

World Baseball Classic: Final - USA vs Japan

Tuesday, 21 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team USA

Mark DeRosa

Postgame Press Conference

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

Q. You've been in the storytelling business a number of years. How can you even imagine a story the way this game ended?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, I was hoping it would end a little bit different with Mike popping one. But the baseball world won tonight. Although those guys are disappointed in there, I couldn't be prouder of 'em, the way they came together as a team.

From getting together two and a half weeks ago, all the things that happened along the way, tough games, easy games, whatever it was, they truly started to bond and enjoy being around each other. But, I mean, if were you going to write a script, I was hoping it was going to go our way with Mikey popping one against Ohtani.

But like I said, I mean, the baseball world, this thing is real, the WBC's real. The whole world got to see Ohtani come in, big spot, battling. It's kind of how it was kind of scripted. I just wish it would have went different.

Q. Can you describe what you saw in the Trout at-bat, what your emotions were during that at-bat, just your whole thought process?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, I saw him take a big deep breath to try and control his emotions. I can't even imagine being in that moment, the two best players on the planet locking horns as teammates in that spot. The fans won tonight. I'm just -- I'm chapped we didn't win.

Q. As the 8th inning unfolds and the 9th comes around and you see the way it winds up with Mike coming up, what's going through your mind thinking



about dramatic endings?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, I was just thinking about all the people around the world watching the game. Like, it never usually plays out like that. I was just saying, I just wanted the leadoff hitter on. Jeff got -- I mean, we couldn't ask -- Jeff works that nasty walk, and then we have two of the best players in the game back-to-back going against Ohtani with Goldie behind him. I felt confident. I really did. But I was well aware. I was like, wow, the baseball world's going to win tonight regardless.

Q. Going into the tournament the pitching staff was an area of concern on everyone's minds, and it seems that it worked out well enough to make it to silver medals, how do you think that they did and how do you feel the whole pitching staff performed?

MARK DEROSA: Yeah, all 30 of these guys -- the guys, especially the pitchers, I said that everyone in that room wanted to be in that room. We didn't have to coax anybody into that room. They reached out to us. If you're going to go into battle, you want guys who want to be there.

So I'm proud of every single one of 'em. They gave us a chance tonight. I hated pulling Merrill right there, and I know he wasn't happy about it, but we were fully loaded in the pen. I felt like we had to keep the game close in that situation.

So, yeah, it was some tough decisions that had to be made. But we threw the ball well, we just didn't get the big hit, we didn't swing the bats great tonight. Credit to them, though. I mean, they were bringing in some nasty dudes.

Q. You've analyzed Ohtani for years now on the network. You've seen him play. But like you said, leadoff guy gets on a one-run game, you got three MVPs coming up, double-play strikeout, tournament over. Is it possible Ohtani exceeded your expectations and what did you see from that guy on this stage?

MARK DEROSA: You know what blows me away on the stage is the fact that he seems to like -- no moment's too big for him. He did not seem like rattled by walking Jeff McNeil on a close pitch down, not rattled that Mookie -- like



you said, three MVPs were coming up to bat.

Like you said, I've analyzed him for years, since he's come over here. What he's doing in the game is what probably 90 percent of the guys in that clubhouse did in Little League or in youth tournaments, and he's able to pull it off on the biggest stages. He is a unicorn to the sport. I think other guys will try it, but I don't think they're going to do it to his level.

Q. Just more than just the disappointment that the guys lost, did you sense any sadness from the group that they were breaking up and now moving on obviously to their teams?

MARK DEROSA: There was talk about that before the game, just the fact that they were going to have to go back to their camps. I mean, you're playing in front of 50,000 people every night, and then the Venezuela game kind of lit our team on fire, and then the offense kept rolling against Cuba. I just think we were starting to gel and we ran into some tough pitchers tonight and we weren't able to get the big hit when we needed it.

But, yeah, I mean, you get to rub elbows with your greatest peers in the sport, pick their brains, work together. The thing that I'll take away, and I said this to them when I addressed 'em in the locker room, is I'm just proud of the fact that I was able to achieve the goal of bringing some of the greatest superstars in the game and kind of building a team. It wasn't an individual AB every time. They really started to enjoy being around each other. I saw them relax as this tournament went on. Yeah, that's the stuff that's hard. I would have liked to have won this thing, no doubt.

Q. To continue on Shohei, when you saw him drawing back and forth from the dugout to the bullpen, that's something that you just see in Little League. What were you thinking about?

MARK DEROSA: My mind was in one spot. I was, like, I wish we had a 7-2 lead and he wasn't pitching. But my mind was in the fact that the baseball world's going to win tonight. They're going to get the two best players in the game on the same team getting after it with two outs in the bottom -- in the top of the 9th. I mean, you really can't write it any better. I just would have liked to have seen Mike hit a 500-foot homer instead of the result.

Q. When did you start doing the math and realize that it could be final batter of the game?

MARK DEROSA: Probably not until the 7th or 8th inning. I was so focused on trying to hold the score close and then Schwarbs hits that one. I thought it was going to light us

up a little bit. I thought we were set up nice with Devin and Ryan Pressly in the 9th to try and snatch it away from them the way they did to Mexico last night. That was my thoughts. I just never wavered on the fact that -- it's so, it was so difficult to hold our lineup to two runs. I wouldn't have thought that going in, regardless of who we were facing.

Q. With the variety of pitch movement profiles, arm slots that Japan was bringing out of the pen, was there any talk in the bench in terms of like getting comfortable in the box, how difficult it was for the hitters?

MARK DEROSA: No, not really. I was shocked they started the lefty. I was shocked that the Padres were okay with Darvish pitching the 9th -- I mean pitching the 8th. Yeah, no, they had good stuff, all of 'em that they brought in. The sidewinder, I thought that was a tough AB for Anderson, so Jeff McNeil gets in there. So I'm proud of the way we competed throughout the entire tournament. I'm proud of my coaches the way they battled. We gave ourselves a chance tonight to get back in this game.

Q. Now that it's over and the whole tournament's done, have you thought about a future in managing in the MLB?

MARK DEROSA: No.

Q. And again for the next WBC?

MARK DEROSA: I hate to say I haven't, but I honestly haven't. I mean, can I have a roster like the one I just currently had? (Laughing.) Because then I'm in.

I didn't put any expectations or pressure on myself like that. I just wanted to see if the stuff I used to do as a player within the clubhouse and trying to create chemistry and trying to create care for one another would fly with the game's greatest players and it does. So that's what I'll take away from it.

THE MODERATOR: Mark, great run by your team, game for the ages, thanks for everything the last couple weeks, really appreciate it.

MARK DEROSA: Appreciate it.

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