

World Baseball Classic: Semifinals - Venezuela vs Italy

Monday, 16 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Italy

Vinnie Pasquantino

Postgame Press Conference

Venezuela 4, Italy 2

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Thank you, everybody, for covering this. This has been an incredible event. Hopefully it's a banger of a championship game tomorrow, two deserving teams. So that's about it.

Q. I talked to some of your teammates before the game, and they said they were not surprised that we're here in Miami in the semifinals. Do you think that baseball in Italy has really been growing? What's the message to those people in Italy that watched the game right here?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Yeah. We were told -- and we need to fact check it -- but that 7 million people watched this game, I think, this game tonight in Italy. What time is it over there, 4:00 a.m.? That's incredible. That's why we're doing this tournament, in my opinion.

So to have that sort of impact once every few years is incredible, and the goal of this team -- we've talked about it a lot -- is to impact Italy, and we have, and that's incredible.

So for us, we weren't successful on the field tonight, but we were successful in Italy, and that's what this is all about, so we're very thankful about that.

Q. (No microphone.)

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: No. Once we came -- maybe before the tournament if you had asked me, yes, I would have been surprised. But once I met these guys and we started to build a relationship, I thought we were going to win the whole thing.

Q. Take me through the process of being managed by Francisco Cervelli and what was maybe one thing that you learned the most about him.

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: I just learned how relaxed he is



in big situations and how that affected the whole team.

And we've talked a lot about the young guys on this team. Something that Francisco was so good at was making them feel comfortable all the time. You guys know him. He's fiery. He's got a lot of energy. He's loud. All that put together created an environment where guys felt comfortable to be themselves, and that's what you ask out of your manager, is to maximize the talent that the team has, and he did that just about as well as anybody I've ever seen.

So he was incredible this tournament. We don't make it this far without him. It was an absolute honor to play for him, and I hope down the road, in another Classic, I can suit it up for him again.

Q. Vinnie, what was it like being on the field after the game? It seemed like you guys weren't ready to leave. Then what did Francisco say to you and where'd you go tonight?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Yeah, we just wanted to make sure we waved and thanked, one, the Venezuelan fans who were here tonight and the Italian fans that were here, because that atmosphere was incredible. The last four games that we've played have been loud, so we just wanted to thank the fans a little bit and have a moment together as a team.

Francisco, when he addressed the team, it was a lot of thank yous. It was a lot of telling us how much we mean to him and this chapter of his baseball career, now on the coaching side. There are some things that he said that I'd like to keep between the team just because it was a special moment, but it was just -- he just said a lot of nice things about everybody on the team and how much we've impacted him. It was incredible. So he did a great job in there.

Q. Hey, Vinnie. Before the game today, you talked about how 20 years down the road the goal is that this team is a lot of Italian-born players. Can you maybe speak to what the reaction has been after the game of those Italian-born players right now, like Aldegheri and Scotti?



VINNIE PASQUANTINO: For me, it's thanking them for letting me be a part, because without them opening their arms to Italian-Americans, this doesn't happen. So I just told them I'm so grateful for them, I'm so blessed that they've come into my life, and that they've opened their arms to a lot of us who wanted to represent the country the right way.

They were amazing, so I think for me it's just try to show them how much we appreciate them for bringing us in, and we want to do the same back to them. So it was just -- it's been incredible being teammates with those guys. I hope I face them down the road. I know I'll face Sam at some point this year. So it's just amazing to build that brotherhood with these guys that you never would have an opportunity to.

Q. Vinnie, obviously we saw the impact that this tournament has had and the attention it's gotten in Italy, but what are some of the things you think need to happen next to keep the momentum going? And what sort of role do you envision yourself playing in trying to help and not stop at this tournament, but continue on in the future in Italy?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Yeah, I think from a personal standpoint, it's a lot about getting out there. I've been to Italy once, and that's not enough. So for me, if I really want to make an impact, I've got to get out there.

It will be a lot easier now with Francisco at the helm, with Marco Montieri at the helm, with Ned at the helm to get out there and maybe do camps or whatever it might be out in Italy. So I think that's kind of the main goal. I know they have Euros in the fall, I believe, like the European championships. Doing what we can to just support them whenever possible.

So for us I think it's a lot about getting over there and just trying to make an impact. I think this is a great start, but the job's not done yet, and we've got to keep working to help.

Q. Did you have any speech after the game in the clubhouse, do you remember?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Did I? Yeah. I shared some words with the team, just how grateful I am to be teammates with all of them, because they were incredible.

So it's a really sad night for us, and it's not because we lost, because we played a great game. Venezuela was the better team tonight. There was nothing to hold your head for that. I think we're just sad that this team is not going to

be together anymore. Guys have flights at 7:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, so it's kind of back to the real world now.

It's just been an incredible run, so I just shared how thankful I am and how humbled I am. To be the captain of this team is one of the high points of my baseball career so far, and I'm never going to forget it.

Q. Vinnie, you've been in playoff games. You've been in playing baseball in New York. Where do you rank these last couple games in your career?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Yeah, the only real comparison I have to -- so I've played in playoff games but I've never played the field in playoff games. I've only DHed, so I can't really speak from a playing the field aspect.

But especially the last two games, Puerto Rico and now Venezuela, it's just amazing because it's -- the energy. I mean, I played in the Dominican so it's similar to that, it's just not as many people, especially in a dome. So it's just so loud, it's amazing. The passion people have for baseball here and for their countries is incredible, and I'm so honored to have played in this tournament.

But it's very comparable to those playoff games with how loud it gets, with how much pressure there is. You're just kind of nervous all the time in a good way, but you're just waiting for something to happen. You've got to make it happen, but it was -- yeah, the atmosphere here is absolutely incredible.

Q. How do you feel you've changed personally before and after playing for Italy as a team captain in this tournament?

VINNIE PASQUANTINO: Yeah, I think I've changed a little bit just in terms of how I'm trying to interact with my teammates, in terms of trying to make them better. This is the first time in my professional career that I've kind of been told, "Hey, we want you to -- this is your clubhouse, and we want you to do what you can to help."

And I say that respectfully because I have an unbelievable leader to follow in Kansas City with Salvador Perez. I mean, he has set the tone for my career, and he's helped me so much. This is just the first time I've played without him at this level, and it was just one of those things where I just tried to pour into my teammates as much as I could, knowing that we had 10 to 14 days together, to try to make an impact as much as possible, to try to help them learn the game as much as possible because that's what I think being a good teammate is all about, is trying to help guys get better at the game. And if you can help them be a

better person or whatever it is, that's awesome too.

But it's just little things, having conversations with Sam Antonacci before the game, how he's feeling about his swing, or with Andrew Fischer about what the approach is or how he's feeling in the field.

Talking to Nick Morabito tonight, just asking him has he had a good time. I know he didn't play as much as he wanted to. He's talking about this is the best baseball experience of his life and he barely played.

That's what it's about. When guys don't care about their individual success, or you care about your individual success but you're so locked in on the team and being around the guys that you're with, that it's great. So that's what I've learned the most is try to not focus on the personal stuff as much and focus on the team.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports)