

# World Baseball Classic: Final - USA vs Japan

Tuesday, 21 March, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Japan

### Hideki Kuriyama

#### Postgame Press Conference



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

**Q. I just wanted to ask you: Can you tell us exactly how you feel now?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: All the players looked very, very happy, so that made me happy.

**Q. What was going through your head and what emotions were you feeling there at that final at-bat, Shohei Ohtani versus Mike Trout?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Well, possibly, I'm sure everybody in the U.S. were thinking Shohei and Trout is something. I think nobody was -- of course that was the ideal situation, but I don't think anybody was really imagining it. I think baseball is great and it kind of describes life, I think. Not just only Shohei, all the Japanese players, and I would imagine that the last scene was created by everybody.

**Q. When did you know that Shohei was available to come from the bullpen and how was that conversation to make that decision?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: After I came here, I think the 17th and 18th on the practicing, I think we talked to them in detail.

**Q. Following with that question, just talk about what you told Shohei about the preparation of going to the bullpen in the middle of the game and also deciding when to have Darvish pitching after not throwing after 12 days, maybe.**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: I'm sorry, can you ask the question? Did you ask about Darvish? Are you asking why Darvish threw when he said he was going to throw?

**Q. Just the conversation with him about pitching after not pitching for 12 days.**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: I never said Shohei would not pitch or that Darvish will not pitch. I think many press might have said something about it, but I never said that. So from the semi schedule and final, I knew we had four days with jet lag and I wasn't sure those two can come or not. So that's why I am not going to approach at all.

If they wanted to win, I was hoping they would approach to us. So that's why. Both of 'em told me that they can play, so that's why. And it was difficult to decide when Shohei would go to bullpen. So I know I did something behind, and Shohei said, oh, I'll do that myself. Don't worry about it. I'll take care of it. So that's just like Shohei.

**Q. The coach, you all talk about the future of the baseball world and when you look at the players winning this final and what kind of -- what do you see in the future of the baseball world?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: As I say, I really was happy. I said I was very happy to see them being happy. So to be detailed, the young pitchers were able to pitch against those good American players. So of course when you look, the American players are probably difficult to adjust to the smaller body of the Japanese pitchers.

But I think it was a very precious experience for the Japanese pitchers and also all the kids in Japan who are watching that might think, oh, that's really cool, and they might want to make up their mind to want to be baseball players. So I think that was a very great thing to do.

**Q. What do you think were the biggest factors that led to all of your team's success in the entire tournament?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Well, of course all the players did their best. And also, every player, Yoshida and Shohei and Nootbaar, all the players made up the fantastic team. So that's probably the one of the components. Also, what is the culture of the Japanese team? I think it's a pitcher. And I think that the pitcher is the critical point. And besides Shohei, the younger pitchers are great, so I was very



happy.

**Q. I think you had some ideas, if we have to win, we had to send some pitcher. Were you thinking about Ohtani back then?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: I'll leave it up to your imagination.

**Q. I think after the 8th inning, I think you know the last batter will be Mike Trout, and I think you could imagine that. But when you found out the last batter would be Trout, what did you think about when you found out?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Well, I don't know how to say, but the game today, and when you think about the American batters, of course we're not going to be able to complete without facing them. So of course when Shohei was going in the bottom of the 8th and of course three of them there, and then of course that was -- after the double play, we had the two outs, so I just have to be able to get through this, and that's all I was thinking of.

**Q. What was your personal feelings about playing with Ohtani? I don't think you've mentioned anything about it. So you played about three weeks with him. What do you think about it?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: So if you ask me tomorrow, I think I can give you personal feelings because I'm done with the being the coach. Because I'm a coach and it's not my personal feeling, but I'm just feeling from the point of a coach, I think that Shohei will be great for the younger players.

**Q. When did you realize that it might come down to Shohei Ohtani versus Mike Trout?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Of course I want him out there, so I think it was when we got the double play and then I was just hoping, of course, that Trout would be the last one. So I think that I didn't really -- I wasn't really thinking of a calculation like you were calculating.

**Q. Once you became a coach and anything that you have to do, and I think you've done everything you proposed you would do during this WBC. Do you think you've done everything you could have done going into this game or was there something else that you could have done?**

HIDEKI KURIYAMA: Well, for the baseball I know we do everything that we can think of as far as the preparation. But even then you have more things to do always. It's been 12 years since I became a coach and ever since when I was a coach with the Fighters I never felt I've done

everything I could have done. So of course I, if I wasn't prepared, then that will cause an issue with the players. So if you ask me that question, I think I could have done a lot of things.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Hideki.

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