

World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Colombia vs Panama

Monday, 9 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Team Panama

José Mayorga

Pregame Press Conference

Q. Good morning. I know that obviously you guys are focused on what you're going to be doing today, but I wanted to ask what happened within the group in Tokyo. Three teams that were 2-2. Australia eliminated. They had a great tournament. Korea is in. The blessings and complicated parts of performance. I want you to talk to me a little bit about, to place this in perspective, how easy it can be or how difficult it can be to advance in this tournament.

JOSÉ MAYORGA: It's like you say. It's part of the tournament. We all know the rules. We all know what's at play. Unfortunately for Australia, they had a great tournament. I believe the rules have been set for a long time, but you have to follow them and try to understand and do the best that you can before you get to that position.

Q. How does it feel knowing you're going to hand the ball to Espino today, a veteran who's been around a long time, pitched in the original World Baseball Classic. Has he said anything to you? Is he ready to take the ball? How does it feel for you guys to have him out there?

JOSÉ MAYORGA: He's 100 percent ready. He's one of the best at preparing himself. It feels good having him on the mound with the experience that he has. I think it's the kind of game we want to have him for. I think he's the perfect fit for the game that we have today.

Q. Regarding Paolo Espino, do you have a plan to take him to the 65 pitches limit or do you have something specific for Paolo and the pitches?

JOSÉ MAYORGA: Yes, we obviously know he has the 65 pitches, but we're going to be reading the game to make the changes and adjustments.

Q. What represents the decision-making in a game



that is literally do or die to give the ball to the experienced one who's retiring? What does that mean for the team? That mix of the technical and the emotional.

JOSÉ MAYORGA: I think he plays a role that goes hand in hand, but the motive is his experience to manage the magnitude of this game. I believe that he's demonstrated throughout his career, and we trust and we're confident that he will be able to do it again.

Q. Good morning, José. After that victory, it's the only thing that keeps you alive, but are you guys clear on the possibilities of Panama with regards to victory over Colombia?

JOSÉ MAYORGA: Yes, definitely. I believe for us it's to control what we can control and come out and win today's game.

Q. It's the last day with the possibility of advancing. I want to ask what thoughts you have from this championship? You had a night of criticism and then a night of a lot of praise. So this tournament where you've gone through a lot of emotions.

JOSÉ MAYORGA: Well, it's learning. It's learning. I believe that it's the same for everyone. I believe that I mentioned it when this tournament started, I respect everybody's opinion. Criticism and praise, this is all part of this. It's something that we are living through and that we're in, and that's how this business is.

Q. With the result between Colombia and Panama, in such a case that you do not qualify because the numbers are so complicated, will you have a bitter taste? Because this team has been one of the best of all time, but in other teams they haven't shown that level.

JOSÉ MAYORGA: Today all we can do is control what we can control, and it's to win this game. After that, I'll have to come back, we may be able to answer that question about the bitterness and all.



Q. I want to ask you about a key player on the team. They're all important, but we're talking about one Allen Córdoba, who started in that first game. What has happened with Allen Córdoba with an injury? We haven't seen him in the lineup?

JOSÉ MAYORGA: I believe that everybody knows, we're talking about the injury that he had after the first game that had been on his shoulder and that he was in pain. He's had treatment. He's improving. But as I said yesterday also, he was going to have some X-rays. We're still waiting for the results from the images.

Q. Along that same line, to ask about Bethancourt, who also had a moment when he reached third base. Is there any reaction? Like in Allen's case he kept on playing, and the next day we realized it did affect him, that injury. On the other hand, yesterday everybody batted, and the lineup changed, and it has changed game after game. How difficult will it be for you to set up that lineup? What is your priority? What are you going to do with the batting order?

JOSÉ MAYORGA: Bethancourt got hurt, obviously. He slipped on the base. He's fine. He feels fine. Not completely. He does have a little bit of pain. But he's a fighter. It's going to be difficult to get him out of the lineup. He's in. He's fine. He's going to be in the lineup.

Yes, there have been a few changes, and yesterday we showed more offense from the rest of the tournament, and the lineup is quite similar.

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