

World Baseball Classic: Pool A

Friday, 6 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Team Cuba

German Mesa

Alfredo Despaigne

Roel Santos

Workout Day Press Conference



Q. German, I got two questions for you. It's about the subject of the Cuban team. Cuba has 170 players in Major League Baseball and Minor Leagues, and this team only has seven, eight players. Do you have any answers as to why it's such a low number?

GERMAN MESA: Well, these are the athletes that we called who accepted to play with the national team, the ones that are here. There are others who could not because of their own personal reasons.

Q. On the subject of how efforts were made to set up this team, there were some times (no microphone).

GERMAN MESA: Well, look, the question that you're asking me, I'm not the one who should answer that question. You shouldn't ask that question to me. I'm sorry.

Q. To whom should I ask?

GERMAN MESA: Well, you guys are the ones who work in that. My job is to coach the Cuban baseball team, balls and strikes. That's what pertains to me, what I'm interested in.

Q. Okay, a question as to balls and strikes. This World Classic has the particularity of the pitch clock. Do you know whether the Cuban team is adapted to that, whether they've worked with it, because I guess it's a different rhythm, that level of pitching and rhythm?

GERMAN MESA: Well, yeah. We've been working on that, on rhythm. We've had very few problems with that. We're working on the 12 seconds and having people on base. We haven't had any problem. The same problems as other people have had, not only the Cuban team.

Q. What is the assessment of this team after the two losses that you've had?

GERMAN MESA: Well, look, these are preparation games where the team has been getting ready. We've had to make some movements, players who we did not have when we were getting the team ready, and this is the time to look at it and try to do the teamwork.

They've played well, and then you get experience from the defeat. We have to see what happens after that.

Q. German, I told you I love being in the dugout and being able to share the magic I saw in you, which is something different in baseball. The Cuban team has a weak point in the left field. Can you tell me who's going to be in left field tomorrow?

GERMAN MESA: Well, I can tell you that. I can advance that to you. We had difficulties for that position for different reasons. We were not able to get a left fielder, but when we want to, we can do it.

Q. Has never been left out for the next stage. It always classifies for the next stage in the World Baseball Classic. The responsibility of continuing with that story with regards to Panama, what do you know that you're going to be playing with tomorrow?

GERMAN MESA: Well, we already have -- we have already studied Panama. They have studied us also. I don't think this is going to be an exception that Cuba is going to be left out. We're going to come out like we've always come out to try to reach our goal. Play the game. That's the idea. That's what we have our mindset on.

Whatever revelations, assessments, the way they've studied us, we're studying our opponents, and with the weapons that we have, we're going to go ahead as we've always done.

Q. We know that your heart is in this tournament, but maybe your mind back home, because there's an energy crisis back there, the oil reserves, I suppose



that you have relatives who have suffered blackouts. Talk to us a little bit about that while you're here representing Cuba.

GERMAN MESA: Well, that's no secret for anyone what Cuba's going through. Right now we are here, and what we have to do. Our family is wherever we're going. That's all I can tell you, brother.

Q. Alfredo, this is your fifth Classic, and you're going to go into a group of people who have only been able to do that. You've been a victim of a lot of criticism with regard to your inclusion on the team. Do you think this last Classic is going to be the way that you can show that you still have something left in you and that way you can leave with your head up high and you are the historical honoree?

ALFREDO DESPAIGNE: First of all, I think we've done a good job. We were in Venezuela, Nicaragua, the United States. I believe that I'm ready. I feel fine physically. The main thing is I don't think just about myself, I think about Cuba going to the next phase. Whatever happens, we are a team. We'll come together and all have the same objective to do things.

It has to be collective. It is a collective effort. We are several players that are ready, and we're willing to come out any time in any inning and to give everything for the team.

Q. German, tomorrow Livan and then we have Negro. Who are going to be the starters for the next game? Do you have the lineup?

GERMAN MESA: Yes, we have the lineup ready. Tomorrow when we're done with the game, I'll be able to tell you the next one. We go game by game.

Yes, we do have it defined.

Q. But you can't advance it?

GERMAN MESA: No, I'm going to tell you tomorrow, which is Moinelo.

Q. You both have been in several Classics, Alfredo your fifth. How do you value this team with other teams that you've been in with the World Baseball Classic, for example, with the 2023?

ROEL SANTOS: My name is Roel Santos Martinez, first of all. The question you're asking, comparing 2023 with this one, it's totally different, but it's similar in the sense that we have not had a chance in the last Classic and this one of

being able to have more space with the new athletes that come in, like to get more teamwork.

It happened with the last Classic. It took us a while to react, get to know the players. When we were to win the games, we got together, we knew the purpose that we had and the team changed. This year the same. We're Cuban above all, and sometimes we don't know each other. But when we get together, we all get to see what each one has. I believe that has been one of the main differences in terms of Classics.

There is a hunger and a thirst to win games. The Cubans have that energy in the dugout from inning to inning and game to game to get victories because we're hustlers, we're hungry to win. I think that's what is going to keep the Cuban team in the World Classic.

ALFREDO DESPAIGNE: I think that it may not be so much of a significant difference, but there is a difference. We do have experience and youth in this Classic, but as Roel said, we did react as a team kind of late. We would have liked to have it earlier, but that's what the game gives you every day. We were only together one or two days. This year it's the same thing.

We have had good chemistry in the games in Arizona, with the guys I've never seen before, we shared with them. The guys were great. They want to play. They want to look good, and they want to do well. That is their objective. That is their goal. I've liked the chemistry with these young guys.

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