

# World Baseball Classic: Semifinals - Venezuela vs Italy

Monday, 16 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

## Team Venezuela Daniel Palencia

### Pregame Press Conference

**Q. What has been the aggressive mindset on the mound, and how are you going to take the same mindset because you are just one step away from the grand final? That was your second goal, first to qualify to the Olympics and then to win this 2026 WBC.**

DANIEL PALENCIA: From the very beginning, this has been our goal, our philosophy to be able to attack. This is the best baseball-wide. We cannot underestimate anybody. All the teams are very good.

Sometimes you play in the Majors for 10 years and now you have to face players that are just fantastic, and you have to be sure of the pitches that you throw.

**Q. In Venezuela there is a very complicated situation. What is important to do in order to continue developing baseball in Venezuela?**

DANIEL PALENCIA: Baseball has been growing in Venezuela, especially these days. This team is comprised of players from different states of Venezuela, and that's why we are united. That's the key.

I have my own baseball academy in my hometown, and I try to develop that so that kids learn baseball and chase their dreams.

**Q. Daniel, how electric was it to have that big upset win, and then how fun has it been to share the field and that locker room with all your teammates?**

DANIEL PALENCIA: It was awesome. I was dreaming of this since I saw the last Baseball Classic. It's just awesome.

In the beginning I feel like a kid right here, just sharing how we start. And for me, just I'm living the dream right now.

**Q. Daniel, what would it mean to you and this team to**



**bring Venezuela to their first final in the WBC?**

DANIEL PALENCIA: That has been our goal. Our goal has been to be champions. It would mean a lot to the Venezuelan people, to everybody who loves baseball, and we are going out to fight, to win, and to do our best.

**Q. A couple of questions, Daniel. Can you tell me something about Johan Santana's job on the coaching staff with starters and their relievers so that the job can be seen in a very accurate way from all the pitchers? Can you tell me about that? And, of course, your impressions about this WBC.**

DANIEL PALENCIA: Johan has a lot of influence. From day one, we have meetings before the stretching session. We just have meetings to speak about the game, about the batters.

To me, it is a dream come true being here to talk to Johan Santana every time I have the chance. I ask him questions, I try to learn from him. That's very important.

I believe that it's been very important for the team, helping us, giving advice, putting together the plan to attack the batters. Yes, very grateful to him.

**Q. The main enemy of powerful pitchers such as yours is the lack of control. However, you have had a great evolution in that part, meaning reducing walks. I would like to ask you about that development. Is that something related to mechanics or concentration, focus? What have you been doing to improve that?**

DANIEL PALENCIA: You know, baseball is a very fast sport and it is important to make adjustments in the process. Thank God I was able to do that.

And with that fastball, it is not easy to have good control, but I train that with my coaches in Venezuela. I learned that I was able to control my fastball and to put it where I wanted. I made some mechanic adjustments. I trained like a sprinter because I learned that it is about velocity, the capability of the muscle to move. I learned about my body and I improved that. That was very useful.



**Q. You spoke about Santana, a legend in the Venezuelan baseball, and also Miguel Cabrera. What is the influence of that guy in the clubhouse? He is a guy that transmits energy. What's the impact in terms of morale, experience, et cetera?**

DANIEL PALENCIA: A lot. Miguel is a great person. Victor Martinez, Ozzie Albies, they have given me many pieces of advice.

They are still players, I would say, because they know a lot about baseball. They support us. They give us tips or just telling jokes. I mean, that's why the team is so united. There are no egos on this team. We are together in this, and we have a great chemistry within the team.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports)