

World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Canada vs Puerto Rico

Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Team Puerto Rico

Yadier Molina

Carlos Beltran

Joey Sola

Postgame Press Conference

Canada 3, Puerto Rico 2

CARLOS BELTRAN: I just want to make an announcement that Berrios is not going to be with us in Houston. He was not approved because of the insurance. Just now there's no doubt that at least. We feel bad because in some way or another we know the intention that he had to be with us, of helping us out, that he worked really hard here in Puerto Rico, getting ready.

He right now is in a program with training, pitching 70 pitches, and he feels healthy. Some way or another, we as a team, there's no doubt that it would have helped us to have him.

At the end of the day, I understand that with the guys that we've had up until now, giving the credit to all of the ballplayers, the pitchers, and the way that Yadier has managed, we have to continue moving forward with the situation.

I just wanted to mention that and let you all know that that is the reality. Berrios will not be with us.

Q. This question is for all three of you. Joey, you were the general manager of the past iteration. Can you tell me what has been the difficulty with insurances and having ballplayers in this edition versus the previous edition? Also for you, Carlos, I want you to talk to me about how complicated the process has been in your first experience as general manager. Yadier, how can you prepare a manager for this kind of situation when you don't know what will happen from one day to the next?

JOEY SOLÁ: Thank you for the question. There's no comparison. Definitely in the last Classic, I had to manage



just one delicate situation, which is José De León's situation. After that, we don't have any inconvenience like we had this year.

It's no secret the amount of players that have had some situation. Today, as Carlos mentioned, we were informed about the unfortunate situation that Orlandito would not be able to be with us at around 7:00 at night.

That has been the history of this team. The team has faced all adversities that have been placed before us, and we keep on moving and doing what we can at the next stage.

CARLOS BELTRÁN: There's no doubt the process has been frustrating. I understand that the tournament at some point in time should be reevaluated. This kind of situation, there's no doubt that it might sound like a permission, but we need to look at the significance, what that player means for each country that they represent.

These guys, Yadi had a chance of playing in four Classics, and so have I. He has been a coach in two Classics. To represent your country is something that is important. So I think at some point in time WBC should reevaluate this thing about the permissions, because in one way or another it doesn't help. It doesn't help their teams that are hurt because they don't get those permissions.

I say it because in our case we have had this experience that, as Joey said, we have to move forward. It continues tomorrow evening here, and God willing, we're going to Houston. Our mindset is to focus on what we have, and Yadier, together with the coaching staff, to try to position the guys in the best position possible.

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, well, I'm on the same line as Joey and Carlos. It's just frustrating. We'll keep on going. We're still positive. We know that we have very young team that are good and they're talented. They're going to give everything to Puerto Rico.

But it doesn't take away that it is frustrating for the front office, the manager, and the coaches to have elite players



that because of what's happening, they can't participate in their own tournaments. It is frustrating for us.

Q. You mentioned the word permission, and now we're talking about insurances. The problem is there's no money to cover the insurance, and the insurance companies don't want to cover it, or is it that the owners of the team don't want the insurance to cover them?

CARLOS BELTRÁN: Well, the process -- please remember this is governed by WBC. This has a separate committee. Even though it is a tournament approved by Major League Baseball, the WBC committee is the one that determines, based on the protocol, what kind of players are allowed to play based on their history of a player.

This is part of the process. We are the recipients of the information. So with regards to the insurance and all of that logistics of approvals, we really have nothing to do with that. We're the ones who draft the team. We're given a mission, and with the teamwork of Joey and Efrain, that's what we do.

Little by little, they give you these permissions that this player can participate or not. In our case, I can tell you that the part of the permits was like three days prior to the deadline was when we started to receive those notices. So I think it is a process that should be faster because in some way or another, we as managers of the team and people who are drafting the team, getting them ready, in no time at all were we able to guarantee the participation of the star players up until the end.

JOEY SOLÁ: I should clarify and add to what Carlos said. We drafted a team counting on Orlandito, on José Berrios, but when we received the unfortunate news today, we had to make a move. In this case, we're not talking about permission, just that he did not comply with the requirements of his insurance company. That's what we were informed. So his permission was denied today.

It wasn't that these were permissions, it was that they didn't meet the requirements of the insurance company.

Q. With Berrios' absence, and Diaz on reserve for Houston, are you going to have some changes? What are your thoughts depending what happens with Canada and Cuba, what will happen here to Team Puerto Rico?

YADIER MOLINA: I feel real happy with what happened. We are in a position where we're going to the second round, no matter what happens tomorrow. We played good baseball. We pitched very well.

What can I say? I'm very proud of my team. Very proud of the talent of the younger guys. We fulfilled a goal, which was to pass. Now it all depends on what position we go. In order to be a champion, we need to beat all of the good teams, and obviously we're in a good position. I feel very happy with the guys.

What can I say in terms of adding or removing players? We feel very good with what we have. We know Na this group, the pitching did a great job, and we trust them.

Q. How does Berrios' absence changing the plans for the quarterfinals? You were counting on him coming out of the bullpen? Have you thought of the names that could occupy that space, the role that you were going to give him in Houston?

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, well, obviously several hours ago I confirmed that we did have a hope, but before the game started, we received the news. Obviously it was a very frustrating news, very painful because obviously we had a lot of plans with Berrios, but we have to move forward. We have to move forward.

We're going to sit down. We have an off day. We're going to travel, and we're going to reassess and plan what we're going to do in the future.

Q. There is nothing written in baseball. Right now the U.S. is losing 8-4 against Italy. So that makes me ask you, if for the preparation in the second round you are aware of the kind of team you're going to face, or the manager prepares only for the game that's ahead?

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, the preparation is we're going to see. We have to wait for the results. Obviously we know we're going to face a good team. These are teams that have won in their pool, and they're going to have good talent. It's not going to be easy.

As I said, we trusted this group, and we're going to get ready with whoever we're supposed to play against, and we're going to get our heads ready. I can trust this talent that we've done it here. We've had good pitching. The offense has to try to improve a little and score a few more runs, but I do trust the guys.

Q. Is there anything about the team's performance tonight that worries you, raises a flag, or do you just think it's one more game that was left behind and the next is a fresh start? How do you focus it that way?

YADIER MOLINA: Well, I face it that way. I think it was a good game. Both teams played well. They pitched well.

Canada pitched well. Walks cost us two runs. These games you have to be aggressive.

I can't complain. They did a good job in the tournament and gave us a chance to win. I would have preferred a little bit more offense and better at-bats for the guys, but that did not happen. We're going to keep on working and try to improve and obviously try to win that second round.

Q. Do you understand that you have an advantage over the other teams with the two pitching coaches that you have Big League experience? Do you think that José Rosado and Juan Nieves can be the difference in this series?

YADIER MOLINA: Without a doubt. I feel very well because it's teamwork, we feel we have great preparation. Cheito has done a great job along with Juanchi and Victor Ramos. We have gotten ready. This is not a thing that just happened now. We've been preparing for months. We've had a lot of meetings, and these guys are ready for this.

They are ready for this. We know we have good arms. We have a mastermind behind home like Martin and Christian Vázquez.

Obviously we feel very confident. We know we have a good quality of teams from now on, but we trust our own.

Q. Getting out of today's game of everything that happened, a simple question, have you talked with Martin, his last game here? What did you tell him? He's a catcher with great experience and a great career. A few words from you to him at this moment on his last day in Puerto Rico?

YADIER MOLINA: That's good. I'm very happy of Martin's career. He's a guy who came from the neighborhood. His life wasn't easy. We've been categorized as not being offensive players in our careers, and I compare myself to him from my start. I would say that we offensively couldn't be, and we lasted long in baseball because of our defense, because of our smarts.

Martin is a simple example of that, of Puerto Rican intelligence, that you can do it regardless of what people say. He's a guy that gets his hands dirty. I'm very happy for him. He put himself to work, and we trust him, and we expect to get a trophy for him.

Q. We talk about the offense, and we want to emphasize the night that Nolan Arenado had. What does that say that offense wakeup that Arenado had in today's game?

YADIER MOLINA: It was a good moment. There will be good things, and I believe that the offense overall can improve, but to see Arenado have a night like tonight is something good. It's something that he has worked on a lot the past few weeks to try to get to where he is right now in tonight's game.

I think we're going to see Arenado is going to be very different in the next two rounds and going forward.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports