

World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Cuba vs Panama

Friday, 6 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Team Cuba

German Mesa

Yoan Moncada

Postgame Press Conference



Cuba 3, Panama 1

Q. The question is for Yoan. This is your fifth (indiscernible) in the Classic. You tied Miguel Cabrera. Did you know that?

YOAN MONCADA: No, I did not know that.

Q. The question is we've seen you for many years playing in ball games, playing the different leagues, in Taiwan. I see when you play with the Cuban team, you play with a different passion. Can you explain to me the difference?

YOAN MONCADA: It's no secret to anyone I like to play with the Cuban team. I have a passion ever since I was little with the team. I've been given the chance of coming to play. I felt comfortable with the guys. I felt happy.

Aside from that, it's a different vibe. It's a different vibe. Really every time I put those four letters on my chest, I think all about my dad. He was one of the reasons why I'm here. Also my mom, but my dad always wanted me to play a World Baseball Classic, and me too. I always want to come here, and we're here.

Q. Question for German Mesa. Do we know who's going to be the pitcher of the next game? There was an incident with you and people who brought posters against the Cuban government last time Cuba was here. Now there are other posters, about down with the dictatorship. I don't know if you saw it or you can do something about it.

GERMAN MESA: First of all, I didn't see it. We're concentrating on the game, which is what we came for. What's going on outside is not going to make us lose our concentration.

With regards to they took me out of the stage? What? There was no incident. It was simply a misunderstanding with the guy that was there, and I went to see what was going on, as happens with any human, got a problem, and I'm there. Not only with him, but with anyone.

No, we're not looking at the posters. We came here with an objective, which is to play well, and that's what we're doing.

Q. What about the starting pitchers?

GERMAN MESA: Well, it's between Larrondo and Robaina. We have to decide between the two. After we assess, we'll decide who's going to start the game.

Q. One question. Your assessment on where Cuba won the game?

GERMAN MESA: Where did Cuba win the game? Well, regardless of the pitching, exceptional pitching, the exceptional plays, there was one key play, very important one, where Moncada took that line. He stopped the ballgame.

The most important thing of the team is the attitude they have and how we're in the dugout helping out and supporting each other. I think that that is the main -- the main thing about the game. Regardless of everything that happened in the game, as we saw -- the pitching, the way it went, the timely hitting -- but the third base play was extremely important for the team.

Q. My question is for the manager. How do you feel with this victory for the Cuban team being the first victory for the Cuban selection here on Puerto Rican soil since 2006? How has the environment felt playing here again?

GERMAN MESA: Look, we're very happy with the victory. We started winning. Sometimes we've difficulty winning early. Very good, really pleased.

It's wonderful to be back here in Puerto Rico. We're really



happy.

Q. German, there's a play, and there is a runner on third and first, was it their decision to run?

YOAN MONCADA: No, I thought the ball would have been further back since there was a lot of wind. I decided to go for second.

GERMAN MESA: Nevertheless, we're not stopping anyone or speeding up. I'd rather them to make an effort and not to just stay back. I mean, it's a risky play, but it's cool.

Q. So the plan for the Cuban team is to be aggressive, exploit the speed of the players?

GERMAN MESA: That's what we're trying. Trying to keep the philosophy of the game that we had today and keep it up. Once the horse is running, everyone has to keep on running. It's a demand. That's a projection we have as a team.

Q. German, there is a saying in baseball that you don't change a winning lineup, but is there going to be a change for the next game?

GERMAN MESA: Well, there is an analysis to that. I'm kind of like they say -- I don't know what the newspaper says, but I'm old school. There are things I see. I see what works. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. I mean, we have to assess that.

Q. What is the chemistry right now on the Cuban team? Sometimes a lot of the journalists in Puerto Rico don't know the Cuban team, could be a surprise, and sometimes it's a surprise that they beat the best team. It's happened in other Classics. What is the chemistry? How is the chemistry in that clubhouse, and who are the leaders of that Cuban team?

YOAN MONCADA: Well, in the clubhouse, we're all leaders. There's some who say that Despaigne, captain, who has been there. I'm in my second year. We're all leaders. To me it's the whole Cuban team. We all came here to play ball and to support each other, and everyone has a decision that needs to be respected, and we share the whole team.

The vibe we have in the dugout is to stay together and to stay as righteous as possible and to have fun because that's what we came for, to have fun. You all saw how our dugout was when there was a hit, when there was a double, any play, good play. We came here to have fun.

Whatever happens, at the end of the day, it's a game.

Q. Question for Yoan. You seemed pretty pumped up after that home run. How big was it for you guys to get a quick start like that, get a big home run? How big is that in the first game here to do that?

YOAN MONCADA: Well, you feel real good. You feel real good to start with a home run and to put the team ahead, and the most important thing is to win. Well, it happened, and happy to win and to make a contribution to the team.

Q. I've got a question. Beyond the two home runs, Panama's bullpen stopped every Cuban attack. What did you all see in the Panamanian pitching? In your opinion, what's your thoughts on the Panama baseball team at the start of the tournament?

YOAN MONCADA: Panama has good players, they have good pitchers. They stopped us a little, but in the beginning with those three runs, we took advantage a bit, and our pitching was good too. Thanks to that, we had a victory.

Q. Yoan, what impression did you get from Livan?

YOAN MONCADA: Moinelo? Moinelo is a great pitcher. He's a great pitcher. Really I'm happy to play against him because despite that he is a great person. He also supports his fellow players in the clubhouse, in the dugout, and my respect to him.

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