

World Baseball Classic Championship Final - Venezuela vs USA

Wednesday, 18 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team Venezuela

MVP Maikel Garcia

Postgame Press Conference

Venezuela 3, USA 2

Q. Congrats for the performance. A few minutes ago, Omar Lopez and the coaching staff spoke about the importance of this title for Venezuela. In your specific case, MVP. And some statements that were taken out of context. Now what can you say about Venezuela and Latin America? How can you speak about the performance you have had?

MAIKEL GARCIA: Not only MVP, I just wanted to win. I had a good performance. I was able to help my team today. But with Venezuela, like I said before, many people didn't like what I said. They didn't understand. But our jersey said Venezuela, not Latin America.

Q. Congrats, Maikel. In the first round the DR; quarterfinals, Japan; semifinals, Italy; final, U.S. What a journey. If you had to define with a few words your team or the key for your success, what would you say?

MAIKEL GARCIA: In order to win a World Classic, as Omar said, the best team should. We lost versus the DR, but we beat Japan, Italy, and the U.S. in the final. We continued doing the small things, the details. That's why we were able to win this championship.

Q. Since 2025, you have been the hottest player from Venezuela. I know you wanted to win for the team, but how this trophy as MVP? Are you inspired with this for the season? Could you compete for being the MVP in the American league?

MAIKEL GARCIA: I was not supposed to be here. Many people said that I did not deserve to be on the national team, but Omar Lopez chose me. I did my job, and I'm taking this as motivation and to go out to do my best in the season.



I'm going to do my best every day, and this is going to define who I am.

Q. Maikel, with the first scenes, David versus Goliath, Yankees versus Latin America, the big guys against the small guys, you were not favorite. How can you transform that in the middle of the game with so many emotions? The United States came back. How did you play in this stage as visitors? Eventually you won.

MAIKEL GARCIA: We were visitors because we had a great uniform, but we were feeling at home. There were more Venezuelan fans than American fans. We were used to this at stages, but not the American players.

And that was clear during the game. There is no favorite in baseball. Look at Italy. Italy was underestimated, and they made it to the semifinals. We beat them, but it was not easy. Only on the seventh inning we were able to come back.

We were not overconfident. And the same happened against the Netherlands. We showed the whole world that in Venezuela we have talented players and we know how to play ball. We were not favored. They put us fifth in the ranking, but that's okay with us.

We came to West Palm Beach, we prepared ourselves, and then we implemented here in Miami what we practiced in West Palm Beach.

Q. Where would you put this World Classic? As MVP, you're a young player. You can win a World Series. But is there anything in sports that could be better than this World Classic and this trophy as MVP? You were No. 5 in the ranking. You said that on the field, "Now we are No. 1". Did you guys speak about that? They put U.S., Japan, and the DR before you. But did you speak about that?

MAIKEL GARCIA: I was a champion with the Tiburones, 30 years, 38 years without being champions. I never imagined that I could be here in a World Classic. After being around so many important people, I might win a World Series. I don't know. I don't know what God has for



me and for my team, but to me this is No. 1. To me this is No. 1.

No, we never spoke about the ranking. We knew that we would never be one, two, or three. They underestimated Venezuela because we had never won anything, but we are powerful. We never made it to the final, and this mix of young players and veterans, we proved that we have what it takes to show what Venezuela is worldwide.

We won today, and I expect that in the new ranking, we are No. 1 and Japan is No. 2.

Q. Many people mixed up arrogance with confidence. Acuna supports you and other players. You, personally speaking, are you underestimated? What do you think about yourself as a player?

MAIKEL GARCIA: I didn't believe in my talent until 2025. What I achieved last year made me understand the player that I am. Someone said that I was the best player. I didn't know how good I was. Only in 2025 I found it out. Maikel Garcia, Golden Glove. I understood who I was, and that motivated me to understand that I'm good and to be a player in the Major Leagues.

This is very important. I always say that my brothers that are in Minnesota, I tell them that everything can change in one year. 2024 for me was tough. I was struggling, all the year I was the worst hitter, and then in 2025 they voted for me for MVP of the American League. That was huge, and that motivated me to work harder.

I thought about that. I put that in my mindset. I knew that I could give more, and that's why I'm here in the World Classic. I never imagined to be an MVP in a World Classic, but God's plan is perfect. It's my turn today. He gave me that talent, and I thank God every day.

Q. Congrats to you for winning and for winning the MVP. I was just wondering what this means to you, to bring this kind of joy to your homeland and the diaspora here in the United States, and what this means for pride that you have for Venezuela.

MAIKEL GARCIA: You know, the United States, they have the best players in the world. They have a great team, great pitching staff, and we have the confidence that we can beat them. We just go out there tonight with the confidence that we can beat them.

They played great baseball. God just gave it to us because our country, they need this. A lot of Venezuelans isn't out of Venezuela, and they need this, and we need this too, and we are just given this energy, and they need

this like we need this.

Q. Everyone knows your talent from the very beginning of your career as a professional. Now your value is higher. The whole world is seeing the MVP of this World Classic. My question is: What's your next goal now that you are -- today you are the most valuable player on the planet?

MAIKEL GARCIA: There are some good years, bad years. I have been playing for the Majors for three years, and I saw Judge, Bobby Witt. They improve every year. Last year was great for me, and I want to continue being like that to show that I belong to the league. I want to be like that every year.

Some people say that that was my lucky year, but this year I am inspired. God gave me this victory with my country and MVP, and I'm going to use this as an extra motivation in the Majors. This is the way I'm going to be a better player.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports)