

World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Cuba vs Puerto Rico

Monday, 9 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Team Puerto Rico

Martin Maldonado

Edwin Diaz

Postgame Press Conference



Puerto Rico 4, Cuba 1

Q. How did you feel after that double that gave the team the lead? And how are the emotions for tomorrow's game?

MARTÍN MALDONADO: We're happy. We made history. That was a double. I can tell you that I don't remember anything. I don't even remember what I did.

Understand that we need to give credit to the batters before me who had good at-bats and they were able to on the bases. I was able to get the hit. Then MJ who was walked, and it was a tough at-bat.

What we wanted was not to do too much and pass the baton to the next guy who's going to do it.

Q. Edwin, do you have any restrictions for tomorrow's game, if it's necessary?

EDWIN DÍAZ: No, I'm always available depending on how the game is obviously. The pitches is what counts. I didn't throw many pitches this time. Last time I did quite a bit.

Let's see how the game goes, if we're on or not.

Q. The classification was assured. What mindset are you going to come in with tomorrow, and how can you ensure the first position in this group?

MARTÍN MALDONADO: Same mindset as the first day. Come out and play hard. Canada is strong opponent that has a lot of ballplayers with experience.

It's our game. We want to go to Houston in first place, so we don't expect anything less than go out and try to win from the first inning.

EDWIN DÍAZ: Like Martin, to win the game, the important thing is you're playing good ball. The momentum that we have, the guys are pitching very well, the offense is doing its job at the right time. The defense is incredible. I think if we play the same ball as in these three games, we're going to have a great game tomorrow.

Q. Martin, from what you've announced previously, tomorrow may be your last professional game in Puerto Rico. Clearly you'll continue with the Classic after today, but it will be the last time we'll be able to see you on the field in Puerto Rico. How do you want to finish? What is the image that you want to leave here in Puerto Rico of you as a player?

MARTÍN MALDONADO: Well, it can't be tomorrow. Well, tomorrow is my last game. It's not that it may be. I want to finish, as I've always said in my career. There are a lot of children in the stadium looking at you, and I want to have a chance of giving that hope, that vision that they can do it.

I understand that to be here before my family, friends, my children, my mom, a lot of friends, almost 70 tickets a day, I mean, there's no better blessing or better satisfaction than to finish my career in this way in front of many people who gave their little bit to help me get to where I got in the Big Leagues, and never had a chance to see me in person, and they've been present in these three days.

And tomorrow is another day. You'd have to ask Yadier that.

Q. Talk to me a little bit about the work, the chemistry that you had with the pitchers today. The Cuban manager himself said that today's pitching was super strong, and it's going to be tough in the rest of the tournament. Talk to me a little bit, how did you see Elmer? How did you see the pitching?

MARTÍN MALDONADO: The pitching has been our forte in Puerto Rico. We had some absences in the offense, but every player has brought the desire to want to compete.

Elmer was a little nervous in the beginning, and that's



normal. He reminds me of José Berrios when he pitched in 2013. We're talking about Eduardo, Elmer, who should be the next Puerto Rican faces starting in the Big Leagues and seeing them fight through the innings. It shows the quality of player they are.

As a team, we are ready. We've done the scouting reports. We know who each pitcher is. I understand the staff has done a great job matching the stuff with the opposing batters.

Q. For both of you, what has Arenado meant for you guys, especially the play in the third, and you guys seeing him as a fellow player after many years?

EDWIN DÍAZ: It's a plus. Arenado has a lot of experience in the Big Leagues, and to have him here on the team helps a lot. He helps the young guys who are seeing him, seeing his routine and his things. When he goes out to play, he gives 100 percent. He's one of the best third basemen in history.

When you're the pitcher, you're assured if the ball is hit over there, he's going to catch it. It's a plus to have him as a veteran. He wants to win. Ever since he came to Puerto Rico he said this is different than what he had gone through in the United States because of the unity with Puerto Rico. We're family. In the clubhouse, we're just one. We treat everybody the same, and he loved that.

MARTÍN MALDONADO: I can tell you Sugar just said everything, but two plays today changed the game. He's a guy who could end as one of the best third basemen, and to have him here and to see him, like Sugar says, committed from day one with the country.

I know that many times a lot of people say why wouldn't he play? I think that to have a chance of playing here now, he noticed the way we are as a country. We welcomed him. Yesterday we went out to dinner, and he loved it. From day one, he has been all in with the messages and texts. He now knows a few curse words at least.

Q. To both of you, you talked about Elmer, can you talk about his pitching? And did you have a conversation in that inning where he started a little nervous? What was the conversation?

MARTÍN MALDONADO: He has the same stuff as Berrios with the sinker, the curve ball, the change-up. He's a young guy who's not used to being in this kind of event. As I said, Chaito did a great job with Yadier and myself and with doing well from the start. He didn't look as well as expected. You saw him in the game against Boston.

But having him give us the chance of three innings is big. It's big. The important thing that I saw was he attacked the strike zone with his best pitching, and with the sinker, he let the defense do a better job after him.

Q. Edwin, can you tell me how meaningful it is to be back in Puerto Rico and how much pride you take in helping them get to the quarterfinals?

EDWIN DÍAZ: I feel really proud because it's my first time playing back home, to win the games. It's important. We know one thing we have, and we have a really good team. We play really good defense. Here they are doing their job. So I feel really good. I feel happy to be here for the first time.

I feel really good. I pitch with the same confidence. At the end of the day, I'm really happy.

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