

# World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Canada vs Puerto Rico

Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

## Team Canada

## Ernie Whitt

### Pregame Press Conference

#### Q. Ernie, you got six WBCs. Is this the last one?

ERNIE WHITT: Is this the last one? I hope not. I hope not, no. I'm enjoying it. It's a lot of fun. It's a great group of guys I'm working with, great organization. I'm proud to represent Canada.

#### Q. From watching this Puerto Rican team, what kind of a challenge do they pose for you guys?

ERNIE WHITT: Just going on the field is a challenge. They're a great team. They can hit for power. They're very aggressive, good pitching. That's why they're moving on.

We want to join them. So I congratulate the Puerto Rican team for moving forward, but you play the game to win, and that's what we're going to try to do tonight.

#### Q. Ernie, that being said, with tomorrow's game being the one that determines your fate, how will you balance pitcher usage today versus sitting some guys to ensure you have the best tools to win tomorrow?

ERNIE WHITT: We've been meeting, and we're confident in the pitchers that we're throwing tonight, and I think we're confident in the pitchers that we're saving for tomorrow. So I'll just leave it at that.

We're going out. We feel very confident that we can battle and compete tonight with the people that we have scheduled to throw.

#### Q. Any lineup changes tonight?

ERNIE WHITT: I'm just going to DH Josh tonight instead of playing at first base. It will be Blackie at first.

#### Q. José De León threw a perfect game a couple of Classics ago. What challenge does he present to you today pitching-wise?



ERNIE WHITT: You're talking about De León?

#### Q. Yes.

ERNIE WHITT: He's a Major League pitcher. He knows how to pitch. He changes speeds. So it's a challenge. Any pitcher that goes out on the mound, it's always a challenge. It's mano a mano.

I'm hoping our pitchers can take advantage of that and we're successful.

#### Q. Talk to us a little bit about the environment here in San Juan, what you've seen from other times you've been here for this tournament. And what you see about the tournament here in Puerto Rico this year and the history of that, 20 years now this tournament, how do you see it?

ERNIE WHITT: It's very exciting. The fans are very enthusiastic about coming and watching and cheering for the game. If we can just keep the rain away and have a nice clean game with no rain, it will be great.

#### Q. You have two chances. You have today and you have tomorrow. Which of the two games is more important? And of course what can you say about the Cuban team who came with a low profile but has beat Colombia and Panama. Now you're getting something to talk about. And come in with all this pitching, the best pitching to face Canada.

ERNIE WHITT: Both games are important. Obviously tomorrow's game is probably more important because, if we lose tonight, which I don't plan on doing, but if we lose tonight, we still have a chance for tomorrow, as you said.

So tomorrow is a very important game for us. We have our pitching lined up the way we want, and we know it's going to be a very competitive game.

I think our guys will be ready to play Cuba tomorrow.



**Q. Ernie, just the thinking behind DH'ing Josh and putting Tyler Black at first?**

ERNIE WHITT: Just wanted to give him a little bit of a break. He had yesterday off, and we spoke about it, and he kind of asked if he could DH to have a little bit more time. Absolutely. He's in the lineup. He can put some hurt on some people, and that's what we're hoping for.

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