

World Baseball Classic: Pool A

Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Carlos Beltrán

Josh Rawitch

Hall of Fame Press Conference

JOSH RAWITCH: Because we're in Puerto Rico, I'm going to try to do this in Spanish.

I'm here with Carlos on behalf of the Hall of Fame. The most important thing I wanted to say is we want to invite all Puerto Ricans to Cooperstown in July for Carlos' induction. It's going to be a great party there with all of the Boricuas there.

For us, it's going to be fantastic. If you haven't visited Cooperstown, it's hard to explain, but I'll try to explain it. We're going to have an exhibition with the artifacts of his career. We'll have an exhibit about baseball, life in baseball, about Puerto Rico and all that. So it's an honor to invite the whole country and all of the people to Cooperstown. Congratulations again.

CARLOS BELTRÁN: Thank you, Josh. Honestly, I'm happy. I'm really happy for what we're living through. In my personal aspect as family, as an island, I'm very happy with this chance that God has given me to be selected to the Hall of Fame.

As Josh says, I want to make this invitation to all the fans, all the Puerto Rican fans who love baseball to be able to be there with me that day, supporting me. There's no doubt that it's going to be a very emotional day. There's going to be a lot of emotions going through our minds.

When you try to summarize your career in the Big Leagues, but not only in the Big Leagues but from the start when you're a little kid, there's no doubt that emotions touch you. Knowing that my parents are going to be there, my family, all my loved ones, there's no doubt that also creates a lot of excitement.

Most of all, I think that for baseball fans who love the support, there's no doubt that the Hall of Fame is an extraordinary space. I now as a member of the Hall of Fame, but before being a member of the Hall of Fame, I think that for every fan who loves this sport, there's no doubt that the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum should be



on their bucket list, because there you will understand the history. You'll understand how this sport started and how this sport has evolved.

There's no doubt that at this time when I was there visiting with my family, I couldn't believe yesterday when I was living that I was going to have a plaque there this summer. So as a fan when they give you the tour and tell you the history, wow, it's something impressive.

I give thanks to God because throughout the years that I played, to get to know that there are many players before me that had extraordinary careers and that they played baseball that was difficult for them and to know that the path improved for people like me, and those who are playing right now, there's no doubt that you admire the effort of a lot of players who played baseball before us.

I myself am very thankful because thanks to their effort there's no doubt that my career was improved. So I just want to urge all the Puerto Rican fans to be there with me that day and to go and enjoy it. Like Josh says, it's going to be a party. We're going to have two other candidate who's are going to be there with me - Andruw Jones, Jeff Kent. It's a class of three players.

Just thankful for this opportunity. First of all, thankful to represent the Latinos and especially Puerto Rico.

Q. Carlos, first of all, congratulations. I wanted to ask you, you as a child here in Puerto Rico, when you were talking with your coaches that you wanted to play not only in the Major Leagues, you want to be immortal. Now that you are immortal, what do you tell the children in Cooperstown about baseball?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: I am mortal. I'm going to be immortal in Cooperstown.

Honestly when I was a kid, my dream was to play baseball. You don't have a goal like that to go to the Big Leagues, because when you're a kid, you start for fun. Little by little, you notice that maybe you develop some abilities, but when you start noticing it, you start taking it more seriously.



In my case, I would tell young kids and children, not only of Puerto Rico but of all of Latin America, that it doesn't matter what circumstance you grew up in or what you're living through, I come from a very humble family. It's a family that many times the fridge was full and many times the fridge was empty, and having said that, there are many people also who are living through that situation.

I think that I always stayed focused, motivated, always trying to give the best of myself. One of my greatest inspirations from the start were my parents. What I wanted was to help mom and dad to return a little bit of the effort that they dedicated to me. With regards to that, that's something that has a lot of value.

So to children, please keep on having fun, and to parents, keep on supporting your children because parent support is very important.

Q. For the gentleman from the Hall of Fame, are you guys going to work any type of package for people to buy? Do you need tickets? The lawn is open, but I don't know if you need tickets for people to buy. How does it work? Carlos, for you, looking at the result of Puerto Rico up till today, what are your impressions of what we've gone through to get to here? How would you describe it?

JOSH RAWITCH: The best thing is the tickets are free. You can go with your seats on the ground, but we do have memberships for the members of the Hall of Fame, if you want to sit on chairs or close to the stage.

We're also working here with a company called Rodolfo Yegros Vacations Tours together with a company in New York, it's a travel agency, and they can help you with everything with hotels close to Cooperstown and Albany and other cities.

Most people think that it's very difficult, but it's not so hard. You can come, and it's not so expensive if you stay a little bit farther from Cooperstown. And you can go for free or paying for seats next to Carlos and all the Puerto Rican friends. You can look for our website, baseballhall.org.

CARLOS BELTRÁN: For my part, with regards to the Puerto Rican team, there's no doubt that I'm extremely proud of what we're seeing here in Puerto Rico, proud of the guys, proud of the coaches, Yadier, José, and of all the ballplayers.

Honestly, I think there was a moment in the beginning where things seemed a little difficult because we were counting on some players, and then those players did not

get permission to play. Then there's no doubt that when there is an absence, there's also an opportunity for younger players, and this is what has happened here on our team, opportunity for the younger players to be able to shine. Then I'm happy to see what they've done. It's been a great effort.

These three victories for Puerto Rico, there's no doubt they gave us that pass to Houston. Having said that, I give credit to the guys above anything. My job as GM was to try to set up the team, but once you form the team, that job of having them get together, going out to the field and giving their best, that has to come out from them, and they've done it very nicely.

To see the fans these three days has been it just gives you goosebumps for all of us who are experiencing this. Thank God for all that.

Q. Carlos, following the line where you were talking about the team, the unity, when the team was forming, there were some absences, then there were some people who showed up. A lot of people started criticizing, well, the team is not going to go anywhere, but it's been like "shut your mouth." At other times, there have been those who have been positive. Give us your opinion about both sides.

CARLOS BELTRÁN: Well, yes, we live in a world that is like that. There are people that are positive. There are people that are negative. At the end of the day, I think when you're playing baseball and you're going out in the field and wearing Puerto Rico's jersey, you have a responsibility that's greater. The coaches and the guys, to see them enjoying this, to me the message at Fort Myers was for them to enjoy this experience above anything.

I also let them know that their lives are not going to be the same because, when you put on the Puerto Rico jersey and what you live through in Puerto Rico with the fans -- the energy, the laughter, the enthusiasm -- it's something that is extraordinary.

One example is Arenado a short while ago, he approached me after Saturday's victory and said, wow, this is incredible what I'm living through with you guys. I'm really proud and thankful. Thank you so much for the opportunity. I said, well, for us it's an honor to have you. I would have liked to have you a little bit before, but at the end of the day, I think he does have the experience of playing with the U.S., he has the experience of playing for Puerto Rico.

He told me what he has lived through in Puerto Rico is something that he's going to remember for the rest of his life. To me, that is a mission accomplished for the guys to

be having a time like this.

Q. As a ballplayer or as a manager, is it important to go one place even if it's not on your side of the field?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: When I analyze this work, I don't see it as something that's possible. I'm a person that has relations is something that I feel proud of in my career as a ballplayer. More important is the relationships that I developed in the game and the relationships that I have with the guys. As a manager, I can make a call.

When I started with the coaches, all those coaches that I went after them, I played against almost all of them. So I explained to all of them what it means to represent Puerto Rico, and it was really nice to me to gather up that group.

From there with Sarai (phonetic), Efrain Williams, who has also been a very important part of this process because remember they have the experience of a lot of Classics. To me this was the first experience as a manager, so I needed a lot of information from them. They have been very collaborative with me.

I feel happy because, to see the guys having success, it's a validation that all of the effort that has been done, that is being made forming the team has had a good outcome. On my part, I feel good. I feel happy.

Q. First of all, you talked about the Hall of Fame. Yadier is a candidate eventually to the Hall of Fame. Have you all had any conversation about whether one day he would join that? Second, I would like your answer on today's game could mean avoiding the U.S., you play whoever is on the field, but definitely if you could see them later on in the tournament, it's better.

CARLOS BELTRÁN: With regards to Yadier going to the Hall of Fame, I think that Yadier is a great candidate to the Hall of Fame. Look how much he's a candidate. There's a mural out there that says the year he's going to go into the Hall of Fame. So that speaks a lot about Yadier's career, what he did on the playing field, his leadership, and his career. There's no doubt that Yadier, with God's will, will be our seventh Puerto Rican in the Hall of Fame.

So I'm really happy for that. And I declare it as a fact. With God's strength.

And with regards to today's game, it's a very important game. Once we play, we'll have to face whoever it is. Yes, this kind of series and this kind of event, you want to get to that second series, second phase with the best scenarios for you. So no, it is a very important game today. Canada is great team.

Most of all, our preparation, it's not been different. The process has been taken seriously. There have been some players that have played since day one, and we're looking for a way to give them a break here and there. But today's game is going to be managed to win.

Q. After games and also being around fellow Puerto Rican Hall of Famers who have been here, doing ceremonial first pitches or part of the coaching staff.

CARLOS BELTRÁN: I'm so proud of what has happened in Puerto Rico because of the experience we're creating for the fan base in Puerto Rico. It really means a lot to us. Baseball on the island is a culture. It's something that we breathe. It's something that we need as an island.

So the fact that we have really shown the effort as a team, and the fact that we have really been making our fan base proud these three games has been incredible, like you mentioned. Watching the crowd sing after the game, seeing the guys praying in the middle of the field, thanking God for the victory and for the ups and downs of baseball. That's what really has united us.

So I'm very proud for everybody, for our coaching staff, for our players. Also very proud of the people that have really invested in this event, right? Because in order for an event like this one to happen in Puerto Rico, there's going to be a lot of people involved. So I'm proud. We really have shown good quality of baseball on the island, and at the end of the day, we're happy that we have another step forward to go to our second series in Houston.

Q. This team of Puerto Rico has gone far in this tournament before, and I want to ask you, in light of your experience and the fact that this team has been here before, what has to happen with this particular team with their strengths, their virtues, and their weaknesses, if they have any, to achieve the objective that they need to win? Everyone wants to win a championship. What has to happen to this team to achieve winning a championship?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: I think that above all we need to stay focused as a team. There's no doubt that nothing is guaranteed on the playing field. Anything can happen. Honestly, thinking about it and talking clearly, no one bet on us going to the second round. So that speaks that baseball is a game that, regardless of how you look on paper, you have to go out and play it all in the field and get 27 outs.

There's no doubt that on these days we've been the better team than those that we've played against. I would just

say we play it one game at a time. We can't advance to Miami or Houston; we're not done in Puerto Rico yet. I think today is an important day, as I mentioned. It's an extremely key game. We already have guaranteed our passage to Houston with whatever team we play. We just have to continue with the same preparation.

We've done something really nice. It's that, if people see the preparation of the guys, you can really realize that everybody is taking this very seriously. There's no one who's just fooling around or just lazying off. No one is saying, I have a chance of going from Spring Training and coming to Puerto Rico to have a good time. No, everyone is very serious and very committed, and that makes me happy.

At the end of the day, even though the Classic is very important, there is a preparation, and these guys are getting ready for the season that's coming. There are some things you have to fulfill. There are some restrictions we have as a team. So that's why I give Yadier a lot of credit, José Rosado, and they've been in close communication, even with Edgar Perez and all the coaches, Edgar Martinez. If you see Edgar Martinez working with the kids in the cage, the discipline they've created in these days has been extraordinary.

So I could not be more proud of this team than I do right now.

Q. Carlos, a question. You're one of few ballplayers who can say you reached two World Series, but you also reached two final series in the World Baseball Classic. I want you to tell me what is the mindset of a player like you who are an immortal in the Hall of Fame? And to give that knowledge to the new players because on this team there are a lot of new players with a few veterans, and you were one of those veterans, especially in 2017. I want you to talk about that. Also, what is the usefulness of Lugo and Berrios for the next round?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: Well, with regards to experience, I think that in these days I've been with the team, everything I've promoted with the young guys to take advantage of the opportunity of the resources they have around them, I know many times there's a process, a preparation. There's a process focusing on the game.

Most of all, when you're a young ballplayer, I think that you could benefit from having conversations with someone like Edgar Martinez and a person like Yadier Molina, Edgar Martinez, who's around, Juan Gonzalez, et cetera, et cetera.

My message to those guys has always been try to get something from this experience that you're having, so you can add to your career and that can continue helping you grow and growing in the game.

That has been the message, and we're promoting it. We're doing it. Also, one of the things that has happened is we have created a nice platform for the coaches. We're not limiting anyone to make an approach when they see something that can be improved, and that is something nice.

With regards to Seth Lugo and Berrios, right now the focus is this game. When we finish this game tomorrow, God willing, or today after the game, we'll be talking about that plan. What I'm happy about is we have Berrios, and to me that's fabulous. We would have liked to have him in this series, but that's great.

Knowing we'll have a fresh arm in the second series, and he is a horseman. He's like just a huge guy.

We need to figure out the attack plan, how the matchup comes out, but Berrios is super excited. He called me saying, "I'm here for whatever you need me and in the way that you need me. All that I want is to wear Puerto Rico's jersey," and that's just fabulous.

Q. My question is for Carlos Beltran. At this stage as a player, you could have had a great team and Puerto Rico could have lost. Now as GM, all of these players were chosen by you. Do you feel more pressure now as a general manager before the games or as a player? Do the victories taste better as a general manager or as a player?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: Well, less pressure because I don't have to bat. The pressure is on the guys, and there's always pressure in baseball because pressure is part of the preparation that you care for the game.

So as a manager, I'm enjoying it a lot. I see the game in a little room, in the coaches room, and I have a delay. There's like a 30-second delay, which is horrible because I hear the crowd, and I'm like, oh, my God, I have to imagine what's ahead. Is it a double? Later is when I see the pitch. So it's like torture in that moment.

But thank God these three games have been so good that I just have to stay locked up. I mean, that's my contribution to the team. I have to root for the team with that torture.

Above all I believe that every game is important and every victory feels good. But victories are always collective. On that part, to see that everyone has contributed, this

experience has been so brutal. I lived for the Classic as a ballplayer, and it was pretty, it was nice, but this is not different. It's not different at all.

Q. Carlos, what did you think of the mosaic?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: The mosaic on the wall? That's such an honor. I passed by, and I look, what am I doing on that wall? You ask yourself that question. Not because I didn't have the career, just because I'm so humble about what I'm living right now. It's such a blessing. It's such a great experience.

When I look back at the beginning and when I look at my career as a baseball player and the things that you go through, the ups and downs of the game of baseball and the fact that God has given me this platform to continue to promote the game, to continue to promote baseball, to inspire younger generations to make them aware that you can play this game and have a career, and that's a beautiful thing.

The other question is what?

Q. What do you think of having so much catching talent in that dugout, especially with the younger pitchers?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: I love it. I love it. For generations we have really created hitters, right, like baseball players, and now we see a new wave of pitchers. I love to see it. I love to see younger guys going out there and competing.

A lot of times when you see a younger guy and you're kind of like creating a team and creating the culture, sometimes he hits the ball to a younger pitcher on the mound and in events like this one could be overwhelming, but at the same time, this really can be so powerful for them.

The fact that some of the younger guys have really gone out and pitched good games, man, that's a real boost of confidence for them moving forward. So I'm glad that they're having this experience, and I'm glad also that they're having this opportunity.

JOSH RAWITCH: My wife asked, if anyone knows Benito, tell him he's invited. (Laughter).

FastScripts by ASAP Sports