

World Baseball Classic: Pool D - Puerto Rico vs Dominican Republic

Wednesday, 15 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Dominican Republic Nelson Cruz

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Nelson, once again Puerto Rico, what can you tell us about that?

NELSON CRUZ: To go to the second round, well we're going to give everything we have. We understand the importance of the games, of every game we played from the first loss, every game has been a do or die game. So we're used to this kind of scenario. We're more conscious about the situation and we are better prepared.

Q. Nelson, yesterday you were able to connect hits, then Canó, Segura also finished the game. What's the energy, what's the mood for this game after contributing to the victory yesterday?

NELSON CRUZ: We're ready. No matter what the situation is. When the manager understands that we can help our team, as players we are all prepared. We understand that we cannot play all of us at the same time and the manager believes that we have great possibilities to win.

Q. We asked Lindor something that happened in the final where Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic played, Dominican Republic won and both teams went out to the field to hug each other as Caribbean brothers. Could something like that happen today, no matter who wins?

NELSON CRUZ: It's difficult to predict the future, right? I think that the situation is different because at that time it was a final, right? So this scenario is totally different. But despite the rivalry, we are united by brotherhood. Many Puerto Rican players we have played with, many have family in Puerto Rico, many Boricua families in the Dominican Republic. We have this brotherhood relationship. But today we're going to play and our goal is to win.



Q. The plan of a hitter, the focus before a game could be more complicated when instead of facing a starter from the very beginning you have to face a number of relievers. This could be the case today. Is it more complicated or not?

NELSON CRUZ: Well, in my opinion when we played Nicaragua and Israel it happened the same way. We didn't have much information about those pitchers. Yes, it could be more difficult, but at the end of the day we're out there to compete, no matter the challenges. We're going to face them the most positive way.

Q. Nelson, you said that you cannot predict the future, of course. But let's suppose March 15, 2024, Juan Nunez calls you and says, Nelson, I want you to be my manager of the team for the next Classic.

NELSON CRUZ: Well, I haven't received that call yet, but let's wait for things to happen. We're going to be focused on today's game. Everyone is excited. The fans as well. A lot of expectation in the Dominican Republic, they are expecting a victory and we are going to do our best as a team.

Q. It's an elimination game versus Puerto Rico. Is that an extra, additional motivation for today?

NELSON CRUZ: Yes, we always have had that rivalry between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. I remember the Caribbean Series where I participated and faced Puerto Rico, the excitement in the other editions of the World Classics. It's a rivalry always present between both teams. This is an extra taste and we as players understand that, the fans understand that as well.

I talked to Jose Reyes yesterday about today's game and for both of us it could be a dream to play in a game like today's. The players feel the same. The energy that we have in the clubhouse is great, beautiful. We are focused and we are willing to win.

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