

World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Panama vs Canada

Sunday, 8 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Team Canada

Ernie Whitt

Postgame Press Conference

Panama 4, Canada 3

Q. Ernie, you talked pregame about hoping that guys can make the routine plays out there. How much did that factor into the result of tonight's game?

ERNIE WHITT: Well, it definitely affected it, there's no question. It was a big momentum switch after we had the bases loaded with a chance to break the game open and we didn't do it. All of a sudden the other team gets a little momentum, and they capitalized on it.

Again, you've got to play this game clean. You can't give extra outs, and we paid for it tonight.

Q. You guys were a run away there in the eighth and then went to the top of the ninth. Wilkinson did a nice job there. Then it rains. What's going through your mind at that point? Are you then trying to figure some contingency plans as far as pitching?

ERNIE WHITT: Yeah, I couldn't send him back out after that delay. I'm not going to take a chance and hurt his arm. So we decided we had our chances, even in the ninth inning. We had the top of the order coming up. It just didn't work out.

Again, if you don't play a clean game, you've got a good chance of losing.

Q. Ernie, does the result change your pitching plans for Tuesday at all?

ERNIE WHITT: No, we're going to stay the same. We've got to do a lot of calculation and find out who's available, who's not, check with some organizations to see whether they'll give us some leeway, and we won't have those answers until probably Tuesday morning.

Q. Just with this loss, it kind of removes your margin



for error. You guys have been in this situation before. How do you look at the opportunities now from where you're sitting?

ERNIE WHITT: Well, we have to win, bottom line. We have to win, and we'll let the math take over from that. I think, if we win the next two, I think we have a good shot of moving on.

So our back's against the wall. We know what we have to do. Hopefully we'll straighten some stuff out and get it done.

Q. In terms of the guys, like veterans like Naylor and Paxton that unfortunately they couldn't deliver a clean game, what are you going to tell those guys, or what do those guys have to tell the younger crew how to actually bounce back and forget what happened?

ERNIE WHITT: They're all professional in there. They know when they have screwed up and they haven't. They don't need to be told. They feel bad enough as it is. No one goes out there to commit an error. No one goes out there to pop the ball up with the bases loaded. We don't try to do that. It just happens in this game of baseball.

That's why it's a great game. It's a game of failure, and unfortunately, we failed tonight.

Q. What did you think of the way James' stuff played? Got bled a little that inning, but feels like the stuff may have been better than the results?

ERNIE WHITT: For a guy that's been out of the game for over a year, I liked his action the second inning better than I did the first inning. I feel like he got into a better rhythm at that point in time and threw the ball a little bit better.

We pulled him out with 49 pitches with the three -- I think it was a 2-2 count on the hitter. I don't think I've done that before, but I guess welcome to the WBC because we have to save pitchers so he would be available for the last game anyways.



