

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

Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

## Team Canada

**Ernie Whitt**

**Tyler O'Neill**

**Brock Dykxhoorn**

**Denzel Clarke**

Postgame Press Conference

Canada 3, Puerto Rico 2

**Q. Ernie, Brock was kind of a late add to your team. What did you think of the way he pitched this evening in a big spot for you guys?**

ERNIE WHITT: He pitched extremely well. He was a late addition. He was on our radar, but our pitching tonight, you couldn't ask for more. The three guys really stepped up and held a good ball club in check.

**Q. Abraham Toro seems to thrive at this tournament. In 2023 he had a nice tournament as well, five hits. What have you seen from him as far as his development, his growth the last time you saw him at this tournament?**

ERNIE WHITT: He gives you a professional at-bat. To me he's always grinding, and it seems like he's coming up for us in key situations too. He's a switch-hitter. He does a nice job from both sides of the plate. He's just steady. He's a true professional.

**Q. Tyler, back-to-back walks there in the pivotal third to get you guys the runs. That's a situation where you maybe try to force it, try to get big. Can you describe the approach there to make sure runs come in?**

TYLER O'NEILL: Yeah, Puerto Rico has a really good bullpen. It comes down to bearing down right off the first pitch, really trying to respect the strike zone up there and not expand. Try to get something over the plate that I can handle. I didn't get a bad at-bat.

I tried to be out there. Once I got 0-2, I was just trying to



battle the best I could. Worked out in our favor. Tyler had a great walk behind me as well. Just a really good collective effort today.

**Q. The approach, your mindset going into the Cuba game tomorrow?**

TYLER O'NEILL: Yeah, we're looking forward to it. Really looking forward to another competitive game. It's going to be a dogfight out there. Looking forward to doing my part and playing as hard as we can collectively.

**Q. Brock, as Hazel already mentioned, 2 1/2, 3 weeks ago, you weren't on the roster. You get this opportunity here. You seem super comfortable out there, nine up, nine down. Can you describe how you were feeling on the mound and then what this means to you?**

BROCK DYKXHOORN: I feel comfortable. The heart was definitely racing. I appreciate the start. I would do anything to be here. I told the coaching staff that as a late addition.

Even if I didn't get in the game, I was happy to be here, happy to be with the guys. Baseball Canada is so important to me.

To be put in a spot like that, to come through, I'm happy for the team. Credit Jordan and Logan did a great job holding them in check for the first six innings. I just wanted to do my part, and I'm glad I could.

**Q. Ernie, we couldn't see your replay up in the press box. Did Josh get hit in the forearm or the back of the hand? Where was he hit?**

ERNIE WHITT: The back of the elbow. It's the ulnar nerve that goes through there. It's get you and you'd think it knocked your arm off. It's very painful.

He was in a lot of pain, but it takes time for it to get to feeling back a little bit.



**Q. Was there any discussion of you taking him out of this ballgame?**

ERNIE WHITT: I looked at him, and he said no. I said okay.

No, we're concerned. He got the feeling back a little bit later. If it was hit in the ankle or the knee or something, we'd probably have to put a pinch-runner in for him.

With the elbow, he could still run. It gave us time to get the feeling back into it. He'll probably be sore tomorrow.

**Q. Ernie, Tyler, what does it feel like when you've got the game tomorrow and you can either be atop Pool A or you can be eliminated? The stakes are so different depending on one game.**

ERNIE WHITT: That's the beauty of this sport. You play to get to this position. We knew coming into tonight's game, if we had a chance to win, we wanted to win, but we know that this win was nice, but it doesn't mean anything unless we win tomorrow.

So we have to play a clean game, as I've said all along. We play a clean game, our pitchers throw strikes, I'll take our chances.

TYLER O'NEILL: Yes, I think Ernie said it great. We come into all these games expecting to win. Don't take anything for granted. It doesn't matter the team on the other side. The boys in there, we're confident in ourselves. We know the talent we have and the impact we can collectively make and individually make over the course of a ballgame.

It's just a matter of coming out, playing hard again, trusting ourselves.

**Q. Brock, I just want to follow up what you said. You said baseball Canada means a lot to you. Is there a back story to that? Is it just representing your country? Why does it mean that much to you?**

BROCK DYKXHOORN: Yeah, they've been there for me since I was in high school with the junior team. They opened so many doors for me throughout my career, through college and professional baseball. Yeah, without baseball Canada, I don't know if I'd be here.

Not one story in particular, but just the support all the way through from the time I was a 17-year-old kid. They've been great, and I just want to do my part for them.

**Q. Denzel, that throw in the first inning really seemed to change the momentum of Jordan's outing and that**

**frame for you guys. Just describe sort of your play, how you saw it, what you were thinking as you came up throwing?**

DENZEL CLARKE: The grass was wet, so he got to me fast. He was running in my face, and honestly I felt really surprised and a little disrespected, so I threw it to third and got him out. So it felt good.

**Q. Do you think at that spot where you get an out there and they're looking at a big inning, and suddenly you're one pitch away from getting out of the inning there, did you feel a bit of a momentum shift there?**

DENZEL CLARKE: Yeah, for sure. Baseball is just about the little things. They played a really great game. We played a really great game. It just takes one little instance to change the momentum, change the game.

I feel like both teams did a great job tonight. Yeah, very happy with how we played.

**Q. For any of you, what's your impression of just how far along Canada baseball has come, especially the last five to ten years?**

DENZEL CLARKE: This is from my own experience, being a part of the junior national team, that was very foundational for my development. I know these guys as well.

Kind of at the time you made the junior national team, it was a big step if you want to chase your dreams going to the next level. I feel like the game has grown to a point where there's more things to look forward to in Canadian baseball. There's bigger tournaments. There's more travel ball teams. There's more things to put us on the map as Canadian baseball players.

It's not just okay, one guy got drafted this year. We're starting to put more players on the map. The fact we're fielding pretty much a whole Big League team for the first time says a lot in itself.

**Q. So looking forward to Cuba, what is your mindset? What are you expecting tomorrow on the field?**

TYLER O'NEILL: Expecting a good ballgame. We know they're going to come out firing, but so are we. We're looking forward to Game 4 in this tournament. Hopefully we go a lot further than that.

**Q. Ernie, was your plan to go three, three, three innings with the guys? How did the pitching lineup play out for you?**



ERNIE WHITT: Yes, that's basically what we wanted to do. That was plan A, and it actually worked. Very seldom does plan A ever work.

But we had plan B and C and D. Then we're in trouble after D (laughter).

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