

# World Baseball Classic: Final - USA vs Japan

Tuesday, 21 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Japan

## Yu Darvish

### Pregame Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll get started. Who has the first question?

**Q. If you pitch tonight, is that something that you need to get the okay from the Padres to be used as a reliever or is that something that only depends on you and Team Japan?**

YU DARVISH: Of course I was told I was okay, so mentally I'm fine.

**Q. Do you know what the plans are for you tonight? Did you expect to start tonight's game?**

YU DARVISH: As I say, I just don't know. I have no idea, depending upon how the game will go. I'm ready to go up any time, though.

**Q. So you pitched in the final in 2009, one of the best games in WBC history. Can you compare what you were feeling before that game to what you're feeling now?**

YU DARVISH: Well, I was really -- it was 14 years ago, so I was really too young to remember. But this time it's very different. I think it's a great team right now, this year, so I was hoping to have a great result.

**Q. Kind of speaking about that last game, you've taken on a real leadership and mentor role with some of the pitchers. What did you tell them before last night's game, and is there something you're going to tell the team before tonight?**

YU DARVISH: As I say, this team, I think this is the No. 1, the best team I've ever seen. So I think this is definitely -- I told them, this is a team that we can win, and I'm not going to tell it again, but I know everybody knows what I said yesterday.



**Q. Since your time since 2009, how much has interest do you think grown in the WBC in Japan? And do you see it one day being as big worldwide as soccer's World Cup, or because baseball's played in fewer countries, it has more limited worldwide appeal?**

YU DARVISH: I believe the WBC, I think it's been very popular. It's a very major thing in Japan, so it's the same. I believe -- I think we have more fans now. I know soccer is a very great sport too. I hope both sports will be -- just compete against each other. So I hope it will be the case.

**Q. You've known Shohei Ohtani for a long time. Have you ever seen him show that much emotion as he did last night? And how much fun is he having in this tournament?**

YU DARVISH: No, when we're playing the game, I think of course emotionally, it's really emotional. But I don't know, I've never played with him, never have, so I think this entire team is going to be very excited.

**Q. You made a big decision this year to attend Miyagi camp from day one. What was your thinking behind that decision? Because it had to have been a difficult one.**

YU DARVISH: I was including myself, of course including Ohtani and these younger players, and they really were kind of lost and of course, they're kind of younger, and I just don't want him to hear the difference. I just want to eliminate the idea of the distance and so forth.

**Q. Could you explain what your relationship with Yuki Udagawa has been over the span of this tournament and how you've seen him grow?**

YU DARVISH: Of course I think he was very quiet and he was not really in the team, but I think all the team members kind of accepted him, and I think we kind of laughed together with Udagawa. So I think he himself is now relaxed and I think his performance is improving in this game. I think he's learning. I can learn from him too.

**Q. You guys obviously are trying to win the WBC title tonight. You pitched in a World Series before. What's**



**the big difference in feeling, in emotion, in the two?**

YU DARVISH: Well, I think that both sides are very big deal. So, of course, we are going to the finals, but I haven't felt any feelings, so both games are very important for me. I'm looking forward to it.

**Q. I think Bob Melvin said three days ago that he was a little bit worried about your build-up. How do you feel and how ready do you think you are to start the regular season?**

YU DARVISH: I'm not really, honestly speaking, I'm not really sure. So I have to just think for myself. I know I have to get into the regular season. So I know I'm talking to the Padres about myself and I have to just recover myself and I will be talking to him.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you so much of your support for the World Baseball Classic. Best of luck to Team Japan tonight.

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