

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

Wednesday, 15 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Dominican Republic Rodney Linares

Postgame Press Conference

Puerto Rico - 5, Dominican Republic - 2

Q. Of course the result of the game was not what we expected by us but from the very beginning there was some criticism. There were some moments where you had to use one strategy or the other. Did you regret when you said that you didn't like the bunt?

RODNEY LINARES: Like I said, I don't see the importance of that question. We had the chance to win the game. I don't see why you are asking about the bunt.

To me, you know, everything that happened today, if you want to criticize me, if you want to blame me, okay, I'm the manager of my team, and I take the responsibility for everything that happened. They did everything. The players gave everything on the field.

Regarding the bunt, I didn't see any situation where we should've have bunted the ball. We had the bases loaded because Julio got a hit. I don't see a situation where we could have bunted. We spoke about that. With only one catcher, you don't have so many possibilities we could have at the plate against Sugar and we wanted to save Teoscar or Jean for that situation.

Q. I would like to ask you something, we had a team full of superstars. When a player is not having a good performance in the case of Devers, why didn't you substitute him with so many stars on the bench?

RODNEY LINARES: I respect your opinion a lot. Once again, as a manager of the team of the Dominican Republic, we had the players that in our opinion could have the best at-bats. Devers is one of the best players in the majors.

It's a very short tournament. It's all my fault. Not bringing a pinch-hitter for Devers, I wouldn't do that. I trust the guys.



We lost the series. I am very disappointed. I'm the most disappointed person here.

Q. Great way to finish, what did you learn as your first-time manager experience and are we going to see you in four years?

RODNEY LINARES: Well, I don't know that. That's the first thing, I don't know that.

But what did I learn? I learned that the whole process, there is a lot of restrictions on players. We were handcuffed from the beginning with a lot of the players, especially pitching-wise. Today we tried to go with Cueto for three, we tried to go one time through the order and then go with Abreu. Didn't work. They ended up scoring the four runs. Then we unleashed the guys that we had in the back end.

Didn't play well. That ball Julio misplayed into an inside-the-parker or Little League home run. But like I said before, if I had to do it all over again, I would do it the same way.

Q. You have said that you take the responsibility for the loss. But that's not right. We are a team.

RODNEY LINARES: Yes, but I put together the lineup. And I accept all the criticism, everything you want to tell me because I'm the manager, and I respect my leaders. To me the players went out and did their best. Puerto Rico played great game, great pitching, great plays. Candelario's ball, Wander's ball. They strung together hits. But there is no one to be blamed actually.

Q. You had so many superstars, it's okay to have stars. Maybe you had to change the lineup over and over and over again?

RODNEY LINARES: No, we didn't change the lineup over and over and over again. I think that the lineup, the strength was always the same. We just had Soto leading off. Once again, Julio didn't do a good job. Teoscar as well but these are the players we had. I used numbers, data and according to the data they were the players to be in the lineup.



Q. You mentioned Francisco Mejía, in the game versus Venezuela you made a change at catcher. Why didn't you use the same logic and do the same?

RODNEY LINARES: Because Sugar Diaz is a good against -- according to the numbers, Sugar is better against all the other hitters, but not against Teoscar or Jean. We were trying to save him for that point in time.

From a different perspective, of course, if you say, well in the 6th removing the catcher, you're going to have only one catcher, it's a tough decision. You are handcuffed in the game. If we are behind in the score. Venezuela's pitcher was the right-hander Garcia, and he was dominating.

Q. The other day when Puerto Rico lost a game the manager said that he regretted not having a replay. Now that you took the responsibility, not only losing what else do you regret about the game? Maybe a play that you didn't do or something like that?

RODNEY LINARES: No. Once again, we put the players that we thought would be successful against them, Puerto Rico played better than us and we have to recognize that.

Q. Do you consider this a major failure with this solid team, not only to compete but also to fight for the title?

RODNEY LINARES: Of course, yes. Once again, I take the responsibility, full responsibility. Once again it's difficult when there are so many restrictions on the players. I take the responsibility for the loss.

Q. In the press conference before the game we were speaking about the chess match. You put in someone and you take out the pitcher and things like that. Something like that could happen. There was a problem with Cueto, they strung together hits and scored runs. Why didn't you substitute Cueto if you had the bullpen with rested pitchers?

RODNEY LINARES: Once again there are many restrictions. There was the home run, the hit and the bunt, but guy was ready and we brought the pitcher that could do the job. The bounce by Kiké Hernandez, things that happen in baseball. Once again, we had a game plan, we executed it but it didn't go well.

Q. During your career as a manager you are very passive. You showed that again with a been full of superstars, Julio Rodríguez for example, playing bad, why didn't you bat him lower in the lineup?

RODNEY LINARES: Of course now the questions are

why, why, why, because you didn't achieve the result we all expected. You had a great bench and you didn't move the players. Once again, like I said before, I trust the players that we have. They were the best players at that point in time and it was my decision to put them in and to put him especially in the second spot in the lineup.

Q. In this pool Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, three powers of the Caribbean baseball. Do you think those three teams should be in the same group?

RODNEY LINARES: No, the group, the way it is, it's okay. It is the most competitive group in the championship. Usually one of those teams should be the favorite to win the championship, the tournament.

Q. (No microphone.)

RODNEY LINARES: I don't want to mention any players, but the restrictions were tough. The restrictions on the players, that was something very difficult for me to deal with. Thank you so much.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports....