, with our experience, with our culture? We can help them. They should be invited. Not only right now, but always so that they don't only play each other in Pan-American games or in ALBA Games. No, in other championships. We should have do something.

What do we call Cabrera? The bench coach. We have many leaders in the team. We call him the bench coach. We pray every day, and I'm surprised by the commitment



and by their respect. We have maximized our discipline I could say. We have Chirinos, Romero, Cabrera that are taking a leadership role in different areas.

When I get to the clubhouse -- and I'm sorry I'm speaking a lot because you asked about Miguel. He did many things, but I have different leaders in different areas, you know? I'm very happy every time I get to the clubhouse. They just go out to play Romero, Robinson, et cetera, et cetera.

They do the whole job, so that they are prepared both mentally and physically when they go out.

**Q. Omar, have you had some conversations with Acuña? What adjustment do you think he should make? Carlos, for you: Last year Kansas City sent you down to the Minor Leagues. What adjustments did you make? And how important was that experience in the Minors for you in order to achieve everything you achieved afterwards?**

OMAR LOPEZ: I have talked to Acuña now and then. Now I should have a deeper conversation with him, but not that deep. He is just very anxious. He wants to crush the ball, and he is working from his weakness and not from his strengths. I believe that a lack of patience is not a virtue. He should calm down, and that's what we are going to look for with him tomorrow.

I'm going to talk to him maybe later today or tomorrow before the game because we need him to be there to try to get on base, work a walk, et cetera, if he is not able to hit the ball.

CARLOS HERNANDEZ: Yes, last year I played in the Minors, but I always try to improve my weaknesses. I have been working on that playing in Venezuela, and we have seen the result of that work.

Today I had a good outing. I located the pitches, and we have seen the results of that work.

**Q. One question for Andrés, and the other for the manager: How do you have that double personality? You are so quiet, so passive off the field and a beast when the game starts. Omar, Venezuela has not officially yet qualified for the next round, but you can qualify if Dominican Republic beats Israel today. Are you going to gather to watch the game or not? First Andrés, the beast.**

ANDRES GIMENEZ: Every time I get to the ballpark, yes, I'm a quiet guy, even when I am joking. When I go out, I just want to compete. It's my nature. I'm very competitive, and I want to do the right thing always.

And I want to support the others, and I'm going to do everything I can to help the team win, and to have my teammates trust me the way I trust them.

OMAR LOPEZ: Depends. I am going to watch the game and based on that, I'm going to structure the lineup for tomorrow. I have two possible lineups for tomorrow.

Of course, I'm going to do some things that if the Dominican Republic wins today just to be qualified. We are going to have dinner watching the game.

**Q. Did you find a channel to watch the game finally?**

CARLOS HERNANDEZ: YouTube TV is not paying anything, but that's where I'm watching the games.

**Q. Andrés, you got a hit with two outs. There have been many key hits with two outs. What's the mindset? What do you look for?**

ANDRES GIMENEZ: We always try to look for the best pitch, to be calm no matter the situation. That's key.

Personally speaking, Miggy was before me. I was thinking about that because he was at bat, but I tried to focus. I saw the left-hander warming up. I tried to help the team and looked for the best pitch and make a good swing.

**Q. Omar, what can you tell the Nicaraguan fans about our team? Altuve, Acuña, Miguel Cabrera, these people couldn't get a hit against the Nicaraguan pitching. What can you say about the team?**

OMAR LOPEZ: I felt the emotion of Nicaraguan fans, even the coaches facing people like Acuña, Altuve, et cetera. I was watching them because they were focused on the field, and that tells me a lot about what they can admire in our talent and the talent in the Caribbean.

Nicaragua, like I said before, it's the first time they are participating in the Classic, and we have to support them. We have to find a way to develop that baseball because I managed in Venezuela at the beginning, and there were some Nicaraguan players, and I was able to know their culture. I got to know something about their experience, about their baseball, and I admire how humble they are, the will they had to play hard. I think they left a good impression here in the tournament.

**Q. For the manager, you are not qualified for the next round yet. Maybe today later or tomorrow. Now, the adjustment in that lineup and also the starting pitchers, what are you thinking about that? Rodriguez**

**was not very effective today. He pitched today two innings and seven hits.**

OMAR LOPEZ: He won't be able to participate in the second or in the third round. That was the only authorization that we got from the Detroit Tigers. However, I'm trying to negotiate with them, so that we can count on him for another game at least.

But all the pitchers are available. If we make it to the Finals, everyone is going to pitch that day, God willing.

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