

# World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Panama vs Canada

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

## Team Panama

### Damaso Espino

#### Pregame Press Conference



**Q. Unfortunately in two games we weren't able to get a victory. It was quite close games. Yesterday we were one out away from the victory. Historically speaking in these games we've never been able to beat Puerto Rico. But I want to ask you as a general manager, what do you live through in that clubhouse with the ballplayers? We have one game left, and we haven't been able to win.**

DAMASO ESPINO: Definitely last night was a difficult night. After the game there were 40 people there that were frustrated and sad because of the result, especially when you're so close to victory. But we have to think about today, and we need to focus on today's victory.

Tomorrow is another day, and yesterday is past. We can question a lot of things of ourselves, all of us, but we have to turn the page and focus on what we need to do today.

**Q. I'm impressed you're at the press conference. I've never seen a general manager come and say some words. Why was the decision made? Is it linked to the decision that Panama is going through that you're talking to the media today?**

DAMASO ESPINO: Honestly, I was invited to the press conference, and I was asked if I wanted to participate. I've never said no to showing my face in any situation. Had we won last night, I would have loved to be here, but with the defeat, I'll always be here also to answer any questions.

I'm answering a call that was made to me, and I will always be willing to talk and to answer any questions.

**Q. You're the manager, right, the big boss? And from your point of view as the boss, as the chief of the mission of the delegation, are you satisfied with the work of the coaching staff? What is your evaluation? And I'd also like to know what is risked if Panama has this World Baseball Classic below what happened in**

**2023? We came directly to this World Baseball Classic, but we had a chance where we were eliminated. Is there a risk that have?**

DAMASO ESPINO: I think we're all on the same page. We worked hard for a long time to get ready. When you lose games, there's a lot of questions. Everybody has to look in the mirror and see whether we made the best decisions, but we also have to turn the page. We still have two games left to go, and a lot of things can still happen.

We do not control our future, and that's the most difficult thing. Despite winning two games, I mean, qualification is difficult. I think the most important thing is to play today. We need to win a game, and today's important, and tomorrow we'll worry later, but today's focus should be only how to get those 27 outs today and one more run than the other guy.

**Q. When we talk about the structure of the coaching team of this team, how does each one come, is it your personal decision or whether it was a consensus with the coaching team or by the Federation? How do you form the coaching staff that surrounds José Mayorga? That's my first question, as to whether you've had contact with coaches of the FAB, and what have they told you?**

DAMASO ESPINO: After I talked with FAB to get this position, I talked with José Mayorga because, as I said at some point in time, I wanted someone who had a relationship with the players that had been in tournaments like this one the last few years. I've been with series Premier 12 and other tournaments. Based on that, together with José, we were looking for the best people that we had in Panama for each position. The best pitching coach that we had. We wanted to balance with the batting and the defense and the infield and running bases.

Together we talked with each one of them to get the best coaching staff that we could. The Federation gave me the power to make those decisions, and they gave me 100 percent support with that.



I also talked with the Federation yesterday because we're all -- there are a lot of excitement on that team and wanting to get that victory. I think that that same page as us. We have to look to the future and look at tonight.

**Q. What you've seen in this Classic or the history of the Classics, definitely running the bases faster or those mental errors, they don't show in the box but they weigh a lot definitely. In Panama there are a lot of people who really know about baseball. I mean, they see other games, and they're even more passionate. Beyond them not being here, how does that make an influence in the games? Yesterday we were in that scenario. I was talking with some colleagues, the result there were some outs to make to win this game. You don't feel like a winner in the sixth inning. You still have a third of the game you need to play. I did see from Panama there were a lot of people that analyzed your game and know things, and maybe that's why there's been a lot of criticism and a lot of questionings.**

DAMASO ESPINO: Yes, we are a baseball country. We play baseball -- Minor Leagues, Major Leagues -- and we are used to playing each game. Every time we lose a game, there are a lot of questions, and there are things more so. It's normal. It's normal that you have questions, and we accept it. We are a team, and we make decisions as a team, and things did not come out right yesterday.

Also as a team, we need to show a face and need to look for a victory.

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