

# World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Venezuela vs Israel

Wednesday, 15 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Venezuela

**Jesús Luzardo**

**Eugenio Suárez**

**Eduardo Escobar**

Postgame Press Conference

Venezuela - 5, Israel - 1

**Q. Good afternoon guys. Congrats. Luzardo, your first opportunity to pitch with Team Venezuela. Great job. Your family was here, right? Mom, dad, and a huge group of friends that came to see you. What does it mean to you to pitch for Venezuela and do that in front of your family, especially your father, who is always supporting you all the time?**

JESÚS LUZARDO: To me it was a very special, very important especially to pitch in front of my family as you said. In 2021 everything went bad. But I had three messages: My mom, my dad, my granddad. My grandfather died last year. And he always told me, You are going to make it to Team Venezuela. To me it was something very special. He's with me, I know that. And when I pitch with "Venezuela" on my chest, it's very important to me.

**Q. Question for Eugenio and Eduardo: Tell me what it means to you to be here on Team Venezuela and to play different positions? Any positive impact on the team? Both of you play third base and first base, and you also hit home runs for the victory.**

EUGENIO SUÁREZ: To me it's very important to be on the field and to play every day from the very beginning. When Omar called me for the selection for the team, he asked me if I was able and willing to play whatever he needed me. He needed me today at first base, so that Eduardo was at third base, and I was very happy. I could adapt myself very easily to the first base. Professionally speaking this is my second time at first.

Thank God we had the opportunity to respond with the bat.



The most important thing to me is to be on the field, to wear Venezuela's jersey and to do my best for me for my team, for my family, for my daughter, all the people supporting us in Venezuela. The most important thing is to give your best, not only for yourself but also for the team and the country.

EDUARDO ESCOBAR: Just like he said, when I had the opportunity, when Omar told me that, I said that I could play wherever he needed me.

This is a dream, not only for me but for any professional player to represent his country. The most important thing, the key secret here is that the egos were removed. No matter the position you play, the most important thing is that we are representing our country and we have one name, Venezuela, and that's why you can sacrifice to be willing to play in any position. The most important thing is the union we have on the team, and you don't care if you have to play third base or first base or left field. We don't have any ego on the team. We're humble. We're only one name, "Venezuela" on our chest.

**Q. Congrats, Jesús. I know it was a special moment that you had, you mentioned your family, your parents, your grandfather. How were you able to control those emotions especially when you put on that uniform?**

JESÚS LUZARDO: It was difficult. I walked the first hitter, but with the defense in the outfield we were able to control the game. I feel that support as a pitcher. You are on the mound and that's what I know how to do, I know how to pitch and that's it.

So after the first batter I calmed down, I settled down and I moved forward.

**Q. Question for Eugenio and Eduardo: In all the previous editions of the Classic Venezuela had great hitters, but there was not good hitting and that's a significant difference from this edition. What do you think is the cause for that? The hitting, the hitting performance was much better.**

EDUARDO ESCOBAR: In the previous editions, with all due respect, this is a totally different team because I think



it's the will, we have a lot of talent in Venezuela. We have this commitment to our country and to ourselves. Eugenio is one of the hitters, one of the most powerful hitters we have today. He has connected on many home runs.

We're more focused this time. Maybe we'll try to do more than we did in the previous editions. There were so many stars, great hitters and they have done their best for their country. Now we got what they did before and we have this game plan, you know. No matter if you have to hit home runs, we have to do the small things and to attack the hitters from the very first inning. We trust in the pitching we have. It is not important to make a big swing, but to make those small plays like you used to say, Caribbean baseball.

EUGENIO SUÁREZ: And the preparation, the commitment we made from the very beginning with Omar. We all prepared ourselves the best possible way to come and compete in this World Classic differently from the previous editions. This has been more special. We are doing our best and we agreed on that. Not only for ourselves but our family, our country. Miguel Cabrera, this should be his last Classic. We are prepared, we're ready for the competition. We want to compete every day and the results speak for themselves.

Our preparation before coming to the Classic, before coming to the national team was very good. That's why we have gotten great results.

**Q. What do you think about the pitching rotation of Venezuela for this Classic? How decisive do you think this pitching was, pitching in general and the starting pitching for the results you have achieved?**

EUGENIO SUÁREZ: We have great starters and that was shown in the games. Like I said before, their preparation was impressive. We recognize their quality as pitchers, the control of the pitching, the trust offered by Salvador, because Salvador is a very important part in the battery. They have talent and they have shown that trust to come and compete.

It was not just a play or a game for them but a serious competition. Their numbers are impressive. Those numbers favor us.

EDUARDO ESCOBAR: I agree with him. We have one of the best pitching rotations, like this beast on my left. Like Eugenio said, preparation was key. If you're not well prepared for a short tournament like this, you won't be successful. But having a catcher such as Salvador Perez is an advantage that we have.

With all due respect to the catchers of the other teams, we know who Salvador Perez is and Luzardo and the guys know who is behind home plate and they trust that guy. Their talent is evident. We are proud of them. And like Eugenio said, we're all making sacrifice for the country.

But for Miguel Cabrera I believe that he deserves, respecting the other teams of course, but God willing if we are champions, he deserves this victory, he should retire with this victory.

**Q. Can you speak about Miguel Cabrera and what he represents for baseball and for Venezuela. This is his last Classic. And there was a call to Venezuelans in the majors to join the team, with the team already, what does he say when you are in a gathering, when you are in a meeting?**

EUGENIO SUÁREZ: From the very beginning Miguel has been a key piece for this team, this team representing Venezuela today. Miguel is an idol for us. A player with so many trophies in his career for his dedication and hard work. That's what he says. Look at what we are doing, compete against ourselves and give a hundred percent and try to achieve good results. The other teams should do whatever they want, we should be focused on ourselves.

Miguel is always laughing, smiling, supporting us. Even when he's on the bench or when he's not playing, he's always yelling, screaming and supporting us. Like I said, he's been an idol for us. As Eduardo said before, he deserves to retire with this trophy that he needs, the World Baseball Classic trophy. And we hope to do that for him.

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