

World Baseball Classic Media Conference

Sunday, 15 March, 2026

Team Italy

Manager Francisco Cervelli

Press Conference



Q. As you look at your pitching, who's your starter for tomorrow and how do you see your bullpen unfolding?

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: My pitcher for tomorrow is Michael Lorenzen. And the bullpen is -- I think with today, today's an off day so I think everybody will be available again.

Q. And being up close with Lorenzen over the past few weeks, what has impressed you?

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, Lorenzen, I know him long time ago. I face him many times. This guy has a quality to pitching good games in a tough environment. That's why he's the pitcher. He likes to pitch tomorrow and I think it's a perfect guy against USA. He did a phenomenal job and this is a perfect guy.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Jakob Marsee. Obviously he's a young kid, just made his Major League debut last year and has been playing a big role for you guys.

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, he's one of my best players. This guy is a real ballplayer. He's got everything you need as a manager; he can run, he can catch, he can hit. Probably if you see the numbers right now it doesn't translate how good he is. So yeah, he's going to be my center field for the rest of the tournament.

Q. When you're in Italy, I wonder on the weekends -- obviously you're working a lot of baseball, but how much are you able to read and follow the Serie A clubs, of course especially your favorite Juventus?

And what does it mean to you that those same sports pages that are often talking about soccer are now talking about your team and people can read about your team at the cafes in Italy?

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: It's amazing. I go every weekend, I watch the Serie A, but I always have my eye on my phone because when Juventus play, I watch it. And if they play close to where I live, I go to the games.

But for me is an honor because Italy's all about soccer. If you watch the newspaper, it's going to be five, six pages about soccer. Now we're in. Yesterday I think was the first time for the national team on home TV. The national TV was a success. It's great. What's happening right now, it's just beautiful.

Q. Thinking back to your first participation in this event in 2009, what do you see is the difference in the intensity and interest in this event and what would you see as explaining that difference?

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Well, in 2009 the tournament was amazing. I think the difference now is we're doing it in Miami, the stadium is packed. Houston was packed as well.

Also, more players want to do it because the tournament's getting better and better and better. The exposure, the media is giving a big platform to this tournament. So it's fun.

And from 2009, I did it in 2009 and 2017, it's getting better and better. Organization is better. It's a big league tournament and it's great.

Q. I'm curious, I know we've talked about it, like what John asked about the media in Italy, but what about just people in Italy. Are you hearing from fans? Are they somehow getting to you, getting to the team to tell you guys that they're excited about what you're doing?

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Yes, yes, I get the message from all my friends, my family there. Just imagine in the south of Italy they don't play that much baseball. Yesterday everyone was watching the game.

They send me pictures all the time. It's like the family reunion watching baseball. Even if they don't know that much or they don't understand that much, "How's Italy playing?" It doesn't matter what it is. So there is a lot of excitement in Italy right now about baseball.

Q. Can you share your roster moves that you're making before the semifinal game? I've seen reports

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about both Rocchio and Joe Jacques both joining. Can you share those plans for both of them?

FRANCISCO CERVELLI: Yeah, Rocchio came for Mastrobuoni. He got hurt in the first round. And Jacques is for De Lucia. He's not going to be able to pitch anymore. So we've got a couple moves. Hope they can help.

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