

World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Columbia vs Canada

Saturday, 7 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Team Canada

Ernie Whitt

Jameson Taillon

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Ernie, Cal was throwing a side out there, which would seem to line him up for Tuesday. Is he the guy you expect to start Tuesday against Puerto Rico?

ERNIE WHITT: We haven't decided that yet. It's either going to be Tuesday or Wednesday. He will be throwing one of those games.

Q. Assuming you guys watched the game last night, anything you picked up in Colombia, the way they played against Puerto Rico, the way Puerto Rico pitched them that could apply to today?

ERNIE WHITT: I watched two games yesterday, saw four teams, and two pretty good games going on. Nothing's easy. It's going to be a battle.

Q. Ernie, you've been around team Canada for many, many years and managed in the WBC. Why do you feel this particular group that's assembled is one of the best, if not the best, group of Canadians for this tournament?

ERNIE WHITT: There's two reasons probably. I think we've got a real good position, positional players, and I really like the arms that we've assembled this time. We've got some pitching that hasn't played. Jameson pitched one time before with us.

In these tournaments, pitching means an awful lot. I'm happy with the arms that we have, and I think that we can match up fairly well against the other teams.

Q. For you, Jameson, going into tomorrow, I know we spoke outside of here how excited you are and honored you are to pitch. What did you take away from the first time you took part in this tournament that maybe you've learned from and can apply to your outing tomorrow?



JAMESON TAILLON: I think we were talking a little bit yesterday, like over the course of a Big League season, you get hopefully 30, 32 starts. In this tomorrow's not promised, every game matters, every pitch. It's kind of like a playoff environment.

I think just being on top of your game and really focusing on every single pitch. You don't have the luxury of playing the long game. You've got to be ready to go from pitch one.

I think these teams are looking to put the ball in play, run, bunt. I watched some of the game last night. I saw some bunting going on and moving runners and stuff.

I'm also just in a different spot in my career now. I was in Double-A when I did it last. Now I've been in the majors for a while. It's kind of cool to do it from both perspectives.

Q. When you're in camp, you're usually tweaking or adjusting or working on things. When you're in a playoff type tournament, where's the fine balance in trying to work on something and being competitive right from the get-go?

JAMESON TAILLON: I'm really excited about the competitive side of it. Like I've probably been tinkering a little too much in camp, and this gets me an opportunity to get away, and the only thing that matters is winning with this group. I think that's kind of a welcome thing for me right now, get outside of myself a little bit, play for a team and for a country.

Spring Training can be almost like a selfish time of year where you're trying to be your best and optimize everything. You get in this environment, and it's totally opposite, which is really exciting.

Q. Jameson, not sure how many of the highlights from various games you've seen there, but there have been some pretty wild celebrations, well beyond what you're seeing in the Major Leagues. Just from a pitcher's perspective, where would you sit on if you saw like a



Junior Caminero type celebration or guys really pimping RBI singles, which is something you wouldn't see in the Major League season. Where would you stand on that in this environment?

JAMESON TAILLON: Two things: I think the WBC is great for baseball. Anything that brings baseball attention, I'm all for, especially in this environment. A guy like junior Caminero is a good example. He's a young guy playing for his country with a bunch of guys he probably looks up to a lot and stuff. How can you blame him for being excited?

I just think it's great for baseball. You've got to drop your ego. This isn't about one person. It's about playing for countries. It's also about pride for your family.

Again, part of the reason I'm here was because the last WBC was so amazing, and I thought it was great for the game. I know I just wanted to be a part of it. So it's bigger than yourself.

Q. Could you ever see the standard in Major League Baseball getting to the point where that degree of celebration becomes regular like over the course of 162?

JAMESON TAILLON: Yeah, I think it's already moving there. I think you see guys celebrating some smaller things nowadays, but to be a good Big League player, I think you've got to be really steady. If that helps you or gives you an edge, go for it. For me, if I get too high or low, that's not great. I try to stay as steady as I can.

Obviously sometimes the moment gets the best of you. Again, like every pitch in this matters. I think in the Big League season every pitch matters, but you also play 162. So it's a little bit different.

Q. Ernie, in terms of what you've actually seen from the team in preparation, scoring over 15 runs, as you come into camp, do you envision that you will actually play more of an aggressive game against Colombia, since they're tired with only 14 hours between games? Also, they haven't been able to actually score runs, and they were only scored upon in one inning when they actually got the five runs from Puerto Rico.

ERNIE WHITT: Again, we're going to play our game. Every player knows what they're capable of doing and not doing. We ask them to just stay within yourself, play with pride and passion, and grind every at-bat out. If we can take an extra 90 feet, we're going to.

Again, as far as being tired, you're not allowed to be tired in tournaments like this. We all have turnarounds that are

quick. You just have to be prepared for it, psyche yourself up, just tell yourself I'm ready to go play.

I think our team, we're biting at the bit. We can't wait to get out on that field and play the game.

Q. Is there anything you can take from 2017 when you guys faced Julio? Anything your batters can take or you can offer them advice?

ERNIE WHITT: We talked about it. Justin Morneau is our hitting guy right now. There's a lot of conversation. We've seen video. We are prepared. We have to go out and do it.

The preparation that we have, not only against Julio, but other pitchers on every team we're going to face, we will be prepared.

Q. Jameson, just one kind of non-baseball question. I know you're a big coffee guy. You find any places in Puerto Rico that you like? I don't know if you had time to tour around or anything.

JAMESON TAILLON: I spent a lot of time on Yelp and Google. I found a place the other day, it was called either Coffee 787 or 787 Coffee. I got a pour over. It was really, really good. I think the coffee was soaked or aged in a rum barrel. I feel like I was getting the Puerto Rican experience.

It was really good. Whether I'm in Puerto Rico, we opened in Tokyo last year, if I'm just on a road trip during the season, I try to get out and explore and find places.

Q. Ernie, you guys have been in a lot of international tournaments. There's a lot of energy from crowds and the pride of playing for your country. What do you tell your guys about the right emotional level to find when you're competing, whether on the box or on the mound?

ERNIE WHITT: I think the only effect for the players is it's going to be exciting. When we play here and any time we play almost any Latino team, there's a lot of excitement. I just want them to enjoy the moment and kind of block it out as far as it affecting us, it should not affect us, and play with them.

To me it's exciting when you get the crowd involved. Whether they're cheering for you or against you, it kind of jacks you up a little bit. I don't think it's going to play a factor with us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

