

World Baseball Classic Championship Final

Monday, 16 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team USA

Manager Mark DeRosa

Nolan McLean

Workout Day Press Conference

Q. My question is for Mark. First of all, congrats; right? After yesterday's game, do you have any thoughts on that controversial last pitch? And are you in favor of the next Classic implementing the ABS system, by any chance?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, I'm a fan of ABS. I think it will be good for the game moving forward. I think it will be in the next WBC.

You know, watching that ball back on replay, I can understand why Dominicans are upset about it. I love the class and I have a ton of respect for the way that Albert Pujols handled the postgame.

It had a lot of plate. I think if you take the box, which I think with adding ABS, the box will come off the TV. That ball had a lot of plate, and Will does a hell of a job in framing, but yeah, I'm in favor of ABS coming into the game.

Q. Despite the dominance by the pitching staff yesterday, there wasn't a whole lot of strikeouts for the Dominican team. Talk about Dave Bednar in that situation, getting two strikeouts late.

MARK DeROSA: Unbelievable split to Fernando Tatis. He kind of ran three high heaters to Marte, kind of setting up, kind of tunneling that breaking ball off of it.

Yeah, he's one of those guys that puts himself in some tough spots and is able to pitch his way out of it consistently.

I thought the bullpen -- I mean, Skenes was awesome. To hold that lineup down, it was just one after another. It was just a conveyor belt of just crazy good talent and players. And for our bullpen to do what they did on down the line from Tyler Rogers getting that double play, handing it to



Griffin Jax, handing it to David Bednar.

Garrett Whitlock doesn't get enough love. He's one of the best relievers in the sport. And then obviously Mason is a different animal.

Q. For Mark, Nolan was obviously fantastic last year, but he has limited experience, so I'm wondering why you want him on the team and are giving him this assignment.

And Nolan, why did you want to do it? And also, did you have vertigo or was it just vertigo-like symptoms, and I assume you're completely over that at this point?

MARK DeROSA: For me, I think his desire to want to do this. I think you've got to want to do this.

I think sitting in my apartment watching him pitch in the second half of the season, his stuff is explosive. At the end of the day, he has a relationship with Matt Holliday, who's on our coaching staff, and Matt called me multiple times and was like, "He's built for this."

After my first conversation with him, like I said, your heart's got to be 100 percent in this because it grabs you quick. You can see the environment last night. If you don't want that moment, it's going to eat you up.

So I think he's just built for this. His mindset, his stuff, his want, all of that kind of led to him being a part of this team.

NOLAN McLEAN: Yeah, I think you're crazy if you don't want to do this, honestly. Just getting the opportunity to put USA on your chest and go out there and compete with honestly the best players in the world, I think it's an unbelievable experience for me.

As a competitor, I just want to go out there and compete and try to win and try to put my team in the best spot when I do come out of the game.

And I guess as far as the vertigo stuff, I don't know if there's an actual test to know if I had for sure vertigo. I was definitely dizzy. But yeah, I'm fully past all that now and I'm feeling good.



Q. Nolan, was there any 24-hour period where you were nervous about even being able to make the U.S. roster because of the vertigo-like symptoms?

NOLAN McLEAN: Yeah, I had a stretch there where I didn't feel like myself, but I told my wife, if I can get on a plane, I'm going to play.

So once I felt good enough to fly, it was a no-brainer for me.

Q. And you expect a lot of your or at least a few of your Mets teammates to drive on down to your game tomorrow night?

NOLAN McLEAN: Yeah, I think a few of them are going to try to make the trip. I know Christian Scott talked to me before I left and said, "If you're pitching, I'm coming." So it would be really cool to have some of my teammates out there, but I'm just excited to get going.

Q. Nolan, it's one thing to sign on for this and another thing to have the ball in your hand. Is that a scenario that you envisioned coming in? And then also, what did you take away from your experience the other day in Houston and just how that experience was for you?

NOLAN McLEAN: Yeah, like I said, putting U.S. on your chest and going out there and competing obviously means the world.

Obviously I got clipped there a couple times with the homer, but overall I felt really good. But as a competitor and as someone -- if you work your whole life at something, you want to be put in these spots. So it's just kind of a dream come true to be able to get the ball in such a big moment, and it's something I want to do.

Q. I think you're eligible for 95 pitches in this round, but is there a pitch count limit for you tomorrow?

NOLAN McLEAN: Yeah, I would think I'm probably around 65 or 70 just with the ramp-up. But just until Mark comes and gets me.

Q. Mark, in so far as you did say that Garrett Whitlock doesn't get enough of love, so elaborate. What have you seen from Whitlock? What distinguishes him?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, just his demeanor. He's a stone cold, like the moment's not too big for him. He's got three ridiculous pitches. He's got a backdoor sinker. He's got one of the best changeups I've seen. I couldn't tell if he was throwing a slider or changeup last night, his stuff was

just falling off the table.

And he's just got this cold look in his eyes. That's a big moment, to come in and get the teeth of their order in that spot, going through Soto and Vladdy and Manny and doing it the way he did. And it's been like that for a while.

Working at the network, I get paid to sit up at night until all hours and watch these guys play, and you just appreciate certain guys that don't necessarily get the love that they deserve, for whatever reason, and he jumps off the page.

Q. Nolan, do you remember watching any previous WBCs growing up? And then second question, can you talk about what it means to have DeRo's confidence to get the ball for the championship?

NOLAN McLEAN: Yeah, I've watched a ton of the WBCs growing up. I remember Adam Jones bringing a ball back, I want to say it was 2017. Yeah, 2017. And then obviously everybody remembers the Trout-Ohtani matchup from the last WBC.

And just as a fan of the game, moments like that are so much fun to watch.

Yeah, as far as getting the ball in the finals, I hope DeRo saw what kind of a competitor I have I am. I mean, I'm just super pumped to get the ball and go out there and compete. All I ever want to do is win.

Q. Nolan, I'm just curious, how much have you been able to communicate with the Mets to make sure that you can do this assignment and still be on track to be ready for the start of the season?

NOLAN McLEAN: Yeah, it gets tricky trying to, I guess, go out there with a regular pitch count, but knowing you have -- because typically you have about 100 pitches in a regular season, and you know that going through the order of how you're dissecting guys, how you're making adjustments. Going in there with the mindset of I've got 55 or I've got 60, it's definitely different. And I'm pretty sure it's pretty difficult to manage too.

But the Mets have done a tremendous job of being open, communicative of what I need to do. If you end up with this pitch count, you need to go to the bullpen to finish up here, or if you reach this amount of pitches, you're good, just enjoy it. And so I'm super lucky for that on the Mets behalf.

Q. Nolan, just along those same lines, there's a lot of more experienced pitchers that struggle with the WBC format just because they're trying to get their work in for the regular season. How has it been for you? Last

year when you came up you had a full season behind you, so you were kind of ready to go. Has it been difficult to kind of navigate this, just to figure out what's right for you, but also giving everything you can to the team this spring?

NOLAN McLEAN: I think for me, I'm just trying to stay in the moment as much as possible, and right now I'm on Team USA. My job is to go out there and compete for Team USA. And then after Tuesday, it's all about the New York Mets for me from there.

So obviously hitting the pitch quotas I need to hit to have my arm in a good spot to start the season is a big deal, but right now I'm only worried about the next game.

Q. At the last of the tournament in 2023, you were still a two-way player. So in this tournament, several former two-way players are here either as a pitcher or as a position player. So looking back, how do you think continuing to do both at a high level can shape a player's career?

NOLAN McLEAN: That's a good question. I think a lot of it is just being able to understand both sides of the ball and understand different types of hitters, because you've got plenty of hitters that are kind of read and react, just not looking for any pitches. They're "see ball, hit ball."

And you have super cerebral hitters who are up there looking for a pitch, and if they get it, they're going to do a ton of damage.

I think that's what's super cool about the game of baseball, is figuring out which hitter is which, and I think hitting for a long time kind of helped me do that.

Yeah, it's fun to make adjustments in the middle of a game depending on the hitter. I think that's just -- it's just super enjoyable to go out there and compete against these guys, who, like I said, are the best in the world at doing it.

Q. Judge was saying last night that the noise here was even louder than in the World Series when he experienced it. You hear a lot of people saying this is the biggest stage in baseball. I think in this country we are kind of conditioned sometimes to think that the World Series is the biggest stage in baseball both as Americans and as big leaguer, former big leaguer. Is this the biggest stage in baseball?

MARK DeROSA: For me, it is. I think it's where your feet are, right, at the moment. I've been involved with this since 2023, and in trying to recruit players like Nolan, you try and give them an idea of what it's going to be like.

I credit the other countries as well, the Latin American countries, Japan, all around the world. Last night was such a crazy, crazy good environment to be a part of.

Looking at the lineup card before the game started and walking down the tunnel out, you just look at all the names. I don't think that there's ever been a game that's had that much talent both sides of the field, and just high-level play, great defense, great pitching, just great energy throughout.

So it's wherever your feet are at the moment. I mean, if you're playing in the World Series this year, if Nolan and the Mets go to the World Series, he's going to think that's the greatest environment, but this is just different.

Q. Mark, you've talked in the past about Kyle Schwarber and kind of his role as a leader and what he did for you guys in '23. I wonder why you think he's able to take on that role and have that impact. And also, how does that manifest itself at a time like last night where maybe you guys hit a speed bump in Houston and had some stuff to get through?

MARK DeROSA: I think he's your best friend in grammar school. He's the guy you want to go to dinner with. I just think he's an unbelievable guy. He's a chemistry guy. He's a glue guy in that clubhouse. He doesn't take himself too seriously, but understands the magnitude of what's being asked of him, keeps everybody calm in the dugout. The back of the baseball card says he's one of the best power hitters our sport has.

So yeah, for me he is a no-brainer. Actually, when you're building out a roster like this, having just a cemented DH is probably not the way to go with just the way the construction and trying to make every piece fit. But he is just so special to the group that he trumps all that.

Q. Nolan, presumably you had given a lot of thought to what this would be like for you before you said yes. What has surprised you about actually being here?

NOLAN McLEAN: Obviously, I knew the talent of all the players on all the teams going in, and I knew the fans were going to be unbelievable; but last night, like DeRo said, it was special.

Luckily, as a pitcher, I kind of get to watch it just as a fan. But also, there's nothing better than being on the rail in the dugout and being in every moment with the guy on the mound or the guy in the box.

I knew I was going to want to win, but I didn't expect to just be -- my heart racing more on the bench than it would be

on the mound, just living and dying on every single moment. I think that's the most special part about this event.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports)

