

World Baseball Classic: Semifinals - USA vs Dominican Republic

Sunday, 15 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team USA

Manager Mark DeRosa

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Changes in the lineup for today. You've got Henderson at third and Smith as catcher. Is this just playing the numbers, and can you talk about how the process went telling Bregman and Raleigh, sorry, you're not playing today?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, playing the hot hand right? Gunnar's got numbers against Severino. It's Will's turn kind of bouncing off Cal but he's been swinging the bat.

I spoke with Bregman last night. These guys like the lineup out the night before, so I was able to do that, and he was good with it.

It's game on, game on.

Q. Many managers have highlighted the offense of the DR as one of the best in the world. To you, the USA manager, what do you think about it?

MARK DeROSA: I think it's nasty is what I think. I think they've got some of the best players in the world.

A ton of respect for Albert Pujols and Nelson Cruz putting an unbelievable team together. A ton of respect for the guys in that lineup, and we will act accordingly today as we pitch to them.

Q. Is Paul Skenes ready to pitch today against the most powerful offense that you have right now in this tournament? Was it calculated from day one or was (indiscernible) by coincidence?

MARK DeROSA: A little bit of both. You've got to follow some pairing club guidelines about getting these guys ready for opening day, but certainly we highlighted the semifinal game as a game we'd like to have him take the bump in.



So it just kind of came down to tracks that way, but there was a little bit of both involved.

Q. What has stood out to you both about Roman Anthony the past couple weeks?

MARK DeROSA: Twenty-one years old and totally gets it. Talking to him yesterday, he said something to me that I thought was profound for a young player. He said, "The thing I realized is that the data can get you to the Big Leagues; the Trackman data, the exit velos and swing speeds and all that stuff. But if you want to stay and be good in the Big Leagues, you've got to find your way on base."

And to learn that at 21 I think is super impressive. I love his moxie, I love his makeup, quality at-bat. Doesn't come outside of the zone. Super impressive. I expect him to go have a meteoric career.

Q. When it is necessary to start the job in the bullpen, how are you planning to do? What do you think about it? What is the strategy for the game for the bullpen to face the DR lineup?

MARK DeROSA: Well, I don't want to give you the exact strategy, but I'll say this: I have 10 absolute horses down there that have all pitched high-leverage innings in their career, so we will certainly act accordingly. We know the matchups obviously.

But I'll tell you this. Just like Albert's going to deal with, at some point somebody's going to face somebody that they probably don't want to face, right? The lineup's just too deep and too littered with stars. But yeah, we will certainly be ready to go.

Q. DR has hit 14 home runs in the tournament, a tournament record, and this is possibly the best DR team ever assembled while Skenes is considered a generational talent. What do you think about that matchup?

MARK DeROSA: I think it's what the world wants to see. I think the beauty of the WBC is that not only do you get to see people represent their country on the world stage, I

think it has the ability to bring fans to weren't totally into baseball into it. It's such a grower of the game on a world stage. I think everybody wants to see this one.

So just a ton of respect for the DR, a ton of respect for Albert and Nelson, every pleyer on their roster. These are guys these guys are teammates with, these are guys they have a ton of respect for. So I just think it's just like a phenomenal event that kind of came to pass.

Q. How much can Paul Skenes reasonably give you pitch count-wise today?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, probably around 70, 75. Very similar to where Logan was against Canada.

Q. I was just wondering, whose decision was it to bring Robert J. O'Neill in to talk to the team, and what would you say to anyone who disagrees with the idea?

MARK DeROSA: Well, that was my decision to bring him in. He was brought in, actually, a couple of days in Houston. It wasn't just before the Canada game.

I think for me there has to be -- you never want it to get lost why you're doing this, whatever that why is. And a lot of people -- like Paul Skenes said to me when he signed up for this, "I want to do this for every serviceman and woman who protects our freedom," and that's why we wear USA across our chest.

So I thought it would just be a time to redirect and get these guys to understand that, although this is an unbelievable event and you get a chance to share the locker room with the game's greats, there's a reason why we're doing it and a reason why people protect our freedom at night. I just wanted to honor that. So that's why he came in to talk.

Q. Was it an inspiration for the U.S. to defeat Italy knowing that the team that you put together, that defeat, that loss makes you realize that out there are other teams that can defeat us and wants to beat us?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, I just think it was a wake-up call, right? That's what I think. A ton of respect again for Italy, everyone in this tournament. Italy's gone on to, what are they, 5-0 I think at this point? They beat us, they beat Mexico, they beat Puerto Rico. They've got a lot of good players on their team.

So I just think it was kind of a reset for us. We needed help from them to get into this. We got it. We're thankful for it. And we continue to push on.

Q. Mark, I understand obviously you guys are very focused on this game, but I was curious to understand if you had any thoughts on what happened between Venezuela and Japan? Obviously Japan was the favorite, but Venezuela's victory last night?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, it's funny, we had a meeting today, and I have a ton of respect and a lot of like for their Venezuela manager, Omar Lopez, I believe.

I was telling them today, we had that moment last time three years ago with the grand slam from Trea Turner. I was laying in bed last night watching their game, and when Wilyer Abreau hit the home run, I thought it was kind of like, wow, they waited three years to kind of have that moment.

I played in Venezuela in '99 in winter ball. I have a ton of respect for those guys. Yeah. I thought it was awesome, an awesome moment.

Q. Every generation has always been inspired by someone. We were listening to Pujols saying how important was it Marichal, Juan Marichal, David Ortiz, and Pedro Martinez to be around the players on this team, legends that inspired this generation of players. Your team, the team you are managing today, what legends have been around the players of the national Team USA?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, the other day in my office around the team we had Roger Clemens and Ken Griffey, Jr. hanging around with the guys. So I thought that was very impactful.

You know what I tried to do? I tried to create a coaching staff that not only were great players, but were great teammates and were selfless workers, the Matt Hollidays of the world, the Sean Caseys, the Brian McCanns, the list goes on. So I just tried to put a room together where, at every turn where these guys looked, they had somebody that not only had a back of the baseball card, but was also willing to work to get them ready for their season and do everything possible.

Q. Paul is the best baseball pitcher, maybe he is, but he has never faced a lineup like today's. So what can we expect about the matchup, power versus power?

MARK DeROSA: What do I think the matchup's going to be like?

Q. Yeah.

MARK DeROSA: I mean, we'll have to see. He's not going



to change his MO. He's got a ton of confidence.

Same on the DR. I'd like to think the key to the game is he settles in, gives us the 70, 75 pitches, we're able to grab a lead.

We know it's going to be a raucous environment. We're kind of ready for that and ready to lean into that.

So I just look at it like we've got the right guy on the mound against anybody at any time on any field. So we'll see what happens.

Q. Mark, how much have you enjoyed getting the experience to manage Aaron Judge? Is there anything you learned about him that you didn't know prior to this maybe?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, he's the definition of captain, I'll tell you that much. Leader of men, process-oriented, great teammate. Yeah, just a phenomenal human being besides the fact that he's the best hitter in the sport. So it has been just awesome to share a locker room with him.

Q. What have the conversations been with the guys that you just added to the roster, the pitchers? How closely have they been following it, and have they essentially known all along this was going to be their opportunity? Was it a guarantee? What went into those decisions?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, the three guys that joined us, Tyler Rogers, Will Vest, and Tim Hill knew for a while they were going to be joining. Jeff Hoffman was late. We were kind of middling with the idea of maybe Joe Ryan being added to the roster as kind of a piggyback option. Instead, Jeff Hoffman, I talked to him probably a week ago, but the other three were ready to get right in the fire.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports).