

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Israel vs Dominican Republic

Tuesday, 14 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Dominican Republic

Jeimer Candelario

Pregame Press Conference

Q. We've heard differently from other players that were preparing mentally for months for this Classic. You didn't have a lot of time because of Vladimir's injury you were selected. How do you feel joining the group, and how was part of the preparation when you were dealing with a family issue? You were not with the team training here in Florida.

JEIMER CANDELARIO: Thank you for this opportunity. You know, as a little boy in the Dominican Republic, you always dream of being here at this major event, in this Classic. It's been a blessing for a generation.

We are playing with the best players throughout the world, around the world. To me it was a great opportunity. Vladdy had an injury. We pray for him.

When I was called, I was always available and willing to come. I had a baby coming, another blessing for me. I have to thank God for this opportunity. We are doing our best to get the championship.

Q. Was it difficult for you to leave the national training camp knowing that you had an opportunity to come?

JEIMER CANDELARIO: You don't have a lot of opportunities to represent your country. Yes, just like you said, we made a decision. We talked to the Nationals. They are my team. We got to an agreement, the manager, and I was authorized to come, and everything is fine over there. You know how it works. I didn't make the decision myself, but a team of people, I depend on them, and I belong to that team right now. So we got to this agreement, and it was a blessing.

When I got to the news, I talked to my wife, my family, the managers, and the Nationals, and all together we made the right decision.

Q. How important is it for you today's game knowing



that you are going to face a team that does not have the talent you have? What are you going to do to advance?

JEIMER CANDELARIO: There are no easy games. The best team is not always the one that wins the game. We have to work game after game with the same mindset to apply pressure and to obtain the victory. We have to continue doing what we have been doing so far. I always say that we have to play one game at a time. Today the guys are motivated to win today. This is what we want.

Q. I wanted to ask you about your experience so far. Do you feel under pressure knowing that you come from a country that is expecting a lot from you guys?

JEIMER CANDELARIO: Like I always say, there will be tension and pressure moments. You have to control that. The experience helps you control those emotions. We have a very demanding fan base, people that are supporting us. They want us to win. Some people say that we are favorites, but no, we don't consider ourselves a favorite, but we are capable of doing our best to win, and that's what we are trying to do today.

We are trying to have fun, to enjoy the game.

Q. How complicated has it been for you as you were asked? You were fighting for a position on the Nationals for third base, and now you have to come here to play the first base, which is your second position. Has this been complicated for you, to change or switch from third base to first base?

JEIMER CANDELARIO: Well, I have played first base during my career. In 2020 there was a need on the Detroit Tigers. The first baseman got injured. At that point in time no one was able to play, and they chose me. When the manager asked me, are you willing to play first base? Of course, I'm willing. I just want to help my team win, and this is the same mindset I have today.

I play third base, but whatever the Dominican Republic needs me, I will be there because I'm Dominican from the roots, and I have to support my team. I had this opportunity in Washington. I signed for one year. We're



working very hard. Like I said before, the managers and the coaches made this decision, and that's why I'm here.

Q. Was it useful for you to be physically prepared having played winter baseball? Are what can you say about Rodney Linares? Many people criticized him on social media. What can you say about the manager?

JEIMER CANDELARIO: It's a great league if you play there. Everyone that goes to play in LIDOM is going to take advantage of that. I played some games there. Thank God I was able to do a great job.

We couldn't make it. We didn't win the championship, but we did a good job. We were united as a team doing our best. That confidence that I have gained and with the good job that I did in Dominican Republic helped me in training camp, and I'm doing the same here. Doing my best, trying to help the team win, and this is what we are looking for.

Linares is a blessing for all of us. There will always be criticism. It's normal from the fans, but they support us. We are doing our best to win the championship. It is not easy. Some decisions are made fast. Sometimes we don't agree with the decision we make, but Linares has been a blessing for us.

They let us play, and above all, he communicates very well with the players as a manager, and this is what we want. We don't want to be under pressure. We have to be relaxed, play baseball the right way, and let things happen. We are doing our best. We are working hard. The coaching staff is doing the same, and we have to be united as a group in order to win.

Q. Coming back to your arrival to the team, Vladimir was the player that was injured. You come and join the team. It a hard decision for you to make? You have been in the lineup in every match, and you have almost a familiar link with Robinson. You have shared the dugout in other championships. What does that mean to you?

JEIMER CANDELARIO: Well, first of all about Vladimir, no one expected that injury, of course. He is a very important piece for the team. Great talent.

God knows the things we have to move forward. He is supporting us from home. I know that. He is another Dominican supporting our cause.

When I came here, no one told me, you're going to play every day, no. I'm willing to play wherever they put me and whenever they need me trying to help my team win.

We all play every day in different positions. There is no ego. We want to achieve results. We want to help the team win, and that's what we are doing.

And Robinson Canó, like you said, and for the whole generation, has been a blessing. I am practicing with him since I was 9 years old. I was a batboy with las Estrellas. He took me there. My first glove was given to me by Canó when he played in Triple-A.

Every time he came from the Yankees, he brought me presents, glove, bat, balls, and he helped me, but the whole generation supports him. We're always with him, and we are going to love him forever and ever.

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