

World Baseball Classic: Semifinals - Cuba vs USA

Sunday, 19 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team USA

Mark DeRosa

Pregame Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with questions for Mark. Who has the first question?

Q. Outside of Lance Lynn who, is there anybody that's not available out of your bullpen tonight?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, but they will remain nameless for now. Absolutely. We're going to have to get some length out of our starters. It will probably be a piggyback situation.

Q. Do you speak to your players today about the kind of matchup, kind of the historical significance of this type of matchup and the potential maybe protests or the kind of things that could happen in the stands basically playing in Little Havana?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, we've gone over it. Actually, on the bus ride over here right now I was asking Team USA officials what to expect. They said they will be ready for it. I am more focused on play on the field, what's Cuba's style of play, kind of trying to get in the weeds there. Obviously, I've seen Moncada play, I've seen Luis, Cespedes, all those guys. I follow 'em closely. But, yeah, I can't take my mind to worrying about that stuff. We'll be ready to play.

Q. You were saying last night it was probably going to be a late night for you and your staff. What is going to be the key to a quick turnaround? And how late were you planning last night?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, I was up until about almost 4 in the morning trying to piece it together. Yeah, I mean, bottom line, Adam Wainwright, he's pitched on the biggest stages. He wants the ball. He was disappointed he didn't get it last night when we handed it to Lance, and I completely understood that. I just kept telling him, There's a lane for you, man, just stay with us. He's a teammate. I watched him get drafted by the Braves, watched him grow up in the organization and get traded to St. Louis, then I



ended up winning a Division with him in 2009. So there's a lot of had history between the two of us and he's got a ton of confidence in himself. And then Miles Mikolas as well. So Brady Singer might play a part in this as well. So we have to figure out a way to get piece it together.

Q. Have you had a chance to talk to Daniel Bard and how he's doing particularly after the news with Altuve?

MARK DEROSA: I just went up after the game and made sure he was all right mentally. And then I know that he spoke with Andy at length. Yeah, it's tough. I mean, I've said this, you come into Spring Training and you either struggle and use it as a ramp-up to the season or you're super hot and you almost want to ramp it down because you don't want to go going into the season too hot because you know a slide's coming.

I think for pitchers it's mechanical-based, right? And when you lose your mechanics in an environment like this, it's tough. And it's tough to go grab 'em, too, from our point of view. I know the game's on the line in that situation, but there's some parameters to getting guys hot and not bringing 'em in. We can't get 'em hot and sit 'em back down. So I wanted to believe that he could figure it out and get a popup. That Giménez kind of blooper over his head kind of steamrolled everything. I think if he gets an out right there, I think he might be able to find his command, and then it just kind of unraveled. Jason Adam was, I thought, the star of the game to keep it as close as he did.

Q. Having gone through this experience now for so many games with a couple still left, what suggestions would you have that would improve the tournament in the future?

MARK DEROSA: Oh, wow. I would have liked hot water in Arizona to take a shower. That would be number one. Tough to, with no pitch clock, determine how long these games are going to go. I think the toughest thing for us is we were the night game every day. We just couldn't access anything until that game was over. We're sitting in an auxiliary clubhouse. I mean, everyone's working so hard. I completely understand that. But that was the biggest rub for us, like, where are we going to be from hour to hour and where are we going to take BP, could we not



take BP, we only had one cage.

So just kind of the underbelly of it. But I understand. I remember in 2009, it's like what do you want to do, do you want to travel all over the country, because we never ran into that problem in 2009. But we started in Toronto, went to Miami, ended up in L.A. Here they're trying to keep it to two venues. So when you've got teams winning and losing and having to clear out of the clubhouse super quick and we're trying to get in there, it makes it a little difficult.

Q. Yesterday you were saying before the game that you might be the away team, but that could be good for you guys. Today, taking into consideration the Puerto Rico context of this game, you might not be the away team. What can you say about that?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, it's funny -- I mean, I can't really speak to that. I'm not knowledgeable enough to know the political situation over in Cuba. I just know last night, man, the energy and passion, it was unbelievable. When Trea Turner hit the homer -- there's a -- playing over in Venezuela, there's an exuberance, but there's a class to it too. Talking to my family, who was in the stands, it was like, we're going to jump up when our guys do good and get in your face, you're going to get in our face, and at the end, we'll shake hands. I appreciated that.

The USA chants after Trea went deep kind of got me going. I'm having a tough time realizing I don't play anymore because, I mean, our bench coach was out in that pile at home plate. I just love the fact that we matched their energy, and a moment like that could certainly catapult us.

Q. With what happened to Altuve and obviously to Edwin Díaz, there is a lot of vitriol out there, I guess, at the WBC. You have been on both sides of this. What can you say to people about what the WBC means to the players and you as a manager now?

MARK DEROSA: That's a great question because I completely understand the Major League clubs, the investments they have in these guys, their want to get them back healthy. But these guys are the best at what they do, they're ultimate competitors, and in an environment like that there is a hundred percent buy-in. It just happens organically. And to represent your country, it means the world. Maybe it doesn't start out that way, but I mean, it has become that. These guys want it. And you just can't play with a governor on and protect. You just don't know. I mean, I feel terrible for Jose, I feel terrible for Edwin, their organizations. But it's part of it. It could have happened in Spring Training. Like I said, the ramp up to the season, that could have happened on a back field in a

B game. There's just no way of knowing. I just think this: If you're not in this, you don't get it. I don't know any other way to say it. Like, you just don't get it. When these guys come in here and it starts ramping up and it gets tough. And then you put 50,000 in the seats and -- they want to go. Like, it's the -- I thought that atmosphere last night was as good as a World Series atmosphere.

Q. You mentioned Moncada and Luis Robert. How do you deal with all these hitters that you do not know?

MARK DEROSA: Well, I mean we have a ton of video on obviously those guys. We have a lot of Team USA officials that have been down this road before, we trust our guys in there, the analytics. Bottom line, we trust Adam Wainwright and whoever's going to come in after them. So I trust Andy Pettitte completely. He has been phenomenal. I can't sing his praises enough. He's pitched in, like I said, eight World Series, so it's easy to turn to him and for him to tell me the truth. Like, Lance, I wanted to squeeze him another one last night, bottom of the order, fifth inning, I was like, can he? He's like, Don't you dare. You know, we're having those conversations. And I trust the fact that he knows that.

Q. You're familiar with the long schedule and the demands of it and just the regular season. Is this really kind of the only logical time that you could stage an event like this? I know there's been a lot of conversation about trying to put it in the middle of the season, whether it's November --

MARK DEROSA: I don't see any way of doing it in the middle of the season. To ask guys that are not playing in the event to sit there for two to three weeks -- I know for me as a guy who didn't go to All-Star Games, those four or five days off were welcomed, but that first time back in the box I was like, Whoa, all right, we got to recalibrate the fastball here. And that was like four days. You give guys three week, you're going to have to ramp 'em back up again.

Then I think if you wait until after the World Series, the guys that go deep into the postseason are, you're going to have a hard time getting them to want to do it. And they're usually the best players in the game. So I do think the time is right here. I will say, playing in 2009 in comparison to managing in 2023, these guys came in ready to rock. Like the pitchers were ready to go. I don't think that was the case back in the day. So these guys have taken it upon themselves to prepare to be ready for this.

Q. From the first time that you met Wainwright to tonight what excites you the most about giving him the ball tonight in such a big situation?



MARK DEROSA: Yeah, I just think nothing will faze him. I think he's pitched on the biggest stage, he's succeeded on the biggest stage, he wants the ball. I think that's half the battle in this. I tried to tell him that in my first team meeting, I said, Listen, you're going to get smacked in the face. This was going to be playoff game two weeks into Spring Training. There's just no way to prepare for it. So I just think you have to be mentally tough, mentally strong, be able to execute pitches, not let the moment get too big. And he does all those things. He's done it for 20 plus years.

Q. When you said you didn't go to bed until 4 o'clock, was that more planning or more just adrenaline rush, and how many times have you watched the replay or videotape of that home run?

MARK DEROSA: I was reading how horrible a manager I was on social media first. That was first. No. Trying to piece the pitching puzzle together. Who can we use to, when and if we win today, who could be available for the championship. How do we kind of piece it together both ways.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.

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